

# **DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Personnel and Management Services Committee - 20 October 2003

**REPORT ON:** Social Work Department - Fast Track Scheme for Social Work Graduates

**REPORT BY:** Director of Social Work and Assistant Chief Executive (Management)

**REPORT NO:** 637-2003

## **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 This report seeks Committee approval for the establishment of four fixed term Trainee Social Worker posts.

## **2 RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee approves the establishment of 4 posts of Trainee Social Worker, graded AP3, £17,340 - £19,029, for a period of 15 months.

## **3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 The Scottish Executive has agreed to fully fund the Fast Track placement training at the University of Dundee and contribute to the costs Dundee City Council will incur through employing 4 trainee Social Workers over the 15 month period. This is outlined in the attached financial appendix (Appendix 1). The trainees will be matched into current vacant posts and the net cost to Dundee City Council will, therefore, be funded through slippage in the Social Work Department's Revenue Budget 2003/04 and 2004/05.

## **4 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 None.

## **5 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 None.

## **6 BACKGROUND**

- 6.1 Serious issues exist for many local authorities about recruitment and retention of social workers. At national level, demand for qualified social workers currently exceeds supply. As a result, higher levels of social worker vacancies are causing difficulties in meeting priority needs of children and families in particular.

- 6.2 Part of the Scottish Executive's Action Plan to boost recruitment and retention of social workers includes an initiative called the Fast Track Scheme. The new scheme's purpose is to get people trained and qualified quicker in order to fill vacancies. The scheme followed an extensive advertising campaign earlier this year to improve awareness of opportunities for careers and jobs in social work.
- 6.3 The Fast Track Scheme involved the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) and the new Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education. Recent graduates were invited to apply for the new scheme. Over 1,000 applications were received for 120 places. COSLA and the Institute carried out extensive selection and interviews allowing local authorities and universities to select the best candidates for the new scheme.
- 6.4 The Council's Social Work Department has been successful in attracting funding for four places, which is well in excess of the initial expectation to fund training costs for one place. Funding has been agreed with the Scottish Executive for four places at the University of Dundee for the new course.
- 6.5 In partnership with the University of Dundee, the Social Work Department is required to employ these new graduates as Trainee Social Workers and provide practical placements, support and work experience during their training. On completion of the social work qualification the trainees will become permanent social workers. Within fifteen months they will be placed in vacancies, primarily in care and assessment teams in children's services where the highest level of vacancies are anticipated.

## **7 CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Depute Chief Executive (Finance) and the appropriate trade unions have been consulted on the content of this report.

## **8 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.

A. Baird  
Director of Social Work

10 October 2003

J.C. Petrie  
Assistant Chief Executive (Management)

10 October 2003

**FAST TRACK SCHEME FOR SOCIAL WORK GRADUATES**

| <b>Financial Implications</b>                | <b>Point</b> | <b>Financial<br/>Year 2003/04<br/>£</b> | <b>Financial Year<br/>2004/05<br/>£</b> |
|--|--------------|---|---|
| 4.0 FTE Trainee Social Worker Posts          | SCP23        | 44,000                                  | 63,100                                  |
| Dundee University Training Costs ( 4 Places) |              | 36,000                                  |   |
| Travel / Placement Costs                     |              | 500                                     | 750                                     |
| Total Expenditure                            |              | <u>80,500</u>                           | <u>63,850</u>                           |
| Scottish Executive Funding                   |              | (40,000)                                | (40,000)                                |
| Balance to be Funded from Social Work Budget |              | <u>40,500</u>                           | <u>23,850</u>                           |