

**REPORT TO: DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL EDUCATION COMMITTEE
DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE**

REPORT ON: PROPOSALS FOR SURE START STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

**JOINT REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK**

REPORT NO: 645-2000

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This Report seeks approval for proposals for taking forward Sure Start Dundee to enhance and extend support and provision for children aged 0-3 and their families.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Education and Social Work Committees:

2.1 approve the strategy outlined in relation to Sure Start in Dundee

2.2 approve the proposals for expenditure of Sure Start Funding in the current financial year and that proposed for the year 2001- 2002

2.3 remit the Directors of Education and Social Work to submit information about the strategy for Sure Start Dundee to the Scottish Executive Education Department

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The financial implications of this Report will be met entirely from Scottish Executive Sure Start Funding of £508,000 in 2000- 2001. Funding for the year 2001-2002 has not, as yet, been allocated to individual authorities. A full outline of committed expenditure for the year 2000- 2001 and the indicative expenditure for 2001- 2002 is detailed in Appendix 3 of this Report.

4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Delivery of the Sure Start Strategy will support 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 A key aspect of the Sure Start Strategy is to improve access by a wider range of children and their families to services and provision in local areas.

6.0 BACKGROUND

- 6.1 Sure Start is a national initiative designed to improve services for children in the first years of life and to support their families. Given a key emphasis is on partnership and collaboration across all sectors, progress on the Sure Start Initiative is co-ordinated through the Dundee Early Years and Childcare Partnership. The Sure Start outline targets are also reported within and articulate with Dundee's Children's Services Plan and also in the Early Years and Childcare Plan.
- 6.2 The Sure Start Initiative is funded by the Scottish Executive Education Department. Funding is available in the current year and for the year 2001- 2002.

7.0 CURRENT SITUATION

- 7.1 Demand for services for young children is increasing. As more women return to the labour market shortly after childbirth, there is an ongoing demand for affordable childcare services. In addition, the early years of childhood are demanding for parents. Parenting can become stressed and highly challenging where parents themselves have not experienced a settled and supportive childhood, and where there are considerable social, health and economic difficulties.
- 7.2 Currently childcare services for babies and toddlers are provided by private day nurseries, childminders and by relatives. The first two options are relatively expensive and are therefore not accessible to many parents in low-income groups. Child and Family Centres make limited provision to younger children but usually only when there are other needs identified.
- 7.3 This situation is compounded by the high cost of good quality childcare. Babies, in particular require a high level of adult support and ratios of adults to children are therefore very high. Good quality childcare cannot therefore be delivered cheaply and parents may pay more for care for their babies and toddlers than they will once the children reach the age of three or four.
- 7.4 Effective parenting is a very diverse concept; there is no widely agreed formula for success. However the young child has clear needs in terms of opportunities to play and learn, to communicate with others, to have the benefit of a wholesome diet, to feel supported and cared for, to be treated appropriately if ill or upset and to be warm, comfortable and protected from harm. Not all children experience all of these and indeed some children may reach the age of three or four with many of these missing or only available erratically. Indeed, there is also good evidence that a significant number of children reach nursery school age without the benefits of a nurturing and stimulating early childhood experience
- 7.5 Guidance contained within a letter (June 2000) to Local Authorities from the Scottish Executive Education Department entitled "Sure Start Scotland: Revised Guidance and Request for Updated Information", emphasised the need for outputs in relation to the following;
- Centre based provision which includes childcare and broader family support activities
 - Free standing parent support groups or programmes
 - Outreach/ home visiting programmes
 - Mobile resources
- 7.6 Dundee's Sure Start Strategy reflects this Guidance. A key element of the strategy is to create multi- functional early years provision which can meet the care, education, health and social needs of children whilst also providing better support for parents and families. Three such facilities are now established in Beechwood/ Foggyley, Kirkton and Ardler where Education pre school services and Social Work child and family

services have been combined within single facilities. Such provision offers flexibility and capacity to meet a much wider range of needs within local areas. The services are inclusive, cost effective, combine a range of professional expertise and skill and cater for the needs of children within the context of their families.

7.7 The trend towards integration of early years services is now recognised to have very important implications for ongoing service development. A first principle is that more children should be able to access a range of services under one roof. In particular where families have wide ranging needs, providing services within multi purpose facilities reduces stigma and 'normalises' family support and intervention.

7.8 Sure Start increased the momentum for early years service development. Planning for Sure Start has afforded an important opportunity to think again about how best to support very young children and how to enhance their lives and experiences through appropriate and sensitive interventions, which also reflect the critical role that parents play.

8.0 PROPOSAL

8.1 The Sure Start Dundee Strategy is comprehensive and wide-ranging. It has been designed to meet a challenging agenda. The key strategies are illustrated in Appendix 2 and can be summarised under the following four key areas

- Expansion of direct service provision to meet a range of need and demand
- Enhanced support for early learning and development
- Services to support families, including parent education and networking, respite and sitter services, home based outreach services
- Quality improvement, staff development and in service training

8.2 Full details of the Sure Start Dundee Strategy are outlined in Appendix 1 of this Report.

8.3 As this initiative is new and will inevitably have implications for future service delivery, it will be carefully evaluated. Clear output and outcome targets for children and families have been set and progress towards these will be monitored.

9.0 CONSULTATION

9.1 This Report has been the subject of consultation with the Director of Support Services and the Director of Finance.

10.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

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 the above Report.

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Director of Education

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Date

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Director of Social Work

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Date

SURE START DUNDEE: STRATEGY OVERVIEW**1.0 Background**

1.1 In Dundee the Sure Start initiative has been seen as an integral element in Early Years, Childcare and Family Support Strategic Development. Sure Start developments have therefore been linked into the following key strategies:

- Early intervention
- Parents services initiative
- Community learning strategy
- Development of integrated early years, childcare and family support facilities
- Development of core quality improvement and development mechanisms for all early years and childcare services
- Implementation of Early Years and Childcare Training and Staff Development Strategy

1.2 Several funding sources contribute to these initiatives and a key challenge in Sure Start planning has been to develop coherent strategic approaches which include initiatives funded separately through Excellence Funding, Childcare Infrastructure and New Projects, Pre School Development Grant and Sure Start Grants.

1.3 Several locally identified issues have also influenced the planning and delivery of Sure Start:

- the existing high levels of nursery school and child and family centre provision within the City
- the need and demand for affordable childcare services for younger children
- the need for improved collaboration between Council Departments and Health agencies
- the demand for services for children of student parents (Dundee has a high level of students relative to its total population)
- the need to extend provision of services for children with special educational needs and with and affected by disabilities
- the desire to build on the success of the READ (Raising Early Achievement in Dundee) Project by enhancing and enriching the learning experiences of children in the first years of life

1.4 The key elements of Dundee's Sure Start Initiative can therefore be summarised under the following four key areas:

- Expansion of direct service provision to meet a range of identified need and demand
- Enhanced support for early learning and development
- Services to support families, including parent education and networking, respite and sitter services, home based outreach services
- Quality improvement, staff development and in service training

2.0 KEY STRATEGIES: OVERVIEW

2.1 Development of Integrated Early Years, Childcare and Family Support Centres

2.2 The Sure Start Strategy has evolved over time and reflects a broad agenda. A key initiative has been the development of integrated early years, childcare and family support centres, combining the work of social work child and family centres with education nursery schools and classes. Work undertaken over the course of 1998 to 2000 to establish the Beechwood/ Foggyley Centre was pivotal to strategic and operational development. Many complex issues have been resolved, particularly in relation to management structures and staffing. Dundee now has three such centres, Beechwood/ Foggyley, Ardler and Kirkton and work is ongoing to plan appropriate provision in Charleston and Mid Craigie in the current year, with two further areas being targeted in 2001- 2002.

2.3 These integrated facilities reflect the characteristics of New Community Schools and the Kirkton and Ardler Centres are included as a key element of Dundee's second New Community School initiative.

2.4 An important principle to emerge from these developments is the need to build services, which reflect local need and demand. This has meant that each new centre has unique characteristics. Core service inputs are however defined and will include:

- Mainstream pre school education for three and four year olds
- Early intervention (compensatory) programmes for two, three and four year olds identified as vulnerable or in need
- Enhanced provision for children with special educational needs
- Sessional care for young children in need and programmes for vulnerable families with babies and toddlers (often in response to Children's Hearings and Child Protection Orders) in combination with assessment and family support programmes
- Respite care for vulnerable 0-2 year olds - opening every day and running alongside the above.
- Family Contact for children looked after and accommodated by the Local Authority - sessions arranged according to need and availability of staffing resources
- Extended hours and out of school care services
- Community and Outreach Services- links with other childcare and early years providers, playgroups and childminders. Information and support services, including health provision and promotion
- Parent education, support and guidance - provision of parent programmes and facilitation of networks and self help groups

2.5 The balance and levels of service provision are determined within each Centre to meet local demand and need.

2.6 The new integrated facilities are now focal points within local communities for families with children. Development Plans for each new Centre will be published by December 2000 to outline priorities for development, service output targets and to take forward planned developments to extend the range of services available.

2.7 Sure Start Early Intervention Strategy

- 2.8 Significant numbers of children in Dundee begin their pre school experience without the benefits of an enriching and nurturing early childhood experience. The reasons for this are already well documented in research but are also complex and challenging to address. Poverty, ill health, social isolation, poor learning skills are all factors which can add to family stress. Dundee also has high levels of lone parent families and very young mothers. For many children therefore the early years of life are challenged by ill health, poor nutrition, limited experience of the world around them and a lack of opportunity to learn how to build positive relationships and communicate with others. This may mean that very young children are already under confident, have low self esteem, are unable to settle to an activity, participate in a group, communicate their ideas or feelings or behave in an appropriate way.
- 2.9 Dundee has high levels of provision designed to meet the needs of the most vulnerable children. There is a unique network of Child and Family Centres, which provide a range of support for children in need and their families as defined by the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. In addition more than 90% of children have pre school education experience before starting school. The Sure Start Early Intervention initiative therefore strengthens and enhances educational opportunities for children aged 2-4 in order to identify and address difficulties early and ideally before children start primary school. In addition work to provide for the care, educational, social and emotional needs of children and their families within single facilities increases the possibility of any intervention's success because it is much more likely to be delivered in a coherent way. This kind of intervention has also been shown to have lasting effects on outcomes in later life.
- 2.10 Additional teaching and nursery nurse staff will be deployed within three centres this year and within a further three over the subsequent two years. These staff will provide detailed programme planning and delivery to address specific needs and will work alongside parallel parent support programmes, which will seek to address the needs of parents and to promote their involvement.
- 2.11 In addition a staff development package will be delivered in October 2000 to support staff in extending younger children's learning and to address language, social skills and behaviour development. This will be delivered in partnership with Dundee Educational Psychology Department, Health professionals and others as appropriate.

2.12 Expansion of Support for Children with Special Educational Needs/ Disability

Addressing the needs of children with special educational needs at the earliest point in their lives is a key challenge. Dundee currently has one specialist provision for pre school children and demand for places exceeds supply. In addition an increasing number of children with global developmental delay require effective assessment and intervention in order to fully exploit the pre school experience.

- 2.13 A range of initiatives has therefore been implemented to enhance support for identified children. These include: additional resourcing of designated nurseries to support wider accessibility, expansion of the Pre School Home Visiting Service which provides home and community based support to families with children aged 0-5, prioritising children with special educational needs and provision of specialist educational support within Child and Family Centres. Enhanced support for children with special educational needs has been made available in Foggyley/ Beechwood and in three Child and Family Centres in the current year. Next year facilities will be extended in Kirkton, Charleston and Mid Craigie.
- 2.14 In addition a new policy framework on Provision for Children aged 0-5 with Special Educational Needs is due for publication in January 2001. This will detail extended provision, support for families, multi- agency identification and assessment protocols, and plans to support a wider integration of children within mainstream settings. Following publication of the policy a widespread staff development programme will be delivered to support its implementation.

2.15 Outreach Services

Two outreach workers have been deployed to develop provision in areas identified as having service shortfalls. In the current year this will provide enhanced provision in Charleston, Hilltown and St Mary's areas of Dundee. Further outreach services will be developed in subsequent years to meet identified need.

2.16 Family Learning Networks

- 2.17 Family Learning Networks involve a range of locally based professionals from health, education and social work in providing opportunities to involve parents in their children's learning, to promote effective home: school links and to identify and address the learning needs of parents themselves.

During 1999- 2000 family learning initiatives were developed in Kirkton and Mid Craigie. A city wide network is currently being established with a further three networks this year and three more planned for next year.

- 2.18 A range of parent and family support services are provided by Dundee's Child and Family Centres in accordance with identified individual and community needs.
- 2.19 Dundee has piloted a successful parent support programme, PALS, Parents Altogether Lending Support, which was established in Kirkton in 1998. The Excellence Funding to Support the Role of Parents has extended the PALS initiative into the Parents Services Initiative, which aims, to co- ordinate and develop strategies involving parents of children under 8. This will establish city wide access to PALS groups. At the time of writing PALS is operational every day in various parts of the City.
- 2.20 In addition the Parents Services Initiative supports other strategies by strengthening services directly focused on parents. Therefore this initiative is currently active within the three new integrated facilities and in Sure Start early intervention planning.
- 2.21 Funding has also been provided to extend the family support services provided by Home Start in Dundee.

2.22 Childcare for babies and toddlers

- 2.23 There is a high level of demand for daycare services for babies and toddlers. Currently this service is provided by private day nurseries and childminders and is inaccessible to families in low income groups. Two facilities are currently under development, which will create subsidised places for children aged 0-2. Attached to these will be linked childminding services, which will provide home based care for babies at an affordable rate and which will be quality assured by the Council.
- 2.24 In addition the Dundee Sitter Service has benefited from grants in 1999- 2000 and in 2000-2001 which will enable them to provide increased provision. This service offers parents flexible and affordable home based childcare. This is especially invaluable for families with several children and those requiring care outwith normal working hours, for example in the early morning or evening.

2.25 Support for Student Parents

- 2.26 Dundee has a high level of students within its population. Childcare services are often required to enable parents to embark on or sustain a course of study. Until recently provision designed specifically to meet the needs of students has been very limited. However the new Childcare infrastructure money will be used to develop a package of support to extend affordable options for student parents.
- 2.27 The Education Department is currently working with Abertay and Dundee Universities to develop extended provision. A new childcare facility is planned at Abertay, which will be supported by new childcare infrastructure funding. In addition Sure Start funding will support the development of provision for babies and toddlers within this facility.
- 2.28 Funding will also support the subsidy of places within Council facilities such as extended hours provision and full time places in nursery schools and classes.

2.29 Links with Health

- 2.30 There is a commitment to including health professionals in initiatives to meet Sure Start objectives. It is clearly recognised that the promotion of health and well being is an important element within a comprehensive early years strategy. In 1999 Dundee was part of a bid for a Health Demonstration Project under the Starting Well initiative. Although this bid was unsuccessful the work done to bring forward proposals was important in bringing together a range of perspectives and in creating a way forward for collaborative work.
- 2.31 The Starting Well initiatives have been carried forward within Dundee's second New Community School Initiative bid and will be developed within the context of the Ardler and Kirkton Integrated Early Years Centres. It is also the intention to deploy health input using Sure Start monies within all of the integrated facilities. However this will be drawn from budget available in 2001- 2002 when the new centres are more developed and in a stronger position to deliver a wider range of health focused initiatives. In addition health services in Dundee are undergoing a major upheaval and change process currently in the context of the budget crisis facing Tayside Health Board.
- 2.32 The platform for improved collaboration exists. There is shared commitment, links with the Dundee Local Healthcare Co-operative through their involvement in Dundee's Childcare Partnership and the involvement of health in the New Community Schools agenda. In addition the three Childcare Networks established at local level all have health representation. Formalising collaborative ventures through Sure Start funding next year will bring a considerable amount of planning and discussion to fruition.

2.33 Quality Improvement Framework

- 2.34 An over-riding concern is to ensure that service expansion is set firmly within a context of service improvement and quality development. It is of fundamental importance that there can be clear demonstration of an improved service provision. Sure Start initiatives will be seen as successful in Dundee if a range of improvements can be evidenced including:

- ❑ Better range of affordable and flexible services to meet a wider range of need
- ❑ Fewer referrals to Dundee Educational Psychology, Social Work, Child and Family Psychiatry. Fewer children on Child Protection Register or made subject of statutory supervision requirements
- ❑ Increased numbers of children starting pre school education with needs clearly identified and effective strategies in place to address them
- ❑ Improved quality group care facilities for younger children, more appropriate or babies and toddlers within group settings etc
- ❑ Wider range of services for children with special educational needs/ disabilities within mainstream setting
- ❑ Parents more involved in strategies to support their children and reporting higher levels of satisfaction with services

- ❑ Improved access to staff development programmes focused on the needs of younger children and their families
- ❑ Measurable improvements in health and well being- tooth decay, nutrition, breast feeding, pre and post natal attendance etc

2.35 Performance Indicators for the above are currently under development. Establishing effective measures is challenging and involves a wide range of parental and professional input. A new multi professional Sure Start Strategy and Implementation Group will address this as a first task with the intention to publish a quality framework before the end of March 2001.

3.0 KEY EMERGING ISSUES

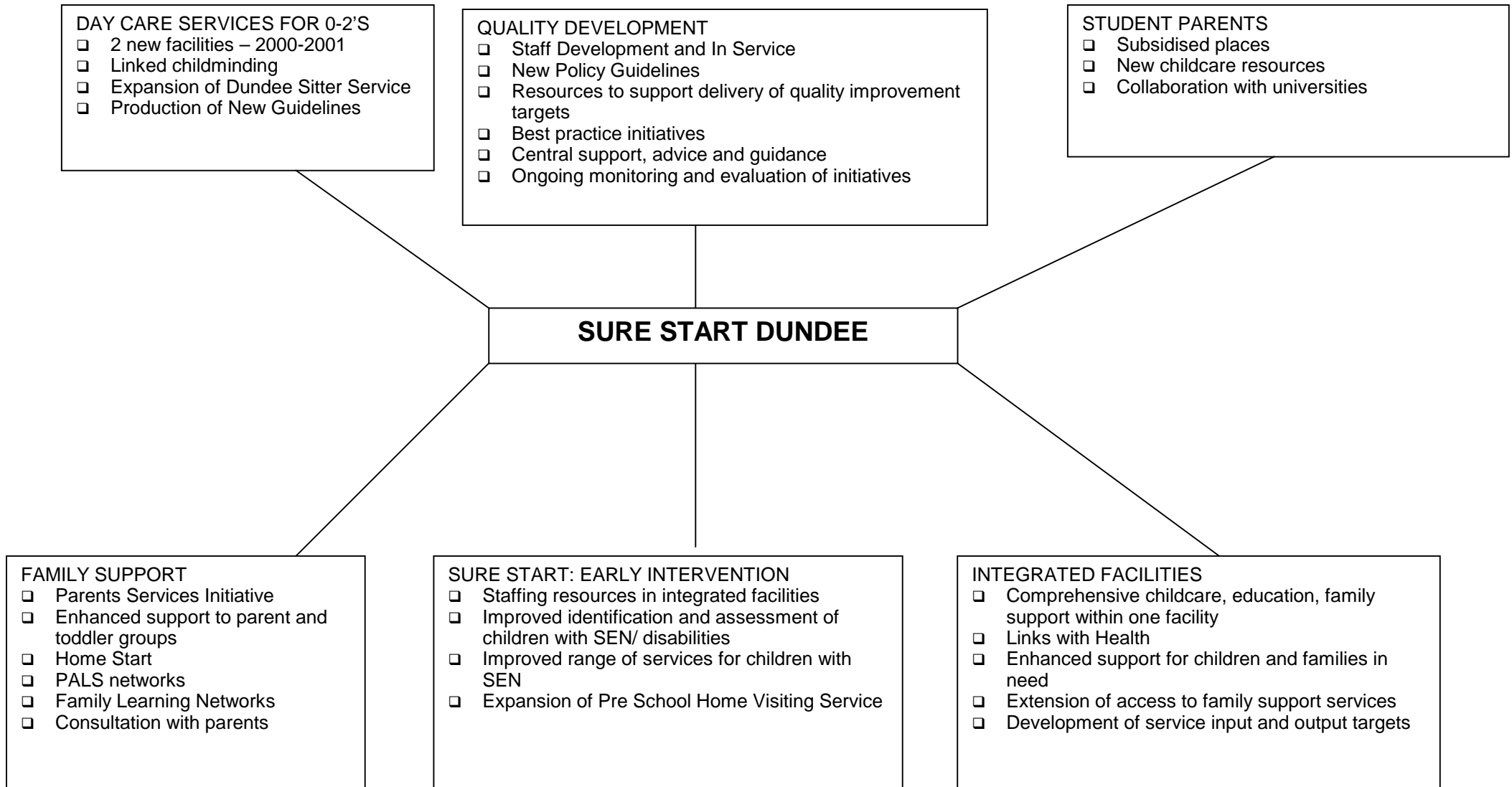
3.1 Dundee in common with the other urban areas of Scotland has significant challenges in relation to supporting children and families. A considerable amount of work was underway before the national Sure Start initiative was launched. However significant numbers of children continue to begin their primary school education with a wide range of issues which impact on their ability to succeed. The key challenge therefore is to use the Sure Start opportunity to build on existing provision, support improved partnership and collaboration and to develop new initiatives and expanded services to strengthen the framework of support available.

3.2 A number of strategies are in place using funding from a range of sources. There is commitment to establishing greater coherence and co-ordination and this can be challenged by attempts to identify the separate strategic and funding strands. Linked to this however is the need to clearly identify what strategies are working and which have the greatest potential impact. This is particularly relevant in a context like Dundee's where there are relatively high levels of provision and services and also high levels of need. Evaluating the value of these services and how they are strengthened by Sure Start is therefore a prime consideration.

3.3 Services for very young children are relatively thin on the ground. Certainly provision of childcare services has been limited to those who can afford to pay the market rate. Sure Start funding will clearly not pay for a city wide network of affordable childcare services, yet this is a key demand and arguably a significant need in relation to inclusion, equality of access, economic regeneration and support for families. It is therefore important that expectations about expansion are realistic. Although there is recognition that the balance of provision may require to change and that there does require to be an expansion of direct daycare provision for babies and toddlers, in Dundee this will most likely be done by re- engineering or rationalising current provision rather than creating new provision.

3.4 Linking with Health provision is of critical importance in the development of a coherent and comprehensive framework of support. However achieving joint approaches is not unchallenging. In Dundee, considerable understandings have been reached and there is undoubtedly a platform from which to develop partnership approaches. However budgets are tight and the Tayside Health authority is in the midst of a budget crisis and major change process. The addition of health focused services within the new integrated early years facilities will be very important. The intention is to use Sure Start funding to deploy health specialists during the year 2001- 2002 to work across the new facilities to promote health and well being. By that time the new facilities will be well established and will have more developed information about need and about how health related input can enhance the provision.

SURE START DUNDEE: SUMMARY OF STRATEGY (APPENDIX 2)



APPENDIX 3

PROJECT	BASE POSITION	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	END OUTPUT TARGET	BUDGET		
						99/00	00/01	01/02
						Committed Budget	Committed Budget	Indicative Committed budget
Early years, childcare and family support. Integrated facilities.	1998 - One facility Whitfield Early Years	One facility Kirkton	Two facilities Foggyley, Ardler plus Charleston, Mid Craigie (Jan 2001)	Two facilities	8 integrated facilities offering comprehensive range of provision, including daycare for 0-2s, support for childminders, family support services, service for children and families in need.		138,000	138,000
Family Learning Network	1998 - none	Two established in Kirkton and Mid Craigie	Four further Whitfield and Fintry + two more TBA	Four further Charleston Ardler, Hilltown and Douglas	10 networks established involving 8-15 families each.	10,000	3,000	3,000
Sure Start Early Intervention	Services provided at Frances Wright Pre School Centre		Three projects Kirkton, Ardler and Foggyley	Two projects	Enhanced intensive provision for up to 20 children aged 2-4 in five locations		41,000	82,000
Pre School Home Visiting Service	1 full time teachers	2 FTE teachers	4 FTE teachers (total of Four FTE teachers in place)		Increased support for children with SEN in private and voluntary sectors, child and family centres and at home. Each visitor carries a case load of approximately 30 families - therefore potential to increase support to 60 additional families.		26,000	52,000
SEN Provision	30 places at Frances Wright Pre School Centre		Additional 8 resourced SEN places at Foggyley. Additional 8 part time places at FWPSC	5 resourced SEN places at Mid Craigie 5 resourced SEN places in Ardler 5 resourced SEN places in Charleston	Additional 23 resourced places for pre school children with SEN Enhanced support provision across all provision including educational input in Child and Family Centres		10,000	30,000
Outreach Services			1 project established	1 further project	Target to be established following audit of baseline in relevant local areas.		75,000	75,000
Childcare for Babies and Toddlers	Private sector provision and childminding charged at full economic rate limited no charge provision for children in need at Child and Family Centres		2 x 12 places established in Charleston & Mid Craigie and linked childminding	2 x 12 places established in linked childminding	24 subsidised places for 0-2 year olds. Linked childminding for up to 25, 0-2 year olds (providing subsidised childminding) Enhanced support for parent & toddler groups.		60,000 8,000	80,000 8,000

PROJECT	BASE POSITION	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	END OUTPUT TARGET	BUDGET		
						99/00	00/01	01/02
						Committed Budget	Committed Budget	Indicative Committed budget
Student Parents	Subsidies available through Universities and colleges		1 new provision at Abertay. Subsidised places in nursery provision, out of school clubs etc. Discussions with Dundee University begun.	To be further defined following continued discussions	Target to be established by October 2000 for Level of provision in Abertay. Subsidy mechanism under development.		20,000*	20,000*
Links with Health	No direct provision of health services to pre school facilities			2 Health Workers to be appointed to work across new integrated facilities				40,000
Quality Improvement	Tayside Regional Council Policy for 3 - 8	Curriculum Framework implementation Appointment of Quality Co-ordinator Resourcing for younger children	Child at the Centre. Establish new Policy Framework	Ongoing	Comprehensive Quality Framework in use across all provision Quality Provision for children 0-5 and their families (Jan 2001) Launch of Training Strategy	60,000 15,000	10,000 10,000	15,000 5,000
Dundee Sitter Service					Year on year increase in family support Funding to support enhancement of provision	36,000 15,000	50,000 15,000	50,000 20,000
Home Start								
Infrastructure		Appointment of Family Support Co-ordinator (Key remit 0-3s) and Clerical Support			Services for 0-3s and their families well co-ordinated, widely accessible and evaluated.	51,000	42,000	45,000
TOTALS						187,000	508,000	663,000
AVAILABLE						340,000	508,000	N/A
DIFFERENCE						153,000	0	

1 Although indicative budgets for 2001-2002 may exceed level of Sure Start funding, funding may be directed from other Pre School/Childcare funding as necessary.

2 The Parents Services Initiative is not shown here because it is funded from the Excellence Fund. However, this initiative is a key element of the Sure Start Strategy.

* This is the Sure Start element of funding. A further £30,000 will be allocated from New Infrastructure funding.

