

BOOKSTART SCHEME AND BOOKSTART POSTS

29 With reference to paragraphs 18 and 22 of the Minutes of the meetings of the Education Committee held on 21 May 2000 and this Committee held on 1 November 2004, respectively, there was submitted a report dated 20 April 2006 by the Director of Community Services (1) reminding Members of the background to the Council's Bookstart Scheme and Bookstart posts; (2) advising that the scheme had been awarded an additional two years funding; (3) seeking approval for the extension of the posts of (a) Bookstart Development Worker at salary grade AP3/4, and (b) Bookstart Plus Development Worker at salary grade AP2 for a further two years until 31 March 2008, and (4) intimating that the funding for the posts would be met from the Surestart Budget.

Decided:

- (1) that the posts of the Bookstart Development Worker and Bookstart Plus Development Worker be extended until 31 March 2008;
- (2) that the report be referred to the Policy and Resources (Personnel) Sub-Committee for consideration and the Education (Resources) Sub-Committee for information, and
- (3) that the report be otherwise noted.

**NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL
REPORT**

To: COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE		Subject: BOOKSTART SCHEME AND BOOKSTART POSTS
From: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES		
Date: 20 TH APRIL 2006	Ref: LMcM/CR	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report refers to the externally funded temporary posts of Bookstart Development Worker (AP3/4), originally established by the Education Committee in May 2000 and the part time Bookstart Plus Development worker (AP2), originally established by the Community Services in November 2004. The Education Department has recently confirmed that funding for a further 2-year period, beyond the earlier expiry date of 31 March 2006, has been secured and on this basis permission is sought to extend the posts for this further temporary period.

2. BACKGROUND

Bookstart Development Worker (AP3/4)

- 2.1 The Bookstart project was initiated in 1992 by Book Trust Scotland, working co-operation with Birmingham library services, the South Birmingham health authority and Birmingham University School of Education. Health visitors presented 300 parents/carers of 9 month old babies in Birmingham with a free baby book, advice about sharing books with babies and an invitation for the child to join the library. The families were monitored (along side a control group) and results indicated a substantial increase in awareness of books, sharing of books and use of libraries amongst participating families. On arrival at school, the children went on to perform noticeably better than their peers in the base line assessment.
- 2.2 North Lanarkshire Council's Libraries and Information section has participated in the bookstart scheme since 1999. The scheme is operated in partnership with NHS Lanarkshire and is funded by the Scottish Executive – who provide the materials for the project - and by Surestart funding for the development worker posts.
- 2.3 Through successive Surestart funding awards (2000 and 2003), the department has employed a Bookstart Development Worker to ensure that links are strengthened between the local authority and NHS Lanarkshire. The Development Worker chooses the materials that are delivered to health centres for onward distribution to parents and children. The worker also undertakes to identify, in co-operation with other agencies, (for example Social Work, nurseries etc) difficult to reach children and to ensure that they receive their packs and the Bookstart message. In addition to this the

Development Worker initiates contact with libraries to establish sessions for parents and children where the value of reading and libraries can be further emphasised for local communities.

- 2.4 At present there are 15 Bookstart rhyme and story sessions running on a regular basis throughout North Lanarkshire (see Appendix 1 for full details). Many of these sessions are proving so popular with parents and carers that some libraries need to run additional sessions to accommodate the numbers.
- 2.5 The project is based on the premise that once the sessions are established by the Development Worker the local staff based within the library will then take ownership of the sessions and continue operate them as part of the standard library programme.

Bookstart Plus Development Worker (part time) AP2

- 2.6 As a result of the success of the initial bookstart pilot project in North Lanarkshire, the Bookstart Plus scheme was developed which is aimed at a slightly older age range of children than the initial Bookstart project and targets children between the ages of 18 months and 3 years. This project, entirely funded by Surestart, currently employs a part-time Bookstart Plus Development Worker (12 hours) who ensures that all children within the age range receive a further Bookstart gift pack, generally at their 2 year check up. The contents of this pack are aimed at providing materials, which will allow children to continue to develop their reading skills.
- 2.7 The role of the Bookstart Plus Development Worker is also to establish sessions for slightly older children maintaining contact with books and libraries.
- 2.8 The stated objectives of the overall Bookstart Plus project can be summarised as follows:-
- to ensure that all babies from within North Lanarkshire receive a Bookstart pack;
 - to establish story & rhyme time sessions in all North Lanarkshire libraries;
 - to encourage early membership of libraries to promote further reading opportunities in North Lanarkshire;
 - to promote early literacy among children in North Lanarkshire; and
 - to facilitate inclusion within North Lanarkshire by establishing outreach activities with various agencies to improve reading and literacy with particular concentration on groups dealing with vulnerable groups and parents.
- 2.9 A series of targets have been established for the project. Details of the project development plan for 2006 - 2007 can be found in Appendix 2.

3. CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 Financial Implications

- 3.1.1 The Surestart budget will provide 100% of the funding for the posts of Bookstart Development Worker, graded AP3/4 and Bookstart Plus Development Worker (part time), graded AP2. Materials for the Bookstart project are provided by the Scottish Executive, via Book Trust Scotland, and those for the Bookstart Plus project will be funded from the Surestart budget allocation.

3.2 **Personnel Implications**

3.2.1 The contracts of the current post holders will require to be extended for a further 2 years until 31st March 2008.

4. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1 The Committee recommended to:

4.1.1 approve the extension of the posts funded through Surestart as outlined in paragraph 3.2; and

4.1.2 refer the report to the Policy & Resources (Personnel) Sub Committee for approval and to the Education (Resources) Sub Committee for information.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Jones". The signature is stylized with a large, looped initial 'P' and a long horizontal stroke at the end.