

REPORT NO 599/97

ANGUS COUNCIL

SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE.....27 MAY 1997

CHILDREN'S GUIDE TO ANGUS

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK

ABSTRACT

This report advises the Committee of a project developed by the Social Work Department in partnership with parents and carers in Angus to publish a guide to services, facilities and other resources which provide support to families, particularly those with children under the age of eight.

1 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Social Work Committee:

- (i) Notes (for information) the proposals contained within this report.

2 INTRODUCTION

The Angus Under Eight's Consultation Forum, having endorsed the initiative as an appropriate and exciting development which had the support of all eight local Fora, established a small Working Group to plan and co- ordinate the production of "The Children's Guide to Angus".

Made up of parents and providers of childcare and with the support of the local authority, the Group held an inaugural meeting in the summer of 1996.

Office bearers and committee members comprise two parents, two childminders and a nursery manager, geographically spread throughout the Council area.

The Group is supported by the Angus Council Social Work Department Senior Resource Worker (Rural Outreach) and the Angus Rural Partnership Development Officer and has been significantly assisted in its task by officers of the Education Department.

The Group aims to produce a guide to services, facilities and other establishments which are of relevance to families. The Group's aims are:

- * to make available to families with young children, who are resident in or visiting the area, high quality information which will enable them to make informed choices about their activities, and which will enable them to access emergency and other services without undue delay
- * to secure improvements in the standards of facilities and services for young children
- * to reduce the isolation experienced by young families in this essentially rural area, particularly those for whom access to services and facilities is restricted by poverty or disadvantage.

3 DATA COLLECTION

The final design of the guide has yet to be confirmed, but it will take the form of an A5 booklet, comprised of a number of sections including:-

- * indoor/outdoor and wet/dry weather activities
- * transport
- * health information
- * eating places

The guide will give information about services to assist parents and children decide how appropriate each one is for their purposes.

Much of the required data has been sourced from local authority departments, (for example in respect of childcare and leisure/recreation), or from other agencies, particularly the Health Board and Trust.

The remaining sections are being compiled by local residents from the different communities in Angus. This information gathering exercise has been co-ordinated via the local Under Eight's Fora, and everyone on their mailing list was invited to complete a questionnaire.

The Education Department of the Council enabled local children to make a significant contribution to the process - a survey was circulated to every primary school in Angus, encouraging children to describe their favourite things to do and places to visit. Some of these children's comments (unedited) will be included in the guide, which will also benefit from extensive use of children's illustrations.

The intention is for the guide, the information in it and the way it is presented to be child focused. Information will be presented in a way that is meaningful to children and in language they can understand and relate to.

There will be a more specialised section on provision for children with disabilities.

Information contained within the guide will be "factual" and details about each establishment and/or facility will be checked by the owner/manager before publication to ensure complete accuracy.

Facilities will not be graded or endorsed in any way - the only subjective comments to appear will be from the primary school aged children.

4 FUNDING

It is intended to make the guide widely available, free of charge, to ensure maximum benefit is derived. Copies of the guide will be placed in schools, libraries, shops, surgeries etc., and will include forms for completion by users to provide feedback for future publications - this exercise if confirmed as a useful resource for families, could be repeated approximately every three years.

While the data gathering exercise has no significant cost attached, printing and publication of the projected 5,000 copies has been estimated to be in the region of £4,000. Quotes from three printing firms have been sought.

It should be noted that the use of maps and illustrations and perhaps a two colour format, all raise the costs of production.

Start-up funding of £500 was received from the Children Act (1989) New Projects Budget of the former Tayside Regional Council and a further £1,000 has been awarded by the Rural Initiatives Scotland Scheme 1996/7, co-ordinated by Rural Forum.

Applications to cover the shortfall have recently been submitted to the National Lottery Charities Board Small Grants Scheme and Angus Council Grant Scheme for Community/Voluntary Organisations. The outcomes should be known by June 1997, which is the anticipated print date for the guide.

In the meantime, additional funding applications will be pursued as appropriate. It remains an option that revenue to assist with printing costs could be accessed from the sale of advertising space within the guide, which is a method utilised by those undertaking a similar exercise in other (substantially urban) areas of Scotland.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications for Angus Council Social Work Department arising from this project, other than staff time and resources to facilitate the working group.

6 CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, the Director of Finance, the Director of Law & Administration and the Director of Education have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

7 CONCLUSION

Information has been provided in this report about a new initiative for children and families in Angus. The production of a Children's Guide is being undertaken by members of the Under Eight's Fora with assistance and advice from the local authority and other organisations.

It is envisaged that this will constitute a significant new resource offering support to families in rural Angus particularly.

1 May 1997

W B ROBERTSON
DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK

NOTE

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 this report.