

**REPORT TO: DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL EDUCATION COMMITTEE –
19 AUGUST 2002**

**REPORT ON: NATIONAL PRIORITIES ACTION FUND – TRANSITIONAL
ARRANGEMENTS 2002/2003**

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

REPORT NO: 627-2002

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report advises Committee of the Scottish Executive's proposed allocation of resources to the Council for the year of transition (2002/2003) for the replacement of Excellence Funding by National Priorities Action Funding. The report identifies initiatives which are currently being delivered under the Excellence Fund and which the department would wish to continue under the terms of the National Priorities Action Plan Fund. Approval is also sought to make permanent a number of posts which are key to the continued delivery of these initiatives.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that:

- i the following initiatives launched under the Excellence Fund as outlined in Section 7 be continued under the terms of this report and conditions of the National Priorities Action Fund.
 - a) New Community Schools (Pilot)
 - b) New Community Schools (Roll-Out)
 - c) Inclusion
 - d) Support for Teachers
 - e) Study Support
 - f) Alternatives to Exclusion
 - g) Support for Parents
 - h) National Grid for Learning
 - i) New National Qualifications
 - j) Early Intervention
 - k) Classroom Assistants
 - l) Class Sizes
- ii the Director of Education be instructed to bring forward a further report on the detail of the National Priorities Action Plan when the final operational arrangements for future years are issued by the Scottish Executive.
- iii the Director of Education and the Director of Finance be remitted to arrange to make the appropriate adjustment to the 2002/2003 Final Education Revenue Budget to reflect the transitional year funding allocations.

- iv the Director of Education and the Director of Personnel and Management Services be remitted to take the necessary action to establish the posts detailed in Section 8 of this report on a permanent basis.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The undernoted table provides comparison of the provision included in the Education Revenue Budget Provision 2002/2003 under Excellence Funding and the replacement allocations notified by the Scottish Executive Education Department under the transitional year of National Priorities Action Funding (2002/2003).

		Final Revenue	
		Budget	National
		2002/2003	Priorities
Excellence Fund	National Priorities	Excellence Fund	Action Fund
Core-Programme	Action Fund	Allocation	Allocation
		£	£
New Community School (Pilot)	School in the Community	200,000	200,000
New Community Schools	School in the Community	311,600	311,600
Inclusion	Social Justice	409,000	558,378
Support for Teachers	Social Justice	274,863	282,769
Study Support	Social Justice	281,744	278,992
Alternatives to Exclusions	Discipline & Ethos	275,600	269,740
Support for Parents	Discipline & Ethos	137,800	134,870
National Grid for Learning	School Infrastructure	652,823	467,400
Higher Still	New National Qualifications	144,271	150,656
Early Intervention	Early Intervention	348,234	335,539*
Classroom Assistants	Classroom Assistants	782,826	672,308*
Reducing Class Sizes	Class Sizes	446,000	743,260*
Totals		4,264,761	4,405,512

*Added to Revenue Support Grant

- 3.2 The Final Education Revenue Budget 2002/2003 includes £4.265M income which it was anticipated would be subject of specific grant claims under the Excellence Fund. As detailed in Section 3.1 above a total of £4.405M additional funding will be available under the National priorities Action Fund £2.654M subject of specific grant claims and £1.751M to be paid in additional Revenue Support Grant. It will therefore be necessary for the Directors of Education and Finance to make appropriate adjustments to reflect this position in the Education Revenue Budget for 2003/04.

4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Implementation of the recommendations contained within this Report will facilitate access to the skills, knowledge and information needed to enable everyone to play a full part in society.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Implementation of the recommendations contained within this Report will increase equality of access to educational opportunity.

6.0 BACKGROUND

6.1 A joint Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (on behalf of Cosla)/ Scottish Executive Review Group examining the future Excellence Fund has proposed that the Excellence Fund be replaced by a new fund offering local authorities more flexibility in resource deployment and focusing to a great extent on achievement of agreed outcomes.

6.2 The fund is to be renamed National Priorities Action Fund to reflect the focus on delivery within the five action areas identified as National Priorities for Education. These are:

- school in the community;
- social justice issues;
- discipline, including strategies for improving behaviour and the ethos of the school;
- school infrastructure; and
- health promotion

6.3 While the final details of National Priorities Action Fund arrangements have to be agreed with Cosla and issued to authorities the Scottish Executive have issued the proposed financial allocations for Dundee as set out in Section 3.1 of this Report. A more detailed paper has also been issued by the Scottish Executive Education Department outlining the conclusions of the Review Group and explaining proposals for the new National Priorities Action Fund including transition arrangements.

7.0 ACTION FUND INITIATIVES

a) New Community Schools (Pilot)

This seeks to continue phase 3 of the government's New Community Schools three-year pilot, begun in April 2001. This project has been working within the Baldrigon Academy cluster to create a comprehensive framework of support and services for children aged 0-12 and their families. The focus of work is on:

- enhancing the education, care and well-being of children living in the neighbourhoods of Kirkton, Downfield, St Mary's and Ardler
- supporting their transition throughout their early years into primary schooling and then into secondary
- facilitating access for families to the best provision for their needs
- providing access to multi-agency services supported by the New Community School philosophy across the pre-school, primary and secondary sectors

b) New Community Schools (Roll Out)

Following on from the New Community Schools pilot the Scottish Executive has granted funds to authorities to support roll out of the new community school approach across all schools over a five-year period. This approach emphasises the need to provide children with

relevant skills and enhance their self-esteem, to equip them for adult life and to reduce social exclusion.

Phase 1 of the roll out programme in Dundee will focus on three secondary schools – Baldragon Academy, Braeview Academy and St Saviour's High School. The model proposed to deliver the programme in each of these schools is an integrated model, comprising education, representatives from other Council departments and health personnel

c) Inclusion

This fund supports a number of strategies designed to maximise access to education for those with special educational needs, by making appropriate curricular provision, by adapting buildings and accommodation, or by devising specific programmes:

i Enhanced provision is being made for youngsters with autistic spectrum disorder, which in part builds upon the lessons of the accreditation exercise carried out by the National Autistic Society in session 2001-02. Proposals include:

- creating and staffing a new specialist unit at Clepington primary school to cater for the increased numbers of children diagnosed with autism
- additional resources for the specialist unit at Fintry Language Unit
- support for a teacher to undertake music therapy training

ii The Quality Contact project has been in place for four years. Initially dependent on external funding from the Derwent Consultancy and managed by the Neighbourhood and Resources Development Department, it transferred to the Education Department in session 2001-02 and was funded from Inclusion monies. It has worked with children in the final stages of primary school, focusing on the transition from primary to secondary school. The project has been extended to all schools in the Menzieshill High School and Craigie High School clusters, and its success has been widely acclaimed. The opportunity is now being taken to:

- enlarge the staff team
- continue to promote greater levels of attainment and reduce levels of exclusion amongst children in the late primary and early secondary years
- devise ways of promoting Quality Contact across all clusters in the city
- provide appropriate levels of resources

iii Many children with special educational needs require very specific resources to enable them to fulfil their true potential. These resources often have to be tailored to the needs of individual youngsters, and by their specific nature usually entail significant expenditure. It is proposed that Inclusion funds will be used to:

- purchase hardware and software to improve access to ICT facilities for children with special educational needs
- buy additional provision of 1.6 FTE Speech & Language Therapists to cope with increasing levels of demand
- purchase specialist aids and appliances to support youngsters with physical needs
- contribute to the cost of transporting vulnerable children to and from school
- promote the integration of ethnic minority children through the provision of resources in a variety of languages
- support the integration of children requiring individualised educational packages

iv There are children whose needs are so great that mainstream provision is inadequate. It is intended that Inclusion monies should support two specialist establishments in Dundee:

- provision of 1 FTE permanent teacher at Dudhope Hospital Unit to ensure the delivery of as broad and balanced curriculum as possible to adolescents suffering from a range of psychiatric disorders
- creation of a pilot project, requiring 1 FTE fixed-term (to June 2003) Classroom Assistant SEN , to support visually impaired children in the unit for children with pronounced and complex difficulties at Kingspark School

v A significant number of children find themselves socially excluded because of difficulties arising from a disrupted home and family environment. The Home School Support Service has met with considerable success over the years in working with families to ensure that channels of communication between schools and families are maintained, that problems are resolved, and that children sustain a good pattern of school attendance leading to increased levels of attainment. It is proposed that:

- 4 FTE temporary Education Support Worker posts are continued on a permanent basis

d) Support for Teachers

This fund supports staff and curriculum developments in a number of areas:

i Considerable progress has been made in developing programmes and materials to raise attainment in these areas. Attainment in 5-14 Language and Mathematics has risen each year and is rising faster than the national average. Ongoing and future work includes:

- Completion of Mathematics, Writing and Reading Programmes of Study for use in all schools.

- Support for writing through the work of the Writer in Residence (Young Authors Project) and animation projects in most deprived schools where motivation for writing is low.
- Extension of READ materials and approaches to middles and upper school.
- Support for transition from Primary to Secondary including cluster moderation projects.
- Additional staff support to promote library development in Primary Schools

ii Environmental Studies 5-14

Science and Technology is a major focus in the Environmental Studies programme particularly in Primary. It is now a national priority. Developments include:

- Funding to develop Science equipment provision. This has already had a significant impact on provision in Primary.
- Staff Tutor support to develop materials and spread good practice.
- Support for transition from Primary to Secondary School and particularly for developments in Social Sciences in secondary.

iii Scottish Qualification for Headship

In addition to costs for candidate training and support this funding supports the post of Management Development Co-ordinator and generic management training for all staff.

iv Support for Probationers

This funds in-service and support for probationer teachers and their mentors. The expansion of the probationer teacher programme means that this will be a key area of development.

e) Study Support

The national development of Study Support was led by Dundee City Council and is now well established in all secondary schools with complimentary programmes in primary schools funded through the New Opportunities Fund of the National Lottery.

All secondary schools are supported to provide additional out of school hours study support for pupils designed to develop study skills and improve attainment. Funding is devolved to schools through the City's Devolved School Management Scheme.

f) Alternatives to Exclusions

This fund supports two key strategies designed to offer appropriate learning experiences to pupils who either present significant

challenges to schools through their behaviour, and/or through disaffection or other reasons choose to stay away from school:

i The Education Department has in place a new policy and set of guidelines on the education of children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is intended that this will assist schools, through onsite behaviour support programmes, to maintain such youngsters in mainstream provision. If these attempts eventually break down it is important that the authority is able to support youngsters and schools by making alternative provision, in offsite educational establishments or in other community schemes. These funds will be used to:

- purchase the services of an external adviser to support the establishment of secondary School Referral Teams; these teams will decide appropriate strategies to support challenging youngsters and monitor their progress
- create opportunities for outdoor education, to assist schools in working with challenging pupils
- establish on a temporary basis the post of Administrative Officer to assist in the planning and administration of the Options group – the central monitoring group which takes referrals from schools of challenging youngsters and makes decisions on their future educational provision – and in the monitoring and compilation of statistical data for the Education Department, the Council and the Scottish Executive
- continue the Futures Partnership between Dundee City Council Education Department and Dundee College; the aim is to build on a successful pilot project from January to June, 2002, and deliver a highly individualised curriculum and supported learning environment to school pupils in their last year of statutory schooling
- buy up to forty part-time and full-time places at ERGO training centre to enable young persons in their last year of schooling to undertake training which will facilitate their transition into the world of work

ii The Education Committee approved a proposal in March 1998 to establish an initiative to improve attendance in schools. This has entailed a review of procedures and IT systems for the recording, monitoring and dissemination of attendance information, and encouragement to schools to improve response and chase-up rates with absentees, to improve follow-up with persistent absentees and to engage successfully with parents in supporting pupil attendance. Of particular note has been the highly successful work done in Dundee city centre and some outlying areas of the city in conjunction with Tayside Police, in challenging young persons of school age out and about during the school day. It is proposed to:

- establish on a permanent basis the post of Attendance Co-ordinator, with responsibility for all aspects of the Attendance Initiative, including liaison with schools and

- other agencies, and the co-ordination of the work of the Schools Attendance Sub-Committee
- make bulk purchase of out-of-school passes, which have proved successful in monitoring and approving requests by pupils and their families to be absent from school during the school day

g) Support for Parents

Currently a key strength of this initiative is its work with primary and nursery schools in offering a range of initiatives to promote the role of parents in supporting children's learning. There has been considerable support for the initiative from nurseries and primary schools committed to working more effectively with parents but who recognise the resource implications in terms of staff time. The capacity of the Parents Services Team to support these developments has therefore been valued highly. In addition the workers fulfil an important role as key members of the Early Years and Childcare Team by, for example, facilitating local childcare networks, signposting services to parents who have been identified as in need of more specialist support, supporting the Sure Start developments and building good relationships with schools.

All three staff involved currently in the Parents Services Initiative are now contracted until 2004. A range of factors has been considered in planning for the further development of this initiative. These include:

- Gender implications – the research which highlights the importance of effective male role models particularly in supporting the self image of boys and their attitudes to learning.
- The recognition that work with parents is resource intensive and requires effective central support.
- The important role parents play in relation to supporting children's transition from nursery to primary school settings.
- The fact that parental interest is at its most high when children are young and that effective strategies to involve parents at this stage can lead to a longer lasting involvement and interest.

h) National Grid for Learning

Dundee was one of the first authorities to network fully its schools and remains at the forefront of educational ICT. This funding is a key element in support for the ongoing development of Dundee Schools Network which links all computers to school networks, to the World Wide Web and to e-mail. Funding also pays for a support team deployed at city and school level to develop and maintain ICT networks.

i) New National Qualifications

This funding supports development for New National Qualifications. This includes staff training and curriculum development to introduce and develop courses in this area (formerly known as Higher Still). Funding is devolved to schools through the city's Devolved School Management Scheme. A Co-ordinator for New National Qualifications is funded to co-ordinate support across the city.

j) Early Intervention

This READ (Raising Early Achievement in Dundee) Project is supported from this funding. This is one of the oldest and most successful intervention initiatives in Scotland. Evidence suggests that significant gains have been made in raising attainment in literacy and numeracy for pupils in our most deprived schools. Funding supports the deployment of Nursery Nurses in the early years and a central team to provide staff training and development materials for learning and teaching.

k) Classroom Assistants

All of the city's 41 primary schools have received at least one classroom assistant and 19 schools receive two classroom assistants. All these permanent posts have been funded from the Excellence Fund and will now be funded from the additional grant-aided expenditure allocation approved under the National Priorities Action Fund.

The Council has been able to achieve the Scottish Executive's target ratio of 15 pupils to one adult by utilising this funding.

l) Reducing Class Sizes

Funding is being utilised to ensure that when primary classes are formed for the new school session there are no P1 to P3 classes with more than 30 pupils taught by a single teacher.

8.0 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

8.1 With the exception of additional teachers for reducing class sizes and classroom assistants the majority of posts attached to Excellence Funded Initiatives have been employed on a fixed-term temporary basis. This has resulted in recruitment and retention issues for the department and difficulties for staff employed for many years on extended temporary contracts. It is therefore, proposed that the undernoted key posts be established on a permanent basis.

Post	Grade	No.	Action Fund Area
Youth Worker, Quality Contact Project	AP1	2.0	Inclusion
Education Support Worker (unqualified), HSSS	AP1	4.0	Inclusion
Writer in Residence	PO1-4	0.8	Support for Teachers
Attendance Co-ordinator	PO1-4	1.0	Alternatives to Exclusion
Quality Improvement Officer (Early Intervention)	Adviser	1.0	Early Intervention

9.0 CONSULTATION

9.1 The Director of Finance, Director of Personnel and Management Services and the Director of Support Services have been consulted on the content of this report.

10.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Scottish Executive Education Department letters and Review Paper issued 5 April 2002.

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Director of Education

AHW/DD
July 2002