

## **DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO: SOCIAL WORK AND HEALTH COMMITTEE – 13 AUGUST 2007**

**REPORT ON: PROPOSAL FOR A BEST VALUE REVIEW OF THE USE OF RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS AND OTHER RESIDENTIAL PLACEMENTS OUTWITH THE COUNCIL**

**REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK**

**REPORT NO: 364 - 2007**

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek Committee's approval to conduct a Best Value Review on the use of residential school placements and other residential placements outwith the Council, with a view to ensuring optimum outcomes for young people and effective use of available resources.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Social Work and Health Committee approve this proposal as outlined below.

### **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report

### **4.0 SUSTAINABILITY POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The proposals in this paper aim to achieve sustainable outcomes for children and young people within a system of sustainable financial planning and resource allocation.

### **5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The proposed Best Value Review aims to ensure that services to children are appropriate, proportionate and timely in relation to levels of need, taking account of particular needs in relation to age, gender, disability, culture and ethnicity.

### **6.0 MAIN TEXT**

6.1 The numbers of Dundee children and young people placed in residential schools outwith the council area, has remained relatively constant from 2001 to 2006 (approximately 15-20 young people).

6.2 The overall percentage of Dundee children placed in all types of residential accommodation has also remained constant at 10% of the whole accommodated Dundee population, compared to a national figure of 13%.

- 6.3 This clearly demonstrates Dundee's success in maintaining children and young people in various community settings within Dundee, thereby promoting continuity for young people within their homes, schools and communities.
- 6.4 However, despite the numbers of children on these placements remaining relatively constant, the costs of external residential provision has continued to rise inexorably from £2.83m in 2003/04 to £4.47m in 2006/07. This is as a result in the increasing costs of placements charged to the local authority by external providers, but may also be related to lengths of stay in placement, the growth in the range of types of placements offered and whether or not additional costs are incurred for education and educational support.
- 6.5 It is therefore proposed that a Best Value review would be structured around the following factors:
- Establishing the current breakdown by numbers of children, placement type, lengths of stay and cost
  - Examining patterns and trends to inform a model of financial planning and future projections
  - Undertaking a sample case file audit and analysis of outcomes for children by placement type
  - Examining internal systems and processes for the scrutiny, decision making and prioritising of referrals for external residential placements and how these articulate with the decision making of the Children's Hearing system
  - Establishing a contractual framework and system for quality assuring the provision of external providers, incorporating the activity of the Care Commission
  - Establishing a robust system for identifying the optimum point at which children, once placed externally, could successfully be returned to Dundee and what services and resources may be required to achieve this
  - Benchmarking outcomes, systems and processes with comparator authorities
  - Bringing forward recommendations for improvements in outcomes, systems and processes as well as consideration of alternative local provision
- 6.6 It is proposed that the Best Value review team should be chaired by the Chief Executive, should involve elected members, and that the core membership should also include Finance, Corporate Planning, Social Work, Education, Health, Police and the Children's Panel as the key local services. In addition, and in order to ensure appropriate challenge to any underlying assumptions about residential school provision, a representative from an external provider should be included in the core membership. Other agencies which could be co-opted into the team as necessary include SCRA, Children's Rights Officer, the Care Commission and a voluntary partner such as Aberlour, who have expressed an interest in developing alternative specialised local residential provision. It would also be important to consider the involvement of a young person or young people and their parents in the process."

## **7.0 CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Finance) and the Depute Chief Executive (Support Services) have been consulted in the preparation of this report.
- 7.2 Members of the Residential Resource Monitoring Group (RRMG) comprising representatives from Social Work and Education have been consulted and further consultation will take place with the agencies to be represented on the Best Value Review Team.

## **8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Best Value Review Guidance - Corporate Planning.

Alan G Baird  
Director of Social Work

Date: 03 August 2007

## BEST VALUE REVIEW PROGRAMME

## TERMS OF REFERENCE PAPER

<b>REVIEW TOPIC</b>	Use of Residential Schools and other Residential Placements Outwith the Council
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	Alex Stephen

<b>1.</b>	<b>Scope of the Review</b>
	To examine the use of residential school placements and other residential placements outwith the Council, with a view to ensuring optimum outcomes for young people and the effective use of available resources, given the continued increase in the cost of external residential provision.

<b>2</b>	<b>Objectives</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish the current situation regarding the numbers of children in residential placements, placement type, lengths of stay and cost</li> <li>• Examine patterns and trends to inform a model of financial planning and future projections</li> <li>• Undertake a sample case - file audit and analysis of outcomes for children by placement type</li> <li>• Examine internal systems and processes for the scrutiny, decision making and prioritising of referrals for external residential placements and how these articulate with the decision making of the Children's Hearing system</li> <li>• Establish a contractual framework and system for quality assuring the provision of external providers, incorporating the activity of the Care Commission</li> <li>• Establish a robust system for identifying the optimum point at which children, once placed externally, could successfully be returned to Dundee and what services and resources may be required to achieve this</li> <li>• Benchmark outcomes, systems and processes with comparator authorities</li> <li>• Bring forward recommendations for improvements in outcomes, systems and processes as well as consideration of alternative local provision</li> </ul>

<b>3</b>	<b>Core Group Membership</b>
	<p>Alex Stephen, Chief Executive - Chair  Elected Members - 1 each from Administration, SNP and Conservative groups  Depute Chief Executive (Finance)  Director of Social Work  Children's Services Manager (Social Work)  Director of Education  Assistant Chief Executive (Community Planning)  Chairperson, Dundee Children's Panel  Chairperson, Children's Panel Advisory Group  Reporter to the Children's Panel  NHS Tayside representative  Tayside Police representative  Representative of external providers  Clerk - Committee Services</p>

<b>4</b>	<b>Consultation Process – Who to Consult and How</b>
	<p>Consultation should be carried out with the following organisations and groups, whose representatives may be co-opted into the review team as required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Care Commission</li> <li>• Children's Rights Officer</li> <li>• Voluntary sector representatives (eg Aberlour)</li> <li>• Representatives of young people and parents</li> </ul>

5	<b>Schedule for Completing the Review</b>	
	Pre planning <b>Milestone Meeting 1</b> <b>Milestone Meeting 2</b> <b>Milestone Meeting 3</b> <b>Milestone Meeting 4</b>	<b>September 2007</b> <b>October 2007</b> <b>November 2007</b> <b>December 2007</b>