

REPORT TO: DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 21st October 2002

REPORT ON: REVIEW OF SERVICE DELIVERY AT WHITFIELD COMMUNITY EARLY YEARS CENTRE

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

REPORT NO: 747-2002

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This Report seeks approval to conduct a review of service delivery at Whitfield Community Early Years Centre

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Education Committee note and approve the contents of this Report and:

2.2 approve proposals to conduct a review of services at Whitfield Early Years Centre

2.3 approve proposals to investigate the feasibility of updating admission and charging policies

2.4 remit the Director of Education to conduct a consultation exercise with staff and with service users in order to bring forward proposals for future development of this service to the Education Committee in December 2002

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no additional financial costs associated with this proposal.

4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 This proposal will result in increased access to opportunities and the development of skills and knowledge needed to enable everyone to play a full part in society

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This proposal will seek to ensure that services provided by Whitfield Community Early Years Service continue to be available to support families in low income groups to access high quality childcare services.

6.0 BACKGROUND

6.1 Whitfield Community Early Years Centre started in 1991 as a voluntary project managed by the Aberlour Childcare Trust. It was set up to support parents in low income groups to access affordable high quality childcare services. Services were accessible to families living in the Whitfield area of the city.

6.2 In 1998 the Education Committee gave approval for the project to be subsumed as part of the Education Department's early years provision. This was included as part of a report to Committee about New Deal for Schools. Report No 192/1998 refers. The existing staff were transferred to the Education Department and the service has

continued to operate very successfully. The service provided is unique in that it caters for the whole family group. Integrated childcare and pre-school education services are offered to children from 0-5 and older siblings can return to the Centre for services out of school hours.

7.0 PROPOSAL

7.1 There has recently been a significant expansion of childcare services in order to support parents to take up employment or training. All nursery schools in the City provide extended childcare services and increasing numbers of parents are accessing all day and all year round provision in order to take up employment or training opportunities. Many parents are able to claim a Working Families Tax Credit which offsets the cost of childcare services. However for many parents childcare services remain unaffordable and Whitfield Community Early Years Centre has continued to offer a very low cost service. This is, however, at a considerable cost to the Education Department which requires to ensure that all pre-school services offer value for money. This Report therefore proposes a full scale review of services provided at Whitfield in order to ensure that its potential is fully explored and that the services provided represent value for money. The new Children's Tax Credit available from April 2003 will mean that a greater number of families will qualify for financial support to meet their childcare costs.

7.2 The review of delivery of services at this Centre will aim to retain the highly successful and unique characteristics of the Centre whilst bringing the services into line with those provided by other comparable facilities within the local authority. In recent years the Centre has worked very effectively to support young children with special educational needs and their families. Children respond well to the skilled and close adult support. Therefore a key area of potential is to consider how the Centre could play a greater role in providing services to young children with special educational needs.

7.3 The review will include the formulation of a revised Admissions and Charging Policy and will also analyse the current needs of parents to ensure that they are taken account of in the range of services delivered by the Centre. An important aspect of the review will be to consult with staff and with parents to ensure that their views can be taken account of.

8.0 CONSULTATION

8.1 This Report has been the subject of consultation with the Directors of Social Work, Finance and Support Services

9.0 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.

ANNE WILSON
Director of Education

3 October 2002

