

REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 10 SEPTEMBER 2001
REPORT ON: BETTER NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES FUND
REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE PLANNING
REPORT NO: 593-2001

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To recommend proposals for use of the Better Neighbourhood Services Fund.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- a) the draft proposals outlined in the Appendix to this report be agreed
- b) consultation take place with community planning partners and local communities regarding the development of Local Outcome Agreements

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This report deals with use of the resources made available from the Scottish Executive through the Better Neighbourhood Services Fund - £2 million in 2001/02, £3m in 2002/03 and £4m in 2003/04.

4. LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

This report will have a positive impact on the key local Agenda 21 theme relating to access to services.

5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

The report addresses the needs of young people with difficulties and people living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

6. BACKGROUND

6.1 Development of Proposals

6.1.1 When the Scottish Executive announced proposals for the Better Neighbourhood Services Fund, departments were asked to identify potentially suitable projects. These were subsequently assessed against the detailed criteria for use of the Fund which emerged over the summer. Given the tight timescale for submission of proposals, those projects which best fit the criteria have been discussed with Scottish Executive officials to clarify whether they will be prepared to recommend these to Ministers.

6.1.2 The fund criteria require a focus on specific geographic areas. The Executive wants funds to be applied in sufficient concentration to make a difference, and talks about targeting neighbourhoods with a population up to 10,000. This does not lend itself to some of the city-wide initiatives which might have been pursued if the criteria had been broader.

6.1.3 Nevertheless, a proposal has been developed which meets local needs while also addressing the Executive's criteria, which include a requirement to address social justice priorities and ensure measurable outcomes in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

6.1.4 This proposal is set out in the attached draft submission, and focuses on two linked initiatives in selected Social Inclusion Partnership areas - pilot approaches to Co-ordinated Neighbourhood Management and Support for Young People. As well as meeting the Executive's criteria for the Fund, these plans reflect priorities agreed with partners as part of the Community Planning process and established through public consultation.

6.2 **Action Required**

Subject to agreement in principle on the outline plans attached, consultations will now take place with community planning partners and local communities regarding the detailed Local Outcome Agreements which have to be developed as a requirement of the Better Neighbourhood Services Fund.

6.3 **Consultation**

All Chief Officers have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

Director of Corporate Planning

Date

A NEW APPROACH TO JOINING UP LOCAL SERVICES

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL'S PLANS FOR THE BETTER NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES FUND

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Dundee City Council's allocation from the Better Neighbourhood Services Fund is £2million in 2001/2002, £3million in 2002/2003 and £4million in 2003/2004. This paper sets out the Council's plans for the use of the Fund, in response to local needs and the Scottish Executive's criteria.

1.2 These plans:

- address key social justice priorities
- will result in measurable outcomes in deprived neighbourhoods
- take innovative approaches to joining up services
- reflect priorities agreed with partners as part of the community planning process and established through public consultation
- will result in action on a number of fronts while still applying the resources of the Fund in sufficient concentration to make a significant difference to the neighbourhoods and people at which it is targeted.

2. TARGET AREAS

2.1 The focus of Better Neighbourhood Services Fund expenditure in Dundee will be on selected Social Inclusion Partnership areas. This acknowledges the Scottish Executive's expectation that the Better Neighbourhood Services Fund will be co-ordinated with SIPs, and also allows the use of existing, well established and successful mechanisms for community involvement.

3. TARGET SERVICES

3.1 The Scottish Executive guidance was clear that the Better Neighbourhood Services Fund should address social justice priorities and that Ministers would welcome plans involving services for children. The Fund's title suggests a desire to see improved local service delivery and there has also been guidance that action should cut across service boundaries.

3.2 These considerations have led Dundee City Council to develop a plan with two main strands:

Co-ordinated Neighbourhood Management

Piloting a new co-ordinated approach to neighbourhood services, including a neighbourhood co-ordinator who has an overview and a responsibility for effective liaison of all services delivered in an area, is in day to day contact with service providers, and is responsible for a dedicated team of multi purpose neighbourhood assistants carrying out services such as street cleaning, litter picking, open space maintenance, graffiti removal etc. The key aim would be to strengthen the co-ordination of local service delivery and make services more responsive and accountable to residents of the neighbourhood.

To date, efforts to co-ordinate local services have been made through the establishment of Neighbourhood Service Teams, but it is acknowledged that this has not brought about sufficient joined up working in certain priority areas. Chairs of the teams do not have sufficient authority to direct or influence service departments, which have been criticised by local communities for not working corporately or giving sufficient priority to issues of local concern. It is anticipated that the key features of the proposed new approach, set out below, will address these weaknesses in the way services are currently co-ordinated.

Recognising the Executive's desire to focus on small geographic areas, it is proposed to focus the pilot on two contrasting social inclusion partnership areas – Hilltown and Kirkton – which exhibit many of the characteristics described in the Cabinet Office paper "A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal" and the Scottish Executive guidelines for the implementation of the Better Neighbourhood Services Fund:

- Hilltown is a diverse, inner-city area with a wide range of house types and tenures, a cross-section of social class indicators and a high percentage of ethnic groups, all of which presents a challenge in developing an integrated approach to community-wide issues. At the time of the 1991 census, the population of the core and wider community areas was 2,644 and 8,533 respectively.
- Kirkton is a peripheral housing estate, comprising mainly 1950s Council housing with small numbers of private and housing association properties. The area is characterised by high levels of economic disadvantage and benefit dependency, with considerable concerns about crime and vandalism. At the time of the 1991 census, the population was 7,139 but this has reduced significantly due to the demolition of tenement housing.

Key features of the proposed approach would include:

- establishing local targets for service delivery and giving officers direct responsibility for co-ordinating services with greater control of budgets and authority to direct staff
- establishing clear communications with local people and an effective system for tracking progress on complaints and enquiries
- strengthening collaborative working between departments

Subject to local consultation, it is anticipated that the outcomes will include:

- improved response rates and reduced complaints
- increased customer satisfaction
- better communication with local people and increased involvement in the management of public services
- improved public image of targeted areas

This would address one of the Scottish Executive's Social Justice priorities – "increase resident satisfaction within neighbourhoods and communities".



Support for Young People

Piloting an intensive, multi agency approach to supporting troubled young people. This will involve joined up working by the Education, Neighbourhood Resources and Development and Social Work Departments in an integrated scheme to provide more effective intervention for young people with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties including looked after children.

While this issue affects all areas of Dundee, there is clear evidence from schools, families and local Neighbourhood Forum consultations that young people from certain social inclusion partnership areas require further focused support, with Kirkton and Whitfield having been identified as the two areas where support is most urgently required. The intention therefore would be to focus this work on young people from those areas, or in specific contexts such as schools, off-site educational provision or young persons' units where many of the young people concerned have links with the areas concerned. It is estimated that 250 children would benefit from the proposed approach, although one of the first tasks will be to firmly identify all the individuals concerned.

Outcomes will include:

- increased attendance in schools
- reduced exclusion rates
- reduced referrals to off-site or residential establishments
- increased educational attainment
- reduced admissions to local authority care
- reduced rate of referrals to the Children's Panel Reporter
- increased participation of young people in learning opportunities and volunteering
- increased number and range of leisure opportunities open to young people within their local communities
- motivation of young people into more positive lifestyles and a positive rather than a negative impact on their local neighbourhoods

Work has been directed for some time now at measures designed to lead to higher attendance rates and greater inclusion of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties who are at risk of exclusion, using funds available from the Excellence Fund. This work has been cross-city, but with emphasis on particular areas, including Whitfield. In addition New Community schools have been established in the primary and secondary sectors in Kirkton. The Better Neighbourhood Fund will enable significant attention to be paid to a large number of identified individuals, to track and therefore encourage their academic progress as well as their attendance, and to provide educational and work-related experiences which will increase their self-esteem, enhance their personal development and give them the skills to move smoothly into adulthood.

These plans would address another of the Scottish Executive's Social Justice priorities – "every young person leaves school with the maximum level of skills and qualifications possible" – and two specific milestones – "bringing the poorest 20% of pupils, in terms of standard grade achievement close to the performance of all pupils" and "reduce by a third the days lost every year through exclusions and truancy".

- 3.3 Fuller details of both these strands to the Council's plans are set out in Appendices 1 and 2. The strands are linked because of the impact which young people can have on their local communities and residents' satisfaction with their local environment. For example among the outcomes which have been identified for the proposed work with young people include to reduce the level of nuisance related calls about young people to the police within specific neighbourhoods and to reduce the fear of young people held within some neighbourhoods. Problems such as crime, vandalism and graffiti are therefore being tackled both by a preventative approach to working with some of the people responsible and by ensuring a quick response to any problems which do emerge through better co-ordination of remedial works.

3.4 As well as the criteria set out in the Scottish Executive's guidance on the Better Neighbourhood Services Fund, these plans reflect the priorities for action which have been agreed with the Council's public sector partners as part of Dundee's draft Community Plan. These priorities include:

- bringing sustainability to neighbourhoods
- early intervention for neighbourhoods at risk
- improved conditions and services in housing estates
- increased levels of community involvement
- improving educational attainment
- reducing school absences and exclusions
- early intervention and alternative approaches for young people with difficulties

Generally, Dundee's Community Plan is about better integrated services with a bigger role for local communities – key elements of which would be delivered in priority areas through these Better Neighbourhood Services Fund proposals. These plans take forward the action agenda to which all partners in Dundee are committed.

3.5 Issues such as co-ordinated local service delivery and young people are also recurrent themes at local Neighbourhood Forum consultations, and themes relating to improving the environment and improving education also scored in the top ten list of priorities when the Council carried out a city-wide priority search exercise during the course of developing its Corporate Plan. (note that the other topics in the top ten relate to city-wide issues such as employment, action on which would not fit with the Fund's focus on specific neighbourhoods) The Council is confident therefore that its proposal reflects key concerns of local people and the consultations carried out to date will provide a good starting point for further detailed consultation on local outcome agreements.

3.6 These plans also take forward the Area Regeneration Action Plans which have been agreed for SIP areas. For example, both strands of the Better Neighbourhoods plan will address issues in the Kirkton action plan, which include:

- act to reduce/minimise the effects of graffiti and vandalism
- undertake collaborative work to reduce crime by young offenders
- integrate educational activities with appropriate social, emotional and health support for pupils and families
- develop initiatives for 'hard to reach' young people

The Hilltown Action Plan covers themes such as image, quality of life and community safety, all of which will be addressed by the plans for Co-ordinated Neighbourhood Management, while Support for Young People is regarded as a priority in Whitfield for the reasons set out in Appendix 2.

4. **CONCLUSION**

In line with the Fund's criteria, the Council's plans involve using the new resources to find local solutions to local problems, addressing a number of linked issues while concentrating resources to ensure there is a significant impact on the targeted neighbourhoods. The Council believes that these plans meet with Ministers' intentions for the Fund and demonstrate a firm commitment to addressing the Executive's social justice priorities. The plans clearly focus on measurable outcomes and these will be further shaped by consultations as local outcome agreements are developed.

BETTER NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES FUND CO-ORDINATED NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT

1 Background

Dundee City Council's approach to service delivery has sought to balance the benefits of local control with the requirement to maintain strategic management. To date, decentralisation initiatives have involved:

- co-ordination of Council services locally through the establishment of Neighbourhood Service Teams
- public consultation through Neighbourhood Forums and consultation by individual departments
- co-ordination of regeneration in priority areas through Neighbourhood Development Groups, extensive local consultation on priority setting and the development of a co-ordinated decision-making process between SIP areas which involves community representatives at a senior level
- community decision-making and capacity-building, the most developed examples involving the transfer of resources to locally controlled projects

It is now felt that in key areas of the city, there is a need to strengthen the co-ordination of local service delivery and make services more responsive and accountable to residents of the neighbourhoods concerned.

This bid has been developed with the theme of 'joining it up locally and making it happen'. The key features of the new approach it proposes include:

- establishing local targets for service delivery and giving people direct responsibility for co-ordinating services with greater control of budgets and authority to direct staff in order to achieve these targets
- establishing clear communications with local people and an effective system for tracking progress on complaints and enquiries
- strengthening the collaborative working between the staff of different departments and agencies and their accountability to the neighbourhoods they serve
- awareness of issues around community safety, community health and young people

2 Selection of Areas

It is proposed to focus the Co-ordinated Neighbourhood Management initiative on the SIP areas of Kirkton and Hilltown. These areas exhibit many of the characteristics described in the Cabinet Office paper, "A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal", and in the Scottish Executive guidelines for the implementation of the Better Neighbourhood Services Fund, i.e.:

- *Economic ghettoisation*

A disproportionate percentage of the population have lifestyles which orientate around benefit dependency and are afraid to come off benefits for fear of being

unable to re-establish a pattern of lifestyle and security with which they have become familiar.

- *The erosion of social capital*

Community contact between residents is weak and has been weakened by the process of dispersal and housing surplus. Although there is a fairly good coverage of Tenants Associations, the level of service participation by tenants and residents in their neighbourhoods remains low.

The Area Housing Manager in Kirkton has reported that, over the last month, there have been 8 requests for transfers from the area as a result of neighbourhood disputes.

It is reported that, in some parts of the Hilltown, turnover is now so rapid that 50% of local authority residents move house within a twelve-month period.

- *The failure of core services in deprived areas*

There remains a constant pattern of concern reported at Neighbourhood Forums and public meetings in relation to the care and protection of children and to their behaviour and its impact on local neighbourhoods; the stability of communities and quality of the environment; and the lack of engagement with city-wide strategies e.g. on employment and training.

- *The lack of concerted joint action at neighbourhood level*

Neighbourhood Development Groups which currently co-ordinate regeneration efforts have access to budgets but are focused on developmental tasks and there remains a need to plan and co-ordinate local services and strategies.

Neighbourhood Service Teams have not delivered sufficient improvement in these areas. The Chairs feel that they are given insufficient authority to co-ordinate or influence service departments. The low priority given by service departments to corporate working, or to responding to issues raised by the community, has been raised as an issue of concern on a number of occasions. The infrequent meeting pattern and lack of capacity of Service Teams to address local service delivery issues has contributed to their lack of significant impact.

3 Action Proposals

The following key tasks have been identified as priorities for Co-ordinated Neighbourhood Management. They reflect concerns raised through the process of neighbourhood consultation, in current regeneration research and in the guidelines set out for the BNSF. Specific shaping of priorities and local outcome agreements will be the focus of the first phase of any approved bid.

Integrated Service Delivery

- The central purpose of the co-ordinated approach to the management of neighbourhood services will be the creation of one officer whose responsibility it is to have an overview of all services delivered within the neighbourhood.
- The proposed model leaves the agency or department of local government still responsible for that delivery, but requires them to be part of an integrated programme of delivery.

- More than any other single issue, the failure of public services to deliver joined-up local responses is quoted as the reason for ongoing weaknesses in the public sector intervention with alienated or disaffected families.
- This intervention will demand that (rather than meeting monthly to co-ordinate service delivery) the Co-ordinator is in day-to-day contact with key service providers to ensure the appropriate allocation of cases and a rapid response to emerging issues.
- It is accepted that the expected level of commitment will put significant demands on all partners, and the innovative aspect of this proposal is that it is a radical attempt to demonstrate the potential of public services to respond effectively.

Environment

- Close monitoring and speedy action on environmental problems such as litter, graffiti and vandalism by a dedicated team of neighbourhood staff
- Development of a comprehensive strategy for environmental management;
- Co-ordination of landscaping/ground maintenance contracts;
- Identification of environmental priority projects;
- Stronger integration of rapid response team within target areas;
- Possible development of rubbish action zones;
- Possible development of gardening clubs

Community Safety

- Localisation of Community Safety strategy;
- Possible appointment of Community Safety Officers to work across all agencies and act as a bridge between the community and statutory partners;
- Development of stronger Community Safety Groups and targeted project proposals

Drugs

- Stronger links with the Drugs and Alcohol Action Team to provide a focused response within the designated areas

Housing Management

- Integration of new housing management arrangements;
- There already exists a clear basis of engagement with tenants of the local authority and social housing landlords;
- There requires to be a clearer strategy in respect of privately owned stock and privately rented housing

Community Information

- Development of an integrated programme of community activities. The Co-ordinator will be charged with bringing together information about all publicly funded programmes, i.e. neighbourhood centres/schools/leisure and recreation/public meetings from public service providing agencies etc. The purpose being to demonstrate stronger integration, to avoid conflicting dates and to provide a greater sense of strategic co-ordination locally.
- As part of the community learning strategy, a community skills audit will be carried out to identify individuals with skills who are prepared to release these skills for the greater benefit of the community. The experience gained through the Community Volunteer Initiative and the Community Capacity Building Project are both valuable in this regard.

Co-ordinated Neighbourhood Management would involve developing a new officer structure to deliver the key objectives set out above. This would include the establishment of Neighbourhood Service Co-ordinators, Neighbourhood Development Workers and Neighbourhood Assistants, who would be particularly charged with monitoring and tackling a wide range of environmental problems within their designated areas. The teams would have clerical support, support of a Community Safety specialist and would also have a budget to develop and commission services in response to local needs. The latter is particularly important as it allows for local control and local outcome agreements in purchasing services required within neighbourhoods rather than the priorities often identified at the centre through service departments.

These proposals would supersede existing Neighbourhood Service Team and Neighbourhood Development Group structures for the target areas.

Although placed within the Neighbourhood Resources and Development Department the new officers would have direct access to the Chief Executive.

The organisational model is based on co-ordinating inputs from a wide range of Council Departments and Community Planning partners. With the exception of the new officers reporting directly through the Co-ordinator, line-management will remain with the department or partner agency which has responsibility for the function in question but the Co-ordinator will have a key role in integrating services and influencing priorities.

4 Outcome Agreements/Evaluation

Dialogue with community representatives will take place prior to finalising outcome agreements. However, the following key outcomes are suggested:

- agreed targets for local services
- improved response rates and reduced complaints
- increased customer satisfaction
- improved collaboration between departments and agencies
- better communication with local residents and groups
- increased involvement of local people in the management of public services
- improved public image of targeted areas

- 125 children are 'looked after' at home, broken down by postcode as follows::

	<u>No of Children</u>
DD1	6
DD2	27
DD3	37 (includes Kirkton)
DD4	49 (includes Whitfield)
DD5	2
Outside Dundee	2
Not recorded	2

2. THE BID

This bid outlines a multi-agency approach involving the Education, Social Work and Neighbourhood Resources & Development Departments. Senior officers in each department will co-ordinate an approach that targets and conducts intensive work with young people and their families.

The overall objective of the proposal is a preventative one which enables young people to be supported at home in such a way as to promote their personal development, raise their potential learning attainment and provide adequate levels of literacy/numeracy and social competences to improve their ability to cope with the key transition to adulthood and work or further learning.

The focus of the bid is on young people from specific social inclusion designated areas, especially Kirkton and Whitfield, or in specific contexts such as offsite educational provision or Young Persons' Units where many of the young people concerned have links with these areas.

3. OUTCOMES

It is the clear intention that outcomes should as far as possible be measurable. However, some, by their very nature, will rely more on subjective and perception analysis. The outcomes identified are:

- to increase overall attendance in the targeted schools by 2%; and to seek to reduce absence rates of targeted young persons, by 10% in year 1 rising to 25% in year 3
- to reduce overall exclusion rates in the targeted schools by 30%, and of targeted individuals by 50%
- to reduce by 50% the number of referrals to local offsite or residential establishments
- to monitor levels of educational attainment, and seek to increase both the average number of Standard Grades (or equivalent) obtained by targeted youngsters, and their Grade Point Average (or equivalent)
- to increase the educational attendance and achievement levels for looked after children
- to reduce the number of admissions and re-admissions to local authority care
- to reduce the number and percentage of children looked after at home who subsequently become looked after away from home
- to reduce the rate of referrals and re-referrals to the Reporter to the Children's Panel on offence grounds
- to reduce the rate of children subject to child protection referrals

- to reduce the number of children provided with a service under Section 22 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995
- to increase participation of young people in learning opportunities and volunteering within their local communities
- to increase the positive adult and peer group contact period with targeted young people
- to reach a point where the local community express greater confidence and value in the involvement of young people in localised decision making
- to reduce the perception of fear and stereotyping of young people held within some neighbourhoods
- to increase the number and range of informal leisure opportunities open to young people within their local communities
- to reduce the level of nuisance youth related calls to Police within specific neighbourhoods
- to motivate targeted young people into more positive lifestyles

4. **CONSULTATION**

In preparing this bid account has been taken of relevant consultation undertaken with interested parties:

In May 2000 the Education Department issued a questionnaire to all educational establishments seeking views on the provision of education for children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. As a result of that, and of previous audit work, a rigorous review of services has been held which incorporated an extensive consultation programme. School Boards have played a part in this exercise, as have other parental pressure groups. At the present time a Best Value Review of the Educational Psychology Service in Dundee is being undertaken, and a comprehensive parental survey is being planned to take place early in the academic session 2001-02.

Between July and December 2000 the Social Work Department issued a questionnaire as part of a Best Value Review of Child and Family Centre Services. The results indicated high satisfaction levels with the services provided and confirmed the central role of child and family centres in family support and in work with children in need. The service was felt to be accessible, with the right opening hours and well located across the city. This review indicated the value of joined-up services that are responsive to need and available when required.

As a result of ongoing Neighbourhood Forum task group development, local community representatives and young people have been engaged in developing multi-agency youth provision within specific social inclusion geographical areas.

These negotiations have formed the basis of contributions to the draft Community Learning Plans which are nearing completion.

5. **MONITORING & EVALUATION**

Each department has in place already mechanisms to collate and analyse the statistics appropriate to the measurable outcomes. This bid will strengthen the need to refine analysis, so as to provide information on individual and community progress.

There will also be a steering group comprising Senior Officers from the three departments with responsibility for reviewing strategic policy development, examining outcomes and ensuring that Council policy is reflected in operational procedures on the ground, and for close examination of individual progress.

