

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 23 MARCH 2004**

#### **SCHOOL'S OUT FRAMEWORK FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUT OF SCHOOL CARE**

##### **Report by Director of Educational & Social Services**

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

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the Education Committee of the proposals for the implementation of School's Out, and to approve recommendations accordingly.

### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** The Scottish Executive views out of school hours childcare as a key plank in eliminating poverty on the basis that work is the best route out of poverty.

Published in February 2003, School's Out Framework for the Development of Out of School Care requires the Council and the Childcare Partnership to work together to map and review services and report these findings and development plans to the Executive. The outcome of the audit requires to be submitted by 1 April 2004 and a full Action Plan by June 2004.

The School's Out Framework set out overarching objectives to be achieved by 2006, namely;-

- to make a significant increase in high quality, sustainable Out of School Care provision; and
- to ensure that there is provision throughout each childcare partnership area, ideally within every out of school care service, for children with disabilities or other additional needs.

The priorities for action as set out in the framework are;-

- sustainability;
- services for older children and young people; and
- places for children in need and for children with additional support needs.

The Scottish Executive will;-

- monitor information in Children's Services Plans;
- formally review progress during 2005-06;
- work with Councils, Childcare Partnerships and other agencies to ensure that Out of School Care services can benefit from national initiatives aimed at improving children's health and physical activity; and
- work with Councils and the Commission for the Regulation of Care to ensure that the quality of provision is monitored and evaluated.

The definition of our of school care as set out in the national report is “services that provide care for school age children;-

- before school starts in the morning (breakfast clubs);
- after the end of the school day (after school clubs); and
- during school holidays (play schemes or all day care)

### **3. SCHOOL’S OUT RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROPOSALS FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

#### **3.1 Recommendation 1 “ *Local authorities should review out of school care provision ...to set targets for growth, and to establish what local action is needed to address issues of availability, sustainability and quality.*”**

A review of existing out of school care services and future demand has been carried out. This review will inform the development of the local strategy for delivery of out of school care services. In terms of the review the undernoted issues are relevant.

##### **(i) Availability**

A mapping exercise of current provision has been undertaken to provide the required baseline information to the Executive. Nineteen services currently provide 1941 sessional out of school care places. Registered childminders also provide approximately 300 out of school care places.

Audits of mainstream schools with no access to out of school care provision indicate sustainable levels of unmet need in Mauchline and Galston. Timescales for development of services will take account of the new build and refurbishment proposals for these schools.

Planning for children with additional support needs is based on the premise of inclusion in existing provision. Currently a small number of children (28) access mainstream provision. Additional support and integration of access to provision is required to increase this number and to ensure children “in need” have priority access to services.

Eleven Out of School Care services also provide before school care to support parents in work, training or education. Care must be taken to ensure that growth of breakfast clubs does not displace such services. Providers have been consulted and are willing to offer any available places as breakfast club places on the same basis as schools.

Older children and young people have been consulted through Student Councils on the type of service they would prefer, stated preferences reflect the range of activities currently being provided by health motivators and the arts team.

## **(ii) Sustainability**

The out of school supplier base in East Ayrshire is predominantly voluntary sector. Most services are reliant on low level annual funding to remain solvent. A funding formula has been developed to address this. It is equitable in its approach and transparent, supports effective financial planning for services and reflects the priorities of the Community Plan. The Out of School Care Network and Childcare Partnership have been consulted and are supportive of the proposal. Services are encouraged to charge realistic charges and promote the childcare tax credit to parents.

Where services provide places for children with additional support needs, higher adult child ratios increase the cost. Such places are not sustainable on fee income alone and will require ongoing additional resources to ensure viability.

It is intended to prioritise use of the Childcare Strategy in conjunction with the pooled budget being established through the Changing Children's Service Fund to facilitate access to out of school care and to establish a central budget to support referral of children "in need" to out of school care.

A voluntary sector provider is being supported to access NOF Quality Childcare Programme funding to provide peripatetic staff to support children in their local mainstream service. Match funding through the childcare strategy has been allocated for this proposal.

Sustaining breakfast club provision, even where this is a charged service, requires a very significant commitment of resources from a range of funding streams. The Doon Learning Partnership has been piloting breakfast clubs provision with a charge of 60 pence. The pilot will be evaluated and a separate report brought to Committee on the roll out of breakfast clubs.

## **(iii) Quality**

The Commission for the Regulation of Care has primary responsibility for ensuring the quality of services through annual inspection. Copies of inspection reports will require to be provided as a condition of funding from the Council and will form the basis of an annual out of school care quality and standards report.

The Council has currently reviewed quality improvement support for childcare and early education and these proposals are the subject of a separate Committee paper.

All Out of School Care services are being supported to complete the Scottish Out of School Care Network's quality assurance framework "Aiming High for Excellence"

Quality of provision is dependent on the skills and qualifications of staff. The Out of School Care sector benefits from access to Childcare Strategy Workforce Training and Development funding. The Out of School Care

workforce numbers approximately 100. There are around 70 qualified staff, 16 are undertaking qualifications and 13 are unqualified.

### 3.2 Recommendation 2

***“During 2003-04, local authorities working with Childcare Partnerships, should examine the scope for using local authority premises, taking account of the main messages in the school estate strategy, ‘Building Our Future: Scotland’s School Estate’.***

Having clubs in school minimises the need for children to travel after school and helps develop the school’s wider role within the community. Thirteen services currently operate in Council premises, nine of which are in schools.

A protocol has been developed to ensure communication between prospective out of school care providers, schools and Educational and Social Services. Providers and schools sign a “Letter of Agreement” which details roles and responsibilities. This is reviewed annually for emerging issues.

Quality of life funding has been used to support new services in Council premises meet the registration requirements of the Care Commission.

The School Estate Management Plan which was presented to Education Committee on 4 February 2004 takes account of the needs of the Out of School Care sector. The needs of existing services and possible developments in gap areas have been factored into the Public Private Partnership proposals.

The Accessibility Audit currently being undertaken will inform both the planning of future services and the inclusion of children with additional support needs in mainstream services.

### 3.3 Recommendation 3

***“Local authorities should work with Childcare Partnerships to develop a local action plan of short term and longer term help and support to clubs, and to improve sustainability”.***

The Action Plan scheduled to be submitted in June 2004 will set out the main areas of support.

A temporary post of Out of School Hours Childcare Business Support Worker was established in October 2002 graded at AP3/4. The post holder supports services in addressing sustainability issues and provides business support to parent led management committees including support to change status to company limited by guarantee or workers co-operatives. Prospective providers receive assistance with funding applications and business planning. It is recommended that the temporary post is continued for a further two until March 2006 and reviewed thereafter.

Support and resources have been provided to establish a local Out of School Care Network. This is represented on the Childcare Partnership and

associated sub groups. Childminding networks are also being established to link with the Childcare Partnership and Out of School Care Network

Services operating in schools that are part of the Letting Plan benefit from subsidised lets; those setting up in schools out with the Plan do not initially enjoy this subsidy. Officers are currently working on proposals to standardise lets and subsidies to Out of School Care services. Proposals will be the subject of a later committee paper.

#### **4. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1** It is proposed to make the post of temporary Out of School Hours Childcare Business Development Officer permanent with a redesignation of Out of School Hours Childcare Support Worker. The cost of this post at AP3/4 is £23,624 and can be met from childcare strategy funding.

#### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1** Childcare Strategy funding for project support is available from the Scottish Executive until 2006 to progress the development of quality childcare including out of school care in East Ayrshire. Funding for 2004/5 is £422,000.

#### **6. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1** Planning for the continued expansion of childcare is a commitment in both the Children and Young Person's Services Plan and the Community Plan.

#### **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1** It is recommended that Members of the Education Committee:
- (i) agree the proposals detailed in this paper;
  - (ii) remit the staffing implications to the Corporate Governance Committee for consideration
  - (iii) ask the Director of Educational and Social Service to return to Committee on an annual basis with a Quality and Standards report
  - (iv) ask the Director of Educational and Social Services to return Committee with specific proposals on the roll out of Breakfast Clubs
  - (v) otherwise, note the content of the report.

John Mulgrew  
Director of Educational & Social Services

Reference D McA/KG  
27 February 2004

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. "School's Out" Scottish Executive Framework for the Development of Out of School Care.
2. Quality of Life Funding report to Education Committee – 27 May 2003
3. East Ayrshire Childcare Partnership: Annual Progress Report – Education Committee 4 February 2004.

Members wishing further information should contact Dorothy McAvoy Childcare Partnership and Development Officer. Tel : 01563 554956

**IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: Kay Gilmour**