



COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

7th September 2006

Integrated
Strategy for
Early Years
Education and
Care.
548/4(8)

A2. The Council, with reference to its Minute No. B4 of 27th July 2006, considered proposed Terms of Reference for the development of an Early Years Strategy for the 0 to 5 year age range.

The Council recalled that at its Meeting of 27th July 2006, it had received a presentation from the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture exploring some of the complexities involved in developing a coherent Early Years Strategy. Both the presentation and an accompanying report had focused on provision for children aged 3 to 5, thus reflecting the scope of R.C.54/2005 (entitled 'Investing in our future: A vision for early childhood education and care for children in Jersey', which had been presented by the Education, Sport and Culture Committee on 5th July 2005). However, it had been recognised that such provision was only a small component of arrangements for children aged 0-5 and support for their parents/carers. The Council further recalled that it had been agreed that the Education, Sport and Culture, Social Security, Health and Social Services and Treasury and Resources Departments should work together, under the auspices of the Social Strategy Group to develop an Early Years Strategy for the 0 to 5 year age range by the end of 2006.

In recent years, there had been a number of studies and reports into Child Care Provision which had resulted in a number of developments, including the formation of the Jersey Child Care Trust, the enhancement of tax allowances for child care costs, the introduction of a child care allowance for low income groups and support for the policy to provide a nursery class at every non-fee paying primary school. However such developments had not constituted a coherent family policy, based on clear values, which recognised that the States should actively support parents in the choices they made in the best interests of child development.

It was envisaged that the officer group would undertake the following -

- (a) bring forward recommendations for a comprehensive strategy for supporting early years childcare and education in respect of the 0-5 age group;
- (b) consider the appropriate arrangements for financial support for the parents and carers of this age group, including benefits and tax allowances;
- (c) take account of the potential impact of any proposals on existing provision;
- (d) ensure that any recommendations or options for development are fully costed;
- (e) ensure that the recommendations balance the interests of Private and Public sector provision to create choice as far as possible within an efficient system of provision; and,

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(f) work within the current strategic and business plan framework.

It was proposed that the officer group would take account of existing provision for the support of children aged 0-5 and their parents/carers; relevant reviews, reports and research into the development of effective Early Years provision drawn from the United Kingdom and other jurisdictions; responses received from the public consultation on R.C.54, as well as the key principles set out in 'Every Person Counts - A Social Policy framework for Jersey'. The Council agreed that the membership of the officer group should comprise senior staff with appropriate knowledge, experience and influence, as nominated by the relevant Chief Officers, from the Education, Sport and Culture, Health and Social Services, Employment and Social Security and Treasury and Resources Departments, under the chairmanship of Mr. Mario Lundy, Assistant Director Schools and Colleges, Education, Sport and Culture Department. It was further agreed that an invitation would be extended to Ms. Fiona Vacher, Executive Director of the Jersey Child Care Trust to join the officer group. It was anticipated that the initial time commitment for each officer would be approximately 10 working days, and the group would report to the Social Policy Strategy Group, chaired by the Chief Executive, with the intention of presenting its report and recommendations to the Council no later than December 2006.

The Council endorsed the Terms of Reference and membership of the officer group.



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