

Social Services Standing Sub Committee
10 May 2006

IRVINE, 10 May 2006 - At a Meeting of the Social Services Standing Sub Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

Present

Margaret Munn, Jean Highgate and Nan Wallace.

In Attendance

L. Skehal, Head of Service (Community Care) and A. Beattie, Manager (Children and Families Services) (Social Services); and M. McKeown and C. Graham, Corporate and Democratic Support Officers (Chief Executive's).

Chair

Councillor Munn in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

Ian Clarkson, Margie Currie and Alan Munro.

1. Strategic Review of Residential Children's Services & Fostering Services

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) on the outcome of the Strategic Review of Residential Children's Services and Fostering Services.

At its meeting on 28 February 2006, the Social Services Committee considered a report on the outcome of the Strategic Review of Residential Children's Services and Fostering Services, approved the implementation of preferred option 'C' set out in the report, and agreed to remit the report to the Standing Sub Committee for further scrutiny.

The 4 Strategic Outcomes of the Review were as follows:-

(a) Residential Services

- To create smaller, purpose-built residential units designed to meet the individual needs of up to a maximum of 6 young people;
- To deliver a qualified and registerable residential Childcare workforce by 2008; and
- To improve unit management structures, including better staff/child ratios.

(b) Fostering Services

- To change the balance of care between Fostering and Residential Services by the creation of a fee-based Foster Carers Scheme;
- To create, over a 5-year period, 20 fee-based Foster Carers and 10 contract Respite Carers to provide a minimum of 40 Foster placements; and
- To provide training opportunities, regular respite and other supports as well as financial incentives commensurate with other caring professions.

(c) Crisis Intervention

- To maintain children within their families and provide support where necessary to prevent long-term admission to care;
- To increase the number of area team Social Work staff; and
- To further develop the Rosemount Team to increase capacity for intensive support and crisis intervention.

(d) Investment in Services

- To develop services within North Ayrshire to prevent children and young people requiring to be accommodated outwith the authority; and
- To provide local employment.

The intention is to invest in fostering and crisis and support services over the period 2006/07 to 2011/12, in order to change the balance of care from residential to more community based options, to keep children with their families so far as possible, and to improve the overall quality of the residential services provided by the Council.

The officers present provided further information and clarification on the proposals set out in the report and responded to Members' questions. The need to regularly review the implementation of the proposals was emphasised to ensure that the Council is able to respond to changing demands on residential children's services and fostering services.

Noted.

The meeting ended at 3.00 p.m.