

**ANGUS COUNCIL**  
**EDUCATION COMMITTEE**  
**25 AUGUST 2011**  
**'JUST PLAY' PROJECT**  
**REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION**

**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this report is to advise members of the Education Committee about the background to and focus of a key children's service project, '*Just Play – Getting It Right for the Early Years in Angus*'.

**1 RECOMMENDATION(S)**

It is recommended that the Education Committee:

- (i) note the contents of this report
- (ii) note the education authority's success in securing a CashBack for Communities grant for the sum of £350,000 over a three year period, to support the 'Just Play' Project
- (iii) endorse the establishment and aims of the 'Just Play' Project which will commence in August 2011
- (iv) note that the progress of the project will be the subject of future reports to this committee.

**2 BACKGROUND – CASHBACK FOR COMMUNITIES**

2.1 CashBack for Communities (CashBack) was launched in 2007. The fund, managed by the Learning and Justice Directorate of the Scottish Government, is comprised of proceeds from criminal activity across Scotland.

2.2 Since its inception, over £40million has been either spent or committed to projects which will continue through to 2014. While anticipated CashBack income now exceeds over £5 million per annum, some significant 'windfall' payments from single large proceeds of crime activity cases have supplemented the available annual funds.

2.3 The specific aims of the CashBack initiative are to:

- use the proceeds of crime in a positive way to expand young people's horizons and increase their opportunities to develop their interests and skills in an enjoyable, fulfilling and supportive way
- provide activities which will be open to all children and young people, while focusing resources in those communities suffering most from antisocial behaviour and crime
- seek to increase levels of participation in such activities in order to divert young people away from 'at risk' behaviour, and
- deliver positive long-term outcomes for 'at risk' young people.

2.4 It is estimated that, to date, more than 300,000 young people have been involved in CashBack activities in every local authority area of Scotland.

### **3 BACKGROUND – JUST PLAY**

- 3.1 'Just Play' – Getting It Right for our very youngest children in Angus is a 3 year pilot partnership project, led jointly by Tayside Police and Angus Council. The project has a major emphasis on play activity for 0-3 year olds and their families and targets families and young people who live in deprived or vulnerable situations.
- 3.2 The 'Just Play' project has been developed in the context of the Early Years Framework and Getting It Right (GIR) agendas, both of which are based on the principles of prevention and early intervention.
- 3.3 There is an ample body of research evidence which demonstrates that experiences in the first three years of a child's life can have significant impacts on their outcomes later in life. In this context, more work needs to be done to ensure that we are 'Getting it Right' for our youngest and most vulnerable children as early and as effectively as possible.
- 3.4 'Just Play' will seek to provide valuable opportunities to particularly vulnerable families across Angus. It is anticipated that the project will bring direct benefits to the whole community, with targeted young people being less likely to be disruptive at school, less likely to be involved in anti-social behaviour and less likely to offend.
- 3.5 The 'justice' dimension of the title, 'Just Play', is that focussed investment in purposeful play activities in the early years will ultimately reduce costs associated with young people, who grow up in very difficult and chaotic circumstances, going on to participate in negative lifestyles, affected by crime and alcohol and drugs misuse.
- 3.6 The 'Just Play' project, which will commence in August 2011, is the first project of its kind funded by CashBack. Historically, this funding stream has supported in the main initiatives for young people in the 10-19 age range. However, the Scottish Government has responded very favourably to our 'Just Play' proposals and has agreed to invest in this Early Years project, which, pleasingly, will bring a significant investment to early years services in Angus.

### **4 KEY AIMS**

- 4.1 The project will seek to engage vulnerable families with children aged 0-3 years across Angus. Initially, the project will target families in the Arbroath area, with a view to expanding to other areas of Angus during the three year period.
- 4.2 It is proposed that the engagement will consist mainly of direct activity sessions and support to families. We will seek to:
- increase children's and parents' social skills, confidence and self-esteem through a range of opportunities which build on the principles of play and early intervention
  - reduce the risk-taking behaviour of young people born into areas of deprivation or vulnerability, thus reducing later instances of offending, drug and alcohol use and other risk-taking activity.
  - provide CPD opportunities, focused on play, for members of the early years and childcare workforce across Angus, thereby building capacity among existing staff and agencies.
  - raise awareness of the benefits of play, especially when used as a tool to reduce poor outcomes for young children.
  - raise the aspirations and confidence levels of children and parents
  - work collaboratively with services and agencies to ensure a coherent approach to securing positive outcomes for children and families.
- 4.3 Throughout the lifespan of the project, priority will be given to developing sustainable approaches, which will ensure the continuation of key elements of the project beyond the three year period. Such approaches will include an upskilling programme for the early years

workforce across Children's Services, taking due account of 'common core' developments which are the subject of a separate report at this committee cycle.

#### **4.4 Local Delivery**

Ultimate line management of the project will lie the Children's and Learning Partnership Executive Group. Operational responsibility will lie with the Early Years and Childcare Joint Action Group and a 'Just Play' support and monitoring group.

The support and monitoring group will include representatives from a range of Angus Children's Services and Partners, including Health and Social Work. This group will primarily be responsible for the planning, implementation and monitoring of the project, including financial monitoring. Robust approaches will be adopted to track impacts and outcomes arising from the project.

#### **4.5 National Input**

A national CashBack for Communities Delivery Team has recently been established to support all CashBack partners. This team will provide advice and direction to all projects, including 'Just Play', in relation to the following key areas:

- Evaluation
- Communication
- Practice Development

Regular contact will be maintained with the national team during the course of the project. It is anticipated that Scottish Government colleagues will attend local support and monitoring group meetings.

### **5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The project expenditure has been costed on the basis of the £350,000 grant funding available over the three year period.
- 5.2 All costs (detailed in attached Financial Appendix) will be contained within the £350,000 grant, with no additional expenditure occurring.

### **6 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no Human Rights implications arising from this report

### **7 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The issues dealt with in this report have been the subject of consideration from an equalities perspective. An [equalities impact assessment](#) is not required.

### **8 SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT**

- 8.1 This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single outcome Agreement 2011-2014:
- our children and young people are confident individuals, effective contributors, successful learners and responsible citizens
  - adults maximise their potential through learning opportunities
  - individuals and families are involved in decisions which affect them
  - individuals are involved in their communities

- our communities are safe, secure and vibrant
- we have improved the health and wellbeing of our people and inequalities are reduced.

## **9 CONSULTATION**

9.1 The Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Services, Head of Finance, Head of Law and Administration and the Director of Social Work & Health have been consulted in the preparation of this report

## **10 CONCLUSION**

10.1 In the current financial climate 'Just Play' funding is likely to enhance early year's services in Angus. It will allow us to strengthen and build on existing good work already taking place across Angus in the context of 'Getting It Right'.

10.2 The project, which is likely to attract considerable national attention, will provide welcome support to the joint efforts of Children's Services and partner organisations to secure the best possible outcomes for vulnerable children aged 0-3 years.

10.3 Monitoring reports will be brought forward in the light of ongoing evaluations of the project and its impacts.

**NEIL LOGUE  
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION**

**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 a material extent in preparing the above report.

**ED/NL/SRD/EJ**

## 'JUST PLAY' PROJECT FINANCIAL INFORMATION

<b>STAFF COSTS</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>
Just Play Co-ordinator ( salary including NI and Supn)	<b>LG 8</b>	14,100	29,500	29,900	15,000
Just Play Practitioner ( salary including NI and Supn)	<b>LG7</b>	12,300	25,700	26,000	13,000
Travel Costs		500	1,500	1,500	500
<b><u>Sub Total</u></b>		<b>26,900</b>	<b>56,700</b>	<b>57,400</b>	<b>28,500</b>
<b>Set up costs</b>					
Property costs ( including accommodation rental)		5,000	15,000	15,000	5,000
Training		20,000	10,000	10,000	0
Purchase of Resources		15,000	10,000	10,000	0
Administrative Costs		2,000	2,500	2,500	2,000
Monitoring and Evaluation		10,000	10,000	10,000	0
Other		5,000	8,500	8,500	4,500
<b><u>Sub Total</u></b>		<b>57,000</b>	<b>56,000</b>	<b>56,000</b>	<b>11,500</b>
<b><u>TOTAL</u></b>		<b><u>83,900</u></b>	<b><u>112,700</u></b>	<b><u>113,400</u></b>	<b><u>40,000</u></b>
<b><u>Grand Total £350,000</u></b>					