

**REPORT TO: ENVIRONMENTAL AND CONSUMER PROTECTION COMMITTEE
16 DECEMBER 2002**

REPORT ON: TAYSIDE FURNITURE PROJECT

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

REPORT NO: 901-2002

1. PURPOSE

To recommend financial and practical assistance to Tayside Furniture Project.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that members agree to:

- 1) contribute £10,000 towards the staffing and running costs of Tayside Furniture Project from now until the end of this financial year, on condition that the project maintains its existing service in Dundee throughout this period.
- 2) meet the cost (estimated at £2,500) of preparing a professional business plan in order to assess the funding required to secure the long term viability of the project.
- 3) authorise the Director of Environmental and Consumer Protection to nominate a representative to attend the board meetings of the project as an observer
- 4) note that officers will continue to provide the project with advice on applications for additional funding, and will provide information and assistance in the development of the project's business plan.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The total cost of the recommendations in this report is estimated at £12,500. The Director of Finance advises that this can be met from the Environmental and Consumer Protection Department's budget.

4. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

5. DUNDEE 21 IMPLICATIONS

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".

6. ANTI POVERTY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

The project provides practical assistance to people in poverty.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1 Tayside Furniture Project provides a valuable service by collecting unwanted furniture and appliances, checking and repairing these as necessary, and redistributing the items to low income households, who are referred by housing officers, social workers, health visitors, advice agencies and other voluntary groups. This often helps people to take up and sustain council tenancies. The project also provides training opportunities and work experience for staff, volunteers and New Deal trainees.

- 7.2 The project receives funding from a variety of sources and has the potential to secure significant resources in future as part of the National Waste Strategy. However it currently requires assistance to maintain its operation for the remainder of this financial year until long term funding can be secured.
- 7.3 No other projects provide this service and its closure would leave a significant gap, both in terms of helping low income households and in protecting the environment by the reuse of unwanted goods which would otherwise be dumped. It is therefore recommended that short-term assistance is provided both to maintain the project's service in Dundee for the rest of this financial year and to allow the project to produce a business plan which will assess the funding required to secure the long-term viability of the project. The project estimates that £10,000 is required to maintain its operation in Dundee until 31 March 2003, and it is estimated that the cost of preparing a professional business plan would be £2,500.
- 7.4 A number of Council officers have provided assistance to the project in developing bids for additional funding. It is recommended that this support continue, and that, in addition, the Director of Environmental and Consumer Protection should be authorised nominate a representative to attend the project's board meetings as an observer. Further, all relevant council departments will be encouraged to provide information and assistance as part of the process of developing a business plan for the future funding of the project.

8. **CONSULTATION**

The Chief Executive and the Directors of Support Services, Finance, Housing, Neighbourhood Resources and Development, Economic Development, Social Work and Corporate Planning have been consulted on this report.

DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND CONSUMER PROTECTION 6 DECEMBER 2002