

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET REPORT – 23 MARCH 2011

AVENUE CHILDCARE SERVICES

Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to ask Members of Cabinet to approve the recommendation in respect of Avenue Childcare Services regarding a further three year Service Level Agreement and annual funding.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Avenue Childcare Services, formally known as the Avenue Project, located in the north west area of Kilmarnock was established in 1991. The service has had a three year Service Level Agreement which comes to an end on 31 March 2011.

- 2.2 The overall aims of the service are to provide:

- A reliable and flexible childcare service offering trained staff through a daycare and sitter services to enable families to pursue educational, social, recreational and employment opportunities;
- A well balanced curriculum to meet the needs of all children equally to enable them to develop their full potential;
- A drop in centre where isolated or vulnerable families, in particular lone parents, have access to social, recreational and educational opportunities;
- Establish close links and liaise with other agencies for direct or in-direct services to families;
- Reduce the number of children being received into statutory care by alleviating the stress and isolation experience by families;
- Increase the opportunities for parents, particularly lone parents to participate in activities within the local community e.g. training courses and adult education which might develop confidence, self-esteem and prospects;
- Ensure commitment to meet the regulatory framework;
- Ensure commitment to continuous improvement through evaluation and improvement plans.

- 2.3 In 2010/11 the service was allocated £95,144. At Cabinet on 1 December 2010 it was noted that the service would have a 10% reduction in funding as part of management action agreed in terms of the budget setting exercise for 2011/12.

3. SERVICE OUTCOMES

- 3.1 Overall, ninety-three children accessed the day care service between January and December 2010. Thirty-nine of these children were referred from other agencies; forty-three children paid fees and eleven children were from non-waged families.
- 3.2 The vast majority of children were referred by health visitors (23). The reason for referrals broadly included concerns in respect of the child's development linked to family circumstances and support for children linked to health issues in parents/carers.
- 3.3 Questionnaires issued to referrers highlighted outcomes for children in relation to improvements in children's social skills, how they interacted with their peer group and their overall development. Family outcomes included being more relaxed and happy due to childcare; parents more able to cope with family life and where required, families were working more co-operatively with a multi-agency team.
- 3.4 The sitter service supported fifty-five children between January and December 2010, representing twenty-four families. Reasons for referral varied but predominantly related to family/respice support for children with additional support needs.
- 3.5 Questionnaires were issued to referrers and parents/carers who had used both the sitter service and day care service. Overall responses were very positive.
- 3.6 The Monitoring Officer undertook a file sampling exercise as part of the evaluation, which has highlighted areas for improvement in case recording.
- 3.7 The Daycare Service was inspected by the Care Commission in March 2010 on the themes of quality of care and support and quality of staffing. The service evaluated as 'Very Good'.
- 3.8 The Sitter Service was inspected by the Care Commission in August 2010. The themes inspected on the day were also the quality of care and support and the quality of staffing. The evaluation was very good.
- 3.9 A copy of the evaluation is available on the Members portal.

4. PERSONNEL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 N/A.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The recurring revenue cost is £85,630.

6. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The service supports the Lifelong Learning and Health and Wellbeing Action Plan of the Community Plan.

7. EQUALITIES

7.1 N/A.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Members of Cabinet are asked to:

- (i) remit to officers to negotiate a further three year Service Level Agreement with Avenue Childcare Services;
- (ii) approve recurring revenue of £85,630 linked to an inflationary increase, as appropriate.
- (iii) otherwise note the content of the report.

Graham R Short
Executive Director of Educational & Social Services

23 February 2011
KG/SR

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Evaluation of the Avenue Childcare Services report.

Members wishing further information should contact Kay Gilmour, Head of Service: Community Support, Tel: 01563 576104.

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: KAY GILMOUR