

## **DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE – 20 November 2000  
EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 20 November 2000

**REPORT ON:** ESTABLISHMENT OF INTEGRATED DAYCARE AND FAMILY SUPPORT  
PROVISION AT HAPPYHILLOCK CHILD AND FAMILY CENTRE

**REPORT BY:** DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK AND DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

**REPORT NO:** 729-2000

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to establish as part of an integrated education and social work initiative a new day care service for children under the age of three at Happyhillock Child and Family Centre. This will be a pilot project until March 2002 and will offer a number of daycare places for families on low incomes, or where parents are in education or training. The new provision will be delivered as an integrated part of the range of services which are currently provided at Happyhillock Child and Family Centre to children in need and their families. This will promote economic regeneration and social inclusion in the Happyhillock and Linlathen areas, and will offer access to daycare provision to families living in other areas, as appropriate, where there is a lack of existing childcare services.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 It is recommended that the Social Work and Education Committees approve the contents of this report.

### **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 The cost of the new daycare service will be £8,000 in 2000/01 and £50,000 in a full financial year. The service will be provided through deploying the equivalent of three existing posts at Happyhillock Child and Family Centre. These posts will be funded from Sure Start funding, as identified in Committee Report No. 645/2000. This will result in a saving to the Social Work Department of £8,000 in 2000/01 and £50,000 in a full financial year.

The minor refurbishment work and the new equipment required will cost £3,000 and will also be funded from Sure Start monies.

Fee income will depend on the individual financial circumstances of families using the service and is, therefore, difficult to predict. However, income in the range of £12,000 to £17,000 in a full financial year may be a reasonable target.

### **4.0 PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Some minor refurbishment work at Happyhillock Child and Family Centre is required in the designated areas of the building which will accommodate daycare services for children under the age of two. This work will be completed and additional equipment purchased by November 2000 in preparation for the establishment of the new service.

## **5.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The integration of daycare with family support provision will strengthen existing services and will promote social inclusion and economic regeneration in the Happyhillock and Linlathen areas, and in other areas in greatest need of additional childcare services.

## **6.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

- 6.1 It is anticipated that the provision of daycare and family support services will improve accessibility to high quality childcare for families in the Happyhillock and Linlathen areas, and other areas where there is little existing provision.

## **7.0 BACKGROUND**

- 7.1 In Dundee, as in other cities, the need for childcare services for young children is increasing as more women return to the labour market when their children are still very young. The cost of good quality childcare, particularly for babies and very young children is relatively high, due to the level of care and therefore the high adult/child ratios required in registered childcare provision.
- 7.2 Childcare services for children under the age of three are currently provided across Dundee city by a range of private day nurseries, childminders and by relatives. Because the cost of purchasing care outwith the family is relatively expensive, such provision is often not affordable for families in low income groups. Dundee's child and family centres offer a range of family support services to children in need and their families which includes the provision of sessional care, but they do not currently provide a daycare service to working parents.
- 7.3 The Dundee Early Years and Childcare Team have identified that in some areas of the city there is a lack of affordable, accessible childcare provision and local demand for childcare services is not being met. In the Happyhillock and Linlathen areas there are no registered childminders or private nurseries and there are often difficulties for local families in securing provision elsewhere which they can afford and which is reasonably accessible.
- 7.4 The Sure Start Scotland initiative funding has been made available to local authorities by the Scottish Executive to expand services to families with young children under the age of three. This initiative is aimed at providing community based, family focused services, including high quality childcare and direct support to parents.
- 7.5 The proposals for taking forward Sure Start Dundee are outlined in Committee Report No 645 /2000 and include targets for the creation of facilities to provide subsidised childcare places for children under the age of three, with linked childminding services which will offer affordable, quality assured, home based care for babies.
- 7.6 The level of need for childcare provision presenting in the Happyhillock and Linlathen area has made it a priority area for the development of one such facility. Careful consideration has been given by the Education and Social Work Departments to the most appropriate location for the establishment of high quality daycare and the development of linked childminding services based in the area.
- 7.7 Happyhillock Child and Family Centre has been selected as the proposed pilot site for these complementary services for the following reasons:-
- 7.7.1 Happyhillock Child and Family Centre has an established reputation in the local community for the provision of high quality daycare services. Dundee Social Work Department's child and family centres provided daycare services to working parents alongside family support services to children in need until 1997, when child and family centre services were re-focused and were developed to target children in need.

- 7.7.2 The staff group at Happyhillock Child and Family Centre have the relevant skills and experience to provide high quality daycare services to very young children and babies. A range of services are currently provided to children in need under the age of three, including daycare on a sessional basis.
- 7.7.3 There has been a fall in the level of need for child and family centre services by local families in recent years due to the demographic changes which have taken place in the Happyhillock area. In October 2000 there were 55-60 children receiving a service at Happyhillock Child and Family Centre, as compared with 65-70 in October 1999 and 75-80 in October 1998. This fall in the level of local need for family support services means that there is now capacity within the building and staffing resources at Happyhillock Child and Family Centre to develop daycare services for low income families, alongside the range of services provided to children in need and their families.
- 7.7.4 The premises at Happyhillock Child and Family Centre only require minor refurbishment to certain designated areas (for instance, the quiet/rest room for babies) to ensure that the building is able to accommodate the new service.
- 7.7.5 The building is located at the centre of the Happyhillock community, adjacent to local shops and on a main transport route for those who live outwith Happyhillock or Linlathen.
- 7.7.6 The Centre is within a short walking distance of the Linlathen area.
- 7.7.7 The integration of daycare and family support provision at Happyhillock Child and Family Centre will promote social inclusion and will maximise sharing and learning opportunities for all. The addition of educational resources at Happyhillock Child and Family Centre will also enhance the overall childcare provision for the local community.

## **8.0 PROPOSED DAYCARE AND LINKED CHILDMINDING SERVICES AT HAPPYHILLOCK CHILD AND FAMILY CENTRE**

- 8.1 In order to meet the childcare needs of working parents on low incomes, and those of parents who are involved in education or training, it is proposed to create a number of full and part-time daycare places for children under the age of three at Happyhillock Child and Family Centre, and a number of childcare places with local childminders for babies under the age of one. It is anticipated that a minimum of 20 full-time equivalent daycare places can be provided within the Centre, with linked childminding offering up to 8 additional places in the local area.
- 8.2 The Manager at Happyhillock Child and Family Centre will work with the Early Years and Child Care Team to promote the recruitment of childminders for Happyhillock and other areas in need of childminding resources, as appropriate. The Centre Manager in consultation with parents will place children with childminders where this is assessed to best meet their needs and will allocate and manage the linked childminding budget for Happyhillock Child and Family Centre.
- 8.3 The new daycare services will be provided as an integrated part of the range of service provision offered at Happyhillock Child and Family Centre. An inclusive approach will be adopted to the delivery of care to all children with each individual child being placed in a peer group in accordance with his/her own individual stage of development and assessed needs. This will result in a mix of children with different abilities in each group and will offer socialisation, learning and skills development opportunities for the benefit of all.
- 8.4 One of the key aims of this pilot initiative is to develop a model of best practice in the provision of group care to babies and very young children which will be used by the Early Years and Childcare Team to help inform practice and future service development across all care sectors.

- 8.5 The fall in the level of need in the Happyhillock area has required a review to be undertaken of the use of the staffing resources of the Assistant Centre Worker Team at Happyhillock Child and Family Centre. From this review it has been concluded that family support services to the Happyhillock area can be effectively sustained by seven Assistant Centre Workers. The current establishment for Happyhillock Child and Family Centre is ten Assistant Centre Worker posts, three of which have been vacant for some time.
- 8.6 It is proposed that these three vacant Assistant Centre Worker posts at Happyhillock Child and Family Centre be filled and that funding be used from the Sure Start initiative to meet the staffing costs of this new provision.
- 8.7 The current establishment of one Centre Manager and two Centre Worker posts will be retained in order to provide appropriate management and support for the Assistant Centre Worker Team, delivering the new integrated services at Happyhillock Child and Family Centre.
- 8.8 The new daycare service will be managed and supervised by the current Centre Manager at Happyhillock Child and Family Centre, who will deploy staffing resources flexibly across the integrated provision to ensure high standards of service delivery to children and parents receiving daycare, linked childminding and family support services.

## **9.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR STAFF**

- 9.1 There are three Assistant Centre Worker posts at Happyhillock Child and Family Centre which are vacant at the present time and these posts will be filled on a fixed term basis until March 2002 for this integrated Sure Start initiative.

## **10.0 CHARGING POLICY**

- 10.1 A scale of fees for daycare services at Happyhillock Child and Family Centre has been developed for the period of this pilot project. The proposed scale of charges which is outlined in Appendix 2, has been guided by an income maximisation approach and takes into account family income, entitlement to benefit and ability to pay in determining appropriate charges for daycare and childminding services for different family income groups.

## **11.0 PROPOSALS**

- 11.1 It is proposed on a pilot basis until March 2002 to establish additional daycare services at Happyhillock Child and Family Centre. These services will be provided along with family support services as an integrated part of the provision for children under the age of three and their families. Sure Start funding will be used to provide the financial resources to support the delivery of daycare and linked childminding services to families living in Happyhillock and Linlathen, and as appropriate, to families from other areas who are having difficulty identifying accessible or affordable childcare provision. The future development of this pilot initiative will be informed by a process of evaluation which will take into account the views of the parents, children and staff involved.

## **12.0 CONSULTATION**

- 12.1 This report has been the subject of consultation with the Director of Personnel and Management Services and Director of Finance. Full consultation has also taken place with the staff group at Happyhillock Child and Family Centre on the implications of this proposal. The trade unions have also been consulted.

**13.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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.

**14.0 SIGNATURE**

Director of Social Work

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Director of Education

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_



## HAPPYHILLOCK DAYCARE SERVICE – PROPOSED CHARGES

The charging scheme is designed to take account of ability to pay, and of the effect on income of entitlement to the childcare costs element of Working Families Tax Credit (WFTC) and Disabled Persons Tax Credit (DPTC). It is also designed to be consistent with the existing charging system for non-residential care services.

The following charging scheme is proposed.

**1 Income position – in receipt of WFTC or DPTC and qualifying for childcare costs.**

Charge – full sessional charge of £20 per session (day) (families are required to pay the full cost as a condition of entitlement to 70% assistance from WFTC/DPTC with this cost. Therefore, effectively only 30% of the total cost is borne by family).

**2 Income position – in receipt of WFTC or DPTC and not qualifying for childcare costs.**

Charge – 30% of full sessional charge, i.e. £6 per session.

**3 Income position – not in receipt of WFTC or DPTC, but qualifying for health care costs on 'low income' grounds.**

Charge – the lower of 30% of full sessional charge or 50% of excess income, assessed as for the current non-residential care charging scheme.

**4 Income position – income below non-residential care charging thresholds and not qualifying for childcare costs.**

Charge – no charge

**5 Income Position – not in receipt of WFTC or DPTC and not qualifying for health care costs on 'low income' grounds.**

Charge – 50% of excess income, up to the full cost of the service.