

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE – 16 September 2002
PERSONNEL & MANAGEMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE
-16 September 2002

REPORT ON: ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR MONEY ADVICE PROVISION

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK
DIRECTOR OF PERSONNEL & MANAGEMENT SERVICES

REPORT NO: 691-2002

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report outlines proposals for the use of funds allocated to Dundee City Council to provide additional money advice services.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1** It is recommended that the Social Work Committee agree the actions proposed in paragraph 6.8 of this report.
- 2.2** It is recommended that the Personnel and Management Services Committee approves the establishment of a post of Welfare Rights Officer (Money Advice) graded AP4 (£18,878 - £20,897) for a period of two years.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The cost of these proposals will be £114,000 per year. The costs will be met in full by monies allocated to Dundee City Council by the Scottish Executive to provide additional local money advice services.

4 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

The proposed actions will have a direct impact on alleviating poverty across the city. Income will be maximised as part of the debt advice process. Assistance will be provided, which, coupled with negotiated reduced payments, will reduce the stress and pressure experienced by overindebted individuals and families.

5 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

The proposals will ensure that all citizens across Dundee have improved quality of access to local advice services.

6 MAIN TEXT

- 6.1** The provision of additional money advice services is central to the new approach taken by the Scottish Executive following the report '*Striking the balance – a new approach to debt management*'. The Scottish Executive has provided £3m of funding across Scotland to support this and is seeking early progress in developing additional services. £114,000 has been allocated to Dundee.
- 6.2** The additional resources are specifically intended to enhance and increase the provision of front line money advice. Money advice is defined in the '*Striking the balance*' report as: a

series of tools and professional strategies used by advisers to counter the problems encountered by clients in debt, which includes:

- A problem solving approach which recognises the respective rights and obligations of the parties to transactions which the client has entered into.
- A holistic or 'whole person' attitude to the problems of the individual which takes into account factors such as health, housing conditions etc.
- A participative approach involving the individual in solving their problems and learning from experience.
- A professional attitude towards those credit companies and agencies with whom advisers negotiate which recognises the need for consistency and endeavours to build mutual respect.

- 6.3** Local Authorities are key funders of existing money advice provision through their own services and through support for independent agencies. In Dundee, money advice services are provided by three main agencies – Citizen Advice Bureau (CAB) Money Advice Support Team (MAST) and the Welfare Rights Service.
- 6.4** CAB and the Welfare Rights Service provide a city wide service, but there is an inequality of access to locally based money advice services across Dundee. The Welfare Rights Service provides general welfare rights outreach surgeries at Douglas and Menzieshill and money advice work is undertaken there if necessary. There are no other dedicated local money advice surgeries across the city other than those provided in the SIP areas by MAST.
- 6.5** The provision of extra local money advice services by the three main agencies would serve to address the difficult situation and would provide choice for potential service users. The three main agencies have also recognised the need for more debt advice Services and for preventative work and debt awareness to be developed and implemented in conjunction with health care services and possibly housing services.
- 6.6** The Scottish Executive is seeking improvements in the quality of money advice across Scotland and is investing centrally in research and development work on quality standards and statistical recording. The development of a uniform framework for quality standards in money advice and for statistical recording is a key part of the Executive's plan. Authorities and other providers who receive additional resources are expected to co-operate with such developments. The quality standard for money advice is currently an SVQ Level 4 and it is anticipated that the proposed three workers will undertake this qualification.
- 6.7** The three agencies providing the additional money advice services will agree standardised statistical recording systems and quality standards and performance measures in the interim, until Scottish Executive approved systems are in place. These measures will form part of the contracts entered into with the agencies receiving additional resources. Outcomes for the project have been anticipated as assistance to be provided to an additional 1500 debtors in the first full year ie 2003/2004. Other outcomes will include a full publicity and debt awareness raising campaign and the production of debt related leaflets and more intensive coverage of the city.

The available funding will be committed in full to achieving these objectives. Appendix A gives a breakdown of how the funding will be used.

- 6.8** To make best use of the additional funding the following actions are proposed. These actions have been discussed with Citizen Advice Bureau and the Money Advice Support Team.
- 1 Citizen Advice Bureau, Money Advice Support Team and the Welfare Rights Service should each appoint a full-time money advice worker for a fixed period of two years on the first instance, and these workers should undertake an SVQ Level 4 in Money Advice. Fixed Term appointments will enable Dundee City Council to ensure that the funds are being used in the most appropriate manner before entering into a permanent commitment.

- 2 A Joint Project Team should be established with responsibility for quality assurance, training and professional development of the workers, publicity and debt awareness raising. This team would also be responsible for monitoring and evaluating the work undertaken.
- 3 Contracts should be developed with the Agencies to reflect the needs, performance targets and other requirements of the City Council and the Scottish Executive.

This plan has been submitted in outline to the Scottish Executive, who have confirmed that funding will be allocated to Dundee City Council on the basis of this plan. It is hoped that the additional services could be in place by November 2002.

7 CONSULTATION

7.1 Consultation on this report has been undertaken with Citizens Advice Bureau, the Money Advice Support Team, and The Director of Support Services, Director of Finance, Dundee North Law Centre and Dundee Anti-poverty forum.

8 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.

9 SIGNATURE

A G Baird
Director of Social Work

Date

J C Petrie
Director of Personnel and Management Services

Date

APPENDIX A

ADDITIONAL MONEY ADVICE PROVISION – FINANCIAL BREAKDOWN

STAFF COSTS	NO OF POSTS/GRADE	FULL YEAR £000
Money Advice Worker	1.0 FTE AP4	23
PAYMENTS TO PARTNERS		
MAST	To Employ 1.0 FTE Money Advice Worker	23
CAB	To Employ 1.0 FTE Money Advice Worker	23
OTHER PROJECT COSTS		
Training		7
Computer Hardware/Software		5
Recruitment Costs (CAB & MAST)		2
Office Furniture & Equipment		4
Rental costs (outreach surgeries)		3
Clerical Support		5
Postages, Stationery, Telephones, Publications		6
Travel		3
Publicity & Awareness Training		3
Contribution to partners property & Support Costs		2
Interpretation Fees		2
Leaflet Development & Production		3
TOTAL		114

Other costs, which cannot be, funded within the sum available eg Management Support, Dundee City Council recruitment costs, will be met by the three partners from their existing budgets.