

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 12 NOVEMBER 2002**

#### **NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR QUALITY CHILDCARE 2003-2005**

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

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

- 1.1** The purpose of the report is to advise Members of the Education Committee of the new quality childcare programme in Scotland under the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) for 2003-2005.

### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** NOF was created in 1998 to distribute Lottery Grants for education, health and environment initiatives. The Fund delivers programmes across the UK that are designed to improve the quality of life for people and communities and to address disadvantage. The Fund is designed to complement Government strategies.
- 2.2** The out of school hours childcare programme (OSHC), launched in January 1999 set out to create new childcare places across the UK. In Scotland, the Scottish executive's target for new childcare places is 50,000.
- 2.3** The programme has already created over 25,000 new places in Scotland. In East Ayrshire, a total of 1,005 new Out of School Childcare places have been established through NOF.
- 2.4** Funding from the OSHC programme provides one year start up funding for projects for children aged 3-14 (16 with special needs).
- 2.5** Whilst the growth has been significant, there have been concerns about the long-term sustainability of the sector, particularly in areas of disadvantage.
- 2.6** In 2001, NOF introduced two and three years funding to projects in 25 percent of the most disadvantaged postcode areas. In addition, Childcare Partnerships were asked to nominate pockets of disadvantage to be eligible for longer term funding. Overall in East Ayrshire the areas which fall into the category of most disadvantage as defined by NOF are:
- Shortlees, Riccarton and Caprington
  - Auchinleck
  - Muirkirk/Logan
  - New Cumnock
  - Altonhill/Longpark
  - Doon Valley

### **3. THE NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR QUALITY CHILDCARE PROGRAMME.**

- 3.1** The new NOF programme for quality childcare aims to build on the success of the OSHC programme to help create a vibrant, sustainable and good quality childcare sector in Scotland.
- 3.2** Both the OSHC and the new opportunities for quality childcare programme are designed to complement the Scottish Childcare Strategy, the aim of which is to make high quality childcare for children aged 0-14 years available, accessible and affordable in every neighbourhood.
- 3.3** The Fund has made available £14.4 million under the new programme to support capital and revenue childcare projects for children aged 0-14 (16 with special needs). The Fund may support revenue projects for up to 3 years but all projects will be required to demonstrate how they will be sustainability after the life of the grant.
- 3.4** There are two stages to the application process. Childcare Partnerships will act as the lead organisation at stage one, which will involve the submission of a portfolio plan that will identify projects that will meet the childcare needs in their area. Thereafter, individual projects will then apply to the Fund at stage two.
- 3.5** Each Partnership has been notified of the allocation available in their area using the formula used by the Scottish Executive for the allocation of project support for the Scottish Childcare Strategy. In East Ayrshire this is £276,000.

### **4. KEY OUTCOMES AND PRIORITIES FOR THE PROGRAMME**

- 4.1** Childcare Partnerships have been asked to identify the priorities for their area by 28 February 2002. The plan is expected to meet the priorities of the programme which are outlined below:

<b>OUTCOMES</b>	<b>PRIORITIES</b>
To improve the quality of new and existing Childcare provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Capital support to childcare projects Outdoor play</li><li>• Workforce development</li></ul>
To increase access to childcare for Disadvantaged groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Childcare projects which support children</li><li>• Childcare projects which provide support to families</li></ul>
To demonstrate a holistic approach by combining different activities in after school care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Projects which combine care and learning</li></ul>

**4.2** Once the plans have been agreed by the Fund, individual projects will submit a detailed application to the Fund no later than June 2005. All projects should have been included in the original portfolio plan and the application form must be endorsed by the Childcare Partnership.

## **5. FINANCIAL/LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

**5.1** The further developments in relation to childcare places is in line with both national and local policy direction, and, in particular, East Ayrshire Children and Young Persons Service Plan 2001-04.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**6.1** Members of the Education Committee are asked to note the contents of this report.

28 October 2002  
KG/JA/JW

John Mulgrew  
Director of Educational and Social Services

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. Childcare Strategy for Scotland, Scottish Executive, May 1998
2. New Opportunities for Quality Childcare, Scotland, New Opportunities Fund , September 2002

Members wishing further information should contact Kay Gilmour, Head of Community Support tel. no. (01563) 576104 or Janie Allen, Principal Officer Early Years (01563) 576185

### **IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER- KAY GILMOUR**

**AGENDA**