

**NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL  
REPORT**

TO: Social Work Committee	Subject: Scottish Office Consultation Exercise on the Drug Prevention Initiative Advisory Group Report
FROM: J Dickie Director of Social Work	
DATE OF COMMITTEE: 22 April 1997	
REF: JD/MR	

**1. Purpose of Report**

To advise the Social Work Committee on the content of the Drug Prevention Initiative Advisory Group report which has been prepared by the Scottish Office and to make recommendations which should be passed to the Scottish Office as part of the consultation exercise on the report.

**2. Background**

The first phase of the Drug Prevention Initiative was launched by the Home Office in 1990. Twenty small drug prevention teams were set up in areas where drug misuse was considered to be particularly prevalent. Two of these teams were set up in Scotland, based in Dundee and Glasgow. The Home Office restructured the initiative in 1995 resulting in 12 larger teams operating in England with the aim of demonstrating by March 1999, effective approaches to stimulate community based action to tackle drug misuse. The Scottish Office assumed responsibility at that time for funding the Dundee and Glasgow teams. The review is based on extensive consultation with members of local advisory groups and key players at both local and national level. This has been achieved through analysis of documentary materials, interviews, and questionnaires which were sent out to a wide range of agencies in Dundee and Glasgow. The advisory group was set up to draw together the findings of the review and to recommend future action. It comprised representatives from the Scottish Office and key national and local agencies.

The work piloted by the teams has been assessed against a good practice template drawn from papers published by the Home Office during the first phase of the initiative. The teams have in their own particular style and within their structural limitations, responded to quite clear local demands for drug prevention work. They have much to pass on in terms of good practice, especially the work to facilitate community involvement in assisting drugs misuse. They are however limited in scope and coverage and do not fit into any clear strategic or organisational framework.

### 3. **Review of the Drug Prevention Initiative**

This policy review was commissioned by ministers in February 1996 and the remit of the review was to:-

- \* Examine how the drug prevention teams in Dundee and Glasgow inter-related with the overall provision of, principally, primary drug prevention work in Scotland.
- \* Review the role of these teams against the implementation of the ministerial drugs task force report: "drugs in Scotland : meeting the challenge", and the setting up of Drug Action Teams in each Health Board area.
- \* Recommend how the resources of the teams could best be used to deliver, in a cost effective and efficient manner, the drug prevention aims of the task force report and to meet drug prevention needs at a local and/or national level.

The review was required to arrive at options as to how the resources needed to keep these two teams in operation (ie £400,000 per annum) could best be invested in terms of drug prevention work in Scotland. The advisory group was therefore required to take specific account of the views of Drug Action Teams, particularly those in Tayside and greater Glasgow and the strategic plans which these teams have drawn up for their areas.

### 4. **Scottish Experience**

The drug prevention teams in Dundee and Glasgow were initially set up as part of the Home Office drugs prevention initiative. Each team consisted of a team leader, senior development officer and an administrator supported by a local advisory group. Each received funding of £200,000 per annum of which £75,000 was available to fund local initiatives. In all, these teams have supported more than 1500 drug prevention projects and drawn together a wide range of statutory and voluntary sector organisations addressing local drugs problems.

The teams have worked at local level to promote a community based approach to drugs prevention in the following ways:-

- \* Raising public awareness about the problems associated with drugs misuse.
- \* Achieving a better co-ordinated drugs prevention effort.
- \* Supporting the work of existing agencies in ways which would extend the drugs prevention work.

- \* Mobilising other groups and those parents, families, tenants, churches and the media to be active in drug prevention.
- \* Initiating and sponsoring projects which have the support of community representatives.

A community based approach to drug prevention was emphasised because it was recognised that the nature of drugs misuse can vary between areas and that many organisations, groups and individuals have already been involved in trying to prevent the spread of drugs misuse and much can be gained by building on what is already there. Perhaps the strongest argument for this approach is that successful long-term solutions to drug problems will only be found if all sections of the community pull together in co-ordinated action and if there is an input from individuals and groups who historically might have felt excluded from participation in drugs prevention work.

#### 5. **Ministerial Drugs Task Force "Drugs in Scotland Meeting the Challenge"**

This report was published in October 1994 and led to new arrangements for local co-ordination and service planning. Drug Action Teams have now been addressed in each Health Board area and in Lanarkshire a strategic plan for tackling drugs misuse, has been prepared. The Drug Action Teams comprise of key players at a senior level who are able to stimulate action at a local level, as the Directors of Education and Social Work are members.

In May 1996 the all party "Scotland Against Drugs" campaign was launched. It reflects the importance which all the political parties in Scotland have attached to involving communities in tackling drugs misuse.

#### 6. **Review Methodology**

The review of the drugs prevention initiative aimed to provide a description and assessment of the existing structures and work of the Dundee and Glasgow drug prevention teams highlighting principles of good practice which could inform a drug prevention strategy in the wider context. It also set out to construct an analysis of key professional groups within relevant agencies to determine how the teams have networked and established themselves within the local and national drug prevention scene. The review has also set out a description of the community development principles underpinning the work of the teams and the framework within which projects have been grant aided.

Finally, an assessment of the impact of the teams on the local and national scene against good practice guidelines drawn together from published Home Office papers about the lessons learned in the first phase of the initiative has been carried out.

## 7. **Data**

The report has been based on five principal sources of data:-

- \* Analysis of documentary materials relating to the teams.
- \* Interviews with members of the local advisory groups and other key players from the local and national drug prevention scene.
- \* General research material on the nature of the local drugs problems in Dundee and Glasgow.
- \* The result of 40 questionnaires returned from a total of 76 which had been sent out to a wide range of statutory and voluntary agencies in Dundee and Glasgow, working across the whole spectrum of drugs misuse.

## 8. **Report Recommendations**

The main recommendations of the report and the comments of North Lanarkshire Council Departments of Education, Leisure Services, Environmental Services and Social Work, are set out below:-

<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>North Lanarkshire Council Comment</u>
i) The Advisory Group recommends the setting up of a new national drugs prevention unit to provide a national focus on drug prevention work and to collate and disseminate evidence of effectiveness in this field by :-	All departments support this recommendation.
* The dissemination of good practice to ensure compatibility and consistency between local and national prevention approaches	
* The evaluation of the process and outcome of initiatives funded through the unit.	
* The facilitation of inter-agency training	

- \* Networking with the private sector and other organisations to pump prime funding from drug prevention initiatives and to act as a central resource which would provide Drug Action Teams with advice, guidance and access to potential sources of funding in order to assist them in taking forward their proposals for prevention initiatives.
  - \* The setting of clear criteria for the grant funding, monitoring and evaluation of local initiatives and proposals which could be supported through the community drug action scheme.
  - \* Administration and monitoring of drug prevention monies be rationalised.
- ii) Funding - the creation of the national drug prevention unit would provide a focal point for the development of community involvement in drug prevention, the development of effective approaches and the better targetting of resources for prevention work.
- iii) Accountability - to facilitate the development of strategic direction in this area it is envisaged that the unit would report to an advisory committee on its work and progress.
- iv) Location - the advisory group suggested it would be sensible to locate new drugs prevention unit in the central belt.
- This recommendation is welcome but there is some concern that the overall level of funding may be too restricted and amount to spreading limited resources too thinly
- This recommendation is supported
- North Lanarkshire Council departments would argue that North Lanarkshire Council because of its good communication networks would be a very appropriate location for such a unit.

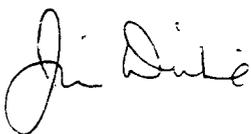
- v) Timescales - the implementation of the national drug prevention unit would involve the winding up of the drug prevention teams in Dundee and Glasgow and a reinvestment of the resources committed to these teams. The new unit should begin operating as soon as possible for an initial period of five years.
- This recommendation is supported

## 9 **Conclusion**

The Advisory Group's report is a very welcome addition to the work which is already underway in North Lanarkshire in collaboration with other agencies such as Police and Health Board and the voluntary sector and it's recommendations are to be welcomed.

## 10 **Recommendations**

1. To note the terms of the Advisory Group's report.
2. To pass the comments contained in this report at Sections 8: 9: & 10 to the Scottish Office.



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