

PERSONNEL & PROPERTY SERVICES COMMITTEE	20 October 1998
POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE	27 October 1998
SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE	17 November 1998
EDUCATION COMMITTEE	24 November 1998

JOINT REPORT BY THE DIRECTORS OF EDUCATION and SOCIAL WORK Report No 1100/98

## MEETING THE CHILDCARE CHALLENGE A CHILDCARE STRATEGY FOR SCOTLAND

---

### ABSTRACT

This report outlines a number of proposals for developing local childcare provision by accessing financial resources provided by the Secretary of State for the specific purposes of establishing new facilities and developing existing services.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Personnel & Property Services Committee, the Policy & Resources Committee, the Social Work Committee and the Education Committee:

- a) note the terms of this report;
- b) authorise the Directors of Education and Social Work to implement the plans detailed below;
- c) instruct the Directors of Education and Social Work to bring forward further reports detailing progress at regular intervals.

### BACKGROUND

Earlier this year the Secretary of State for Scotland issued a consultation paper entitled "Meeting the Childcare Challenge: A Childcare Strategy for Scotland". This document, and a formal response to the proposals contained therein, was the subject of a joint committee report prepared by the Directors of Education and Social Work and considered by the Education and Social Work Committees during the last committee cycle - Education Committee, 25 August (item 8 refers), Social Work Committee, 18 August (item 6 refers).

One of the key proposals in the strategy paper is the requirement for local authorities to establish a local Childcare Partnership which is to include representatives from the private and voluntary sectors, employers' groups, local enterprise companies, under eights' forums, out of school care groups, and council service departments. Further guidance on the setting up of a childcare partnership is to be provided by the Scottish Office but it is unlikely to be issued before the end of October.

The delay in providing advice is unhelpful as the partnership has been charged, amongst other matters, with the responsibility for producing a childcare plan by April 1999. In addition, the Scottish Office recently allocated £82,490 to the Authority for the specified purposes of developing childcare projects and establishing the new Childcare Partnership in the current financial year. Given that this new money must be spent in a relatively short period of time and that it may still be two-three months before the partnership comes into being it is essential that the opportunity is taken to:-

- 1) establish an appropriate service infrastructure;
- 2) develop elements of new provision;
- 3) extend or otherwise support existing projects.
- 4) leave some direct funding available for the Partnership.

The Council has significantly developed provision in both education and childcare places since April 1996. In particular pre-school provision has increased to the extent that sufficient places exist in nursery classes for all children in Angus in their pre-school year. The parallel increase in out of school care provision and the development of rural childcare facilities throughout the same period shows a similar healthy picture. However, there is still considerable scope for further development and, due to the excellent relationship with the existing under eights' forums, it is possible to identify a number of areas which would benefit immediately from development or support.

In order for the Childcare Partnership to function effectively the services of a professional worker with full clerical/administrative support will be required. In addition, the Partnership members will need to be reimbursed for costs incurred such as loss of earnings, out of pocket expenses, travelling and subsistence allowances and childcare costs.

## **PROPOSALS**

It is recommended that the monies allocated to the authority are spent on the undernoted proposals in order to obtain maximum benefit for the Council, children and families throughout Angus and the soon-to-be-formed Childcare Partnership.

		1998/99	Full Financial Year
1	Recruit a full-time member of staff with an appropriate background in early education, social work or childcare.	£8750	£26250
2	Recruit a full-time clerical assistant (Grade GS1/2)	£4000	£12000
3	Provide office accommodation for staff, purchase ICT equipment, furnishings, telephone etc.	£7500	£1500
4	Commission a professional research team to establish independent audit data for the Childcare Partnership.	£12000	Nil
5	Develop new provision for children in need in the Child and Family Centre, Arbroath including:- the recruitment of a full-time nursery nurse, a part-time teacher, the purchase of furniture and the development of a multi-sensory facility.	£4350 £3700 £4000 £18650	£13050 £22050 Nil £2000
6	Provide direct financial assistance to the ten out of school care clubs in Angus.	£13000	Nil
7	Extend community childminding provision in areas of greatest need.	£3000	£9000
8	Operational budget for Partnership	£3540	£4000
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£82490</b>	<b>£89850</b>

## SUMMARY

These proposals, if agreed, would further enhance childcare provision in Angus and are particularly significant in that they embody the concept of partnership in a very real sense. The proposed allocation of funds covers a wide range of providers - Council services, voluntary and private providers - and is very much in tune with the proposals for developing services as described in the Children's Services plan.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The cost of the above proposals in 1998/99 can be met from the additional resources provided by the Scottish Office. A Scottish Office letter dated 23 September 1998 indicated that additional resources of £91,000,000 for the development of the Childcare Strategy across Scotland will be made available over the period 1999-2002. The full year costs of the above proposals will be met from within Angus' share of these additional resources. Costs of other proposals for 1999-2000 will be the subject of separate reports to the Committee.

## **CONSULTATION**

This report has been the subject of consultation with the Chief Executive, the Director of Law and Administration, the Director of Finance and the Director of Personnel.

JIM ANDERSON  
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

W B ROBERTSON  
DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.