

**EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**  
**EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 8 NOVEMBER 2005**

**SURE START FUNDING**

**Report by the Director of Educational and Social Services**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the Education Committee of the additional funding allocated by the Scottish Executive for Sure Start and to seek approval for recommendations accordingly.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** Scottish Ministers have made a commitment in the Scottish Budget 2003-2006, to ensure that at least 15,000 vulnerable children under 5 years have an integrated package of health, care and education.
- 2.2** The undernoted sets out information in relation to the national policy context and funding available to take forward proposals.
- 2.3** Ministers continue to view Sure Start Scotland as a vital part of their overall social inclusion agenda, to help children improve their life chances. The focus for Sure Start Scotland continues to be to provide broad based support to families with young children, targeting those in greatest need.
- 2.4** To date, Sure Start has been used to extend existing and develop new services in East Ayrshire:
- Establishment of Early Years Day Care Services supporting the most vulnerable children and preventing children being accommodated by the local authority
  - Family Care Workers in
    - Bellsbank Family Centre (1 post)
    - Netherthird Nursery and Family Centre (2 posts)
  - Development of Netherthird Nursery and Family Centre
  - Fit Ayrshire Babies
  - Increased places available for children under 3 years of age in Hillbank Nursery and Family Centre.

**3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTS**

- 3.1** Hillbank Nursery and Family Centre currently has four Family Care Workers all of whom work with individual vulnerable families and support families through group work. They are a key resource in the Council's approach to early intervention. The level of referrals for Family Care Worker support exceeds the hours available to work effectively with families in Bellsbank

Nursery and Family Centre and Netherthird Nursery and Family Centre. In Bellsbank Nursery and Family Centre families living in Drongan, Rankinston, Dalrymple and other smaller communities cannot be supported.

- 3.2 In addition, there is currently no Family Care support in Flowerbank Nursery, which deal with a number of vulnerable families.
- 3.3 It is therefore proposed to establish one additional Family Care Worker post in Netherthird Nursery and Family Centre; two posts in Flowerbank Nursery and one post in Bellsbank Nursery and Family Centre. The cost of these proposals is £85,676, based on an average salary cost.
- 3.4 As part of planned support to vulnerable families with young children, Homestart the voluntary organisation was funded through the Changing Children's Services Fund. Homestart meets an identified need which cannot be met from existing nursery provision.
- 3.5 Homestart recruit and train volunteers to offer regular support, and practical help to young families under stress in their own homes, helping to prevent family crisis and breakdown. Homestart East Ayrshire has recruited 26 new volunteers who are supporting 48 children across East Ayrshire. A target of 100 children has been agreed with Homestart based on the funding available.
- 3.6 It is now proposed to fund the work of Homestart from the Sure Start budget as the aims and objectives of the service fit with the Sure Start outcomes for families with young children. This will be at an annual cost of £72,000 per annum.

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

- 4.1 The proposed developments can be met from the additional Sure Start funding allocated to the Council for financial year 2005/6.

#### **5. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The proposals contained in this report, if approved, will have staffing implications for the Department. Accordingly, the report will be submitted to the Corporate Governance Committee for consideration of the staffing matters. The staffing implications have been subject to consultations with the Trade Unions.

#### **6. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The further development of services to vulnerable children funded through Sure Start is consistent with the priorities as set out in the Community Plan.

#### **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 It is recommended that Members of the Education Committee:

- (i) approve the recommendations as set out in Section 3 of this report;
- (ii) ask the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services Department to remit the personnel implications to the Corporate Governance Committee;
- (iii) approve the proposal to fund Homestart; and
- (iv) otherwise note the contents of the report.

John Mulgrew  
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

18 October 2005  
KG/JA/JW

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**NIL**

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

**IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: KAY GILMOUR**