REPORT NO 479/08

ANGUS COUNCIL
SOCIAL WORK AND HEALTH COMMITTEE
22 MAY 2008

REPORT ON THE ANGUS ADOPTION AGENCY AND THE FOSTERING PANEL – ANNUAL REPORT 2007-2008

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK AND HEALTH

ABSTRACT

This report informs members of the production of the Annual Report on the Angus Adoption Agency and the Fostering Panel.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Social Work and Health Committee:-

(i) notes the contents of this report;
(ii) notes the contents of the "Report on the Angus Adoption Agency and the Fostering Panel".

2 INTRODUCTION

Angus Council acquired its statutory duties as an Adoption Agency on 1 April 1996. The agency is responsible for all of the Council’s functions and duties in respect of adoption and permanence including the operation of the Adoption and Permanence panel.

Similarly Angus Council as a local authority acquired its responsibilities to appoint a fostering panel on 1 April 1996. The Angus Fostering Panel is responsible for the approval and review of all foster carers within Angus Council.

3 KEY ISSUES FROM THE ANNUAL REPORT

The Report on the operation of Angus Adoption Agency and the Fostering Panel has been prepared to provide information for the period 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008. It provides statistical information for this period as well as an overview of the full period that the agency and the panels have been in operation.

Key issues from the report include:

a) The restructuring of the Family Placement team during 2007/08 in response to the sustained increase in the demand for foster placements, created separate fostering and permanence teams. This restructuring represents a significant investment in fostering and Adoption in Angus.

b) The Care Commission undertook an inspection of Angus Council’s Adoption services in August 2007. The report was generally very positive about the service. It included three recommendations relating to the timescale for completing panel reports on children, the provision of information to adult adoptees and the arrangements for disruption meetings. An action plan was submitted in relation to these recommendations and the appropriate action has been taken.

c) There have been significant delays in the introduction of the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007 which is now likely to be implemented early in 2009. The Act will significantly change the legal framework for childcare planning.

d) The number of children matched with prospective adoptive carers during 2007/08 was the highest since the establishment of Angus Council in 1996.

e) Additional resources devoted to the recruitment of carers have seen the development of improved recruitment systems and materials. This has yet to translate into
a rise in the number of carers, partly because prospective carers now have the choice of a number of independent fostering & adoption agencies operating within Angus.

The report identifies a number of areas for development in the coming year, particularly:

a) Preparation for the introduction of the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007 including the provision of appropriate training for social work staff and adoption and fostering panel members.

b) Conclude recruitment of additional Adoption & Fostering panel members.

c) To make the most effective use of the panel’s time, establish a sub panel to consider cases solely concerned with financial matters.

d) Maintain the drive to increase the number of carers in Angus and to make best use of the remaining funds that are available from the Scottish Government.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no immediate financial implications arising out of this report. Any developments with future financial implications will be brought back to the committee.

5 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

There are no Human Rights implications arising from the recommendations contained in this report.

6 CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, the Director of Corporate Services, the Head of Finance and the Head of Law and Administration have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

7 CONCLUSION

The report on the Angus Adoption Agency and the Fostering Panel provides extensive information on the operation of the agency and the panels. It highlights the current pressures on resources as well as Angus Council’s success over several years in providing an effective service for children, foster carers and adoptive parents.

R Peat
Director of Social Work and Heal

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 the above report.