

**REPORT TO: ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES AND SUSTAINABILITY
COMMITTEE – 21st JUNE 2004**

REPORT ON: CONTRIBUTION TO DUNDEE FURNITURE PROJECT

REPORT BY: HEAD OF WASTE MANAGEMENT

REPORT NO: 481-2004

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To seek approval for continued financial support for the Dundee Furniture Project.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the committee agree to contribute £25,000 towards the staffing and running costs of the Dundee Furniture Project during 2004/05.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The cost will be met from within the Waste Management Department revenue budget.

4.0 DUNDEE 21 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The project's work has a major impact on the following themes of the Local Agenda 21 strategy – "resources are used efficiently and waste is minimised" and "local needs are met locally".

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The project provides assistance to a wide range of disadvantaged groups, including homeless people, victims of domestic violence and people with health problems.

6.0 MAIN TEXT

6.1 In June 2003, the Council approved a funding package amounting to £50,000 towards the staffing and running costs of the Tayside Furniture Project. This package was agreed on condition that a new company was set up to run the furniture recycling operation in Dundee which would take account of the particular needs of Dundee residents. Accordingly, the Dundee Furniture Project was established on 1st February 2004, and is now operating as an independent Company Limited by Guarantee with its own board of directors. Despite establishing itself as an independent entity, the company continues to participate actively in the Tayside wide initiative.

6.2 The Dundee Furniture Project provides a valuable service to the citizens of Dundee by collecting unwanted furniture and appliances, checking and repairing these as necessary, and redistributing the items to low-income households. The organisation works closely in partnership with Starter Packs Dundee, a voluntary, interdenominational charity which provides basic household goods donated by the congregations of the churches in the Dundee area. The volunteer input by Starter Packs Dundee enhances the capacity of the Dundee Furniture Project to provide a quality service.

6.3 Referrals to the project are made by housing officers, social workers, health visitors, advice agencies and other voluntary groups, and the provision of these basic yet essential household items often helps people take up and sustain council tenancies. The project also facilitates the introduction of unemployed people into employment through training, activity based learning and work experience.

- 6.4 In August 2003, the Tayside Furniture Project was successful in obtaining a grant of £150,000 over two years from the "Transforming Waste" fund. This grant enabled the organisation to invest in staff to develop the project and maximise opportunities for future income generation. As a result of this investment the project is now on a much firmer footing, and is on track to becoming financially sustainable.
- 6.5 The continued existence of this project will benefit Dundee City Council in a number of ways. It will enable the Council to meet its commitments under the Tayside Area Waste Strategy, namely action 8 "to investigate and report on the feasibility of the reuse and refurbishment of municipal solid waste" and action 15 "to facilitate and support the establishment and development of community based and operated waste management initiatives". It will also play a vital role in the delivery of the corporate Homelessness Strategy 2003-06, which refers to the continued demand for furniture packages to prevent and alleviate homelessness in Dundee.
- 6.6 The Transforming Waste grant is conditional on the project obtaining matched funding from other sources. If no matched funding is obtained, then only a proportion of the grant will be paid. This could ultimately jeopardise the future security of the project as there would be insufficient funds to sustain the investment in staff referred to earlier, and the opportunities to develop the project and maximise income would be lost.
- 6.7 Angus Council and Perth & Kinross Council have agreed to provide funding of £25,000 per Authority during 2004/05. If Dundee City Council makes a similar contribution then this will allow the full "Transforming Waste" grant to be obtained.

7.0 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The Chief Executive
Depute Chief Executive (Finance)
Depute Chief Executive (Support Services)
Director of Housing

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 No background papers as defined by section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing this report.

9.0 SIGNATURE

Jim Laing
Head of Waste Management

Date: 4 June 2004