

# **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

**CABINET – 18 MARCH 2009**

## **EARLY EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE FUNDING TO EXTERNAL AGENCIES 2009/10**

### **Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services**

#### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Members of Cabinet for allocation of funds to external organisations in respect of Early Education and Childcare for the financial year 2009/10.

#### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** Reports have previously been presented to Members for consideration in respect of funding, to support the Childcare Strategy.

#### **3. FUNDING TO SUPPORT EARLY EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE**

- 3.1** The aim of the Childcare Strategy is to make affordable, accessible, high quality childcare available in local authority areas across Scotland. In co-operation with East Ayrshire Childcare Partnership, the Council is responsible for identifying local childcare needs and facilitating the development of services to meet these needs.

Some organisations are specifically funded in relation to supporting families with very young children, who are more vulnerable.

##### **(a) Funding for Out of School Care Services**

The Funding Formula for voluntary sector Out of School Care has been in place for five years and over this time providers have benefitted from consistent levels of annual funding. There are 10 providers delivering a service in 16 locations. Over 800 families access services in:

- Bellfield out of school care
- Crosshouse out of school care
- Greenmill out of school care
- Lainshaw lions
- Rascals
- YipWorld
- Bellsbank Adventure Playgroup
- Mauchline
- Patna

## PEACE

- Annanhill
- Dunlop
- Gargieston
- Loahead
- Onthank
- Silverwood
- St Andrews

The major providers in particular are now more financially robust as they operate several services and the sustainable services subsidise those which are not.

The smaller stand alone services find it more difficult to generate sufficient fee income to meet expenditure. This is particularly true for services in villages, but also for those which do not operate in areas of deprivation and are therefore unable to access other grant support. Some services are also reporting lower uptake of places attributed to the "credit crunch". Breakfast club provision is available as part of out of school care in 9 locations.

Although the funding formula has proved to be effective in supporting services, it is planned to review how funding is allocated. The outcome of this will be brought back to Cabinet, in September 2009.

Funding in 2008/09 was £140,174. It is intended to allocate £70,087 for six months funding, pending the outcome of the review.

### **(b) Project and childcare support to voluntary early years groups and organisations**

A financial contribution was allocated to the Ochiltree Nursery Bus Group (£6,078) to support access to nursery provision in Auchinleck Nursery School as there is no pre-school provision in Ochiltee in 2008/09. The Irvine Valley Nursery Bus Group was allocated £4,000 to support parental choice to access provision at Galston Nursery School.

It is recommended that the financial contribution is continued for the Ochiltree Nursery Bus Group as there is no pre-school provision in Ochiltree. It is further recommended that £2,300 is allocated to the Irvine Valley Nursery Bus Group until end of June 2009 and thereafter ceases as parents can access pre-school provision in Darvel, Newmilns, Hurlford and Galston.

Riccarton Pre-5s is a voluntary sector organisation which comprises of 3 services which meet in Riccarton Community Centre – Bluebell Playgroup, Play Away Crèche and the Sand and Water Group. The Council is not in a commissioning arrangement with this organisation as it does not provide pre-school education for children aged 3-5 years or day care for vulnerable children aged 0-3 years.

The services provided are essentially for parents who live in the local area, who access the provision before their children are eligible for pre-school education.

The allocation of funds to this organisation in financial year 2008/09 was £4,890. As part of the reduction in funding as a result of the Strategic Review of the Revenue Budget, work has been ongoing with the group to look at a longer term sustainability strategy for the service including a phased fee increase in 2008/09 and 2009/10.

On this basis therefore, it is recommended that the financial support is reduced in 2009/10 to £4,000 and thereafter reduced by £1,000 per annum until 2013 /14.

#### **(d) SERVICES TO SUPPORT VULNERABLE FAMILIES**

Homestart East Ayrshire is a voluntary organisation providing support to families with children under three years of age. In the calendar year of 2008, they supported 69 families, which represents 190 children. This service complements existing provision and primarily supports families who are experiencing stress, isolation or difficulties in managing family life. Homestart was allocated £55,620 by Cabinet in financial year 2008/09. It is recommended that this level of funding is maintained with an inflationary uplift to £57,290 in 2009/10. A review of the service is available on request.

The Avenue Project is located in North West Kilmarnock and provides a day care service for children and a sitter service. A three year Service level Agreement is in place until 2011. There is a balance of provision between families referred through either social work services or health and those families requiring day care or sitter services to support work or training. From April 2008 to February 09 the sitter service supported 70 children of whom 53 were referred and the daycare service has been accessed by 87 children of whom 35 were referred. Services provided by the Avenue Project are subject to regulation and inspection by the Care Commission.

The allocation of funding for 2009/10 is £94,202 which includes an inflationary uplift.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1** Funding is available to support the recommendation(s) contained in this report.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1** Nil.

#### **6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1** Nil.

#### **7. COMMUNITY PLANNING**

- 7.1** The development of childcare services is reflected in the Delivering Community Regeneration theme of the Community Plan.

## **8. RISK MANAGEMENT**

**8.1** All services funded adhere to Following The Public Pound.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**9.1** It is recommended that Members of Cabinet:

- (i) approve £70,087 to support out of school care services to September 2009 and return to Cabinet with the outcome of the review of the funding formula;
- (ii) approve funding of £6,078 to Ochiltree Bus Group;
- (iii) approve funding of £2,300 to Irvine Valley Bus Group;
- (iv) approve funding of £4,000 top Riccarton Pre 5's and thereafter reduce by £1,000 thereafter on an annual basis until 2013/14;
- (v) approve funding of £57,290 to Homestart East Ayrshire;
- (vi) approve funding of £94,202 to the Avenue Project;
- (vii) otherwise note the content of the report.

Graham Short  
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

Date March 2009  
KG/JA/SR

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Nil

Members wishing further information should contact Kay Gilmour, Head of Service: Community Support, Tel: (01563) 576104 or Janie Allen, Principal Officer (Early Education and Childcare Services), Tel: (01563) 578125.

**IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: KAY GILMOUR**