

Social Services Committee
19 November 2002

Irvine, 19 November 2002 - At a Meeting of the Social Services Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

Present

Alan Munro, Margaret McDougall, Ian Clarkson, Alan Hill, Elisabeth Marshall, John Moffat, Margaret Munn and David O'Neill.

In Attendance

B. Devine, Chief Executive; B. Docherty, Corporate Director, L. Skehal, Head of Service (Community Care), S. Paterson, Head of Service (Children, Families and Criminal Justice) and E. Watson, Youth Crime Officer (Social Services), D. Nibloe, Chief Financial Accountant (Expenditure)(Finance); M. Adams and M. McKeown, Corporate and Democratic Support Officers (Chief Executive's).

Chair

Councillor Munro in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

John Donn, Jack Carson, Stewart Dewar, Drew Duncan, David Gallagher, Jane Gorman, Donald Reid, Robert Reilly and Samuel Taylor.

1. Presentation: "Carers: Hope for the Future"

The Committee received a video presentation entitled "Carers: Hope for the Future". The video, commissioned by Social Services, highlighted the experiences of one particular carer of two physically handicapped young people in obtaining support and respite services, and demonstrated a need for care partners to work together to ensure that services are delivered in a co-ordinated and effective manner to meet the needs of service users.

The Committee agreed that (a) copies of the video be circulated to relevant care partners; and (b) the Corporate Director (Social Services) work with partners to address the issues highlighted in the video.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 1 October 2002, copies of which had previously been circulated, were approved.

3. Fast Track Specialist Children's Hearings Pilot

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) on the plans announced by the Scottish Executive in October 2002 to introduce Fast Track Specialist Children's Hearings for persons under 16 year olds who persistently break the law, and on the Executive's decision to pilot the scheme in three areas, including North Ayrshire, from January 2003 for a period of two years.

It is intended that the Fast Track Hearings will play a key role in the Scottish Executive's Action Programme to reduce youth crime in 2002. North Ayrshire Council will take forward a pilot scheme in association with East and South Ayrshire Councils. The pilot will aim to process cases faster than under the current arrangements; improve reporting standards; provide Children's Panels with better options for the disposal of cases; improve the monitoring of interventions; and improve communication with victims. Children's Panel members involved in the pilot will be trained before the pilots commence. The pilots will be fully funded by the Scottish Executive, and the Executive will also undertake central co-ordination and monitoring and evaluation.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve participation in Fast Track Specialist Children's Hearing Pilot as set out in the report; and (b) that the Corporate Director (Social Services) agree staffing requirements with the Assistant Chief Executive (Personnel).

4. Strategic Review of Services for Older People Phase 2: Consultation

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) on the outcome of the consultation exercise completed as phase 2 of the Strategic Review of Older People Service's approved by Social Services Committee in April 2001.

Consultation on the initial review findings took place between July and October 2002. A wide range of stakeholders were consulted through a variety of means, including questionnaires and focus groups. A number of key themes in the areas of joint working, training, equipment, and resources, were identified throughout the different types of consultation.

The Committee agreed that the feedback from the consultation exercise be reflected in the final report on the future shape of older people's services.

5. Free Personal and Nursing Care

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) on the implementation within North Ayrshire of Free Personal Care for people aged 65 and over who live in the community and in care homes, and free nursing care for all people resident in care homes.

Free Personal Care was introduced on 1 July 2002. The total funding allocated by Scottish Executive for financial year 2002/03 was £107m, of which North Ayrshire Council Social Services received £3.226m. The report highlighted how these funds were allocated, and provided information on the numbers of people receiving free personal and nursing care relating to care in care homes, and free personal care at home. Implementation is progressing well, although it is expected that the impact of winter could bring additional pressures and demands for older people's services.

Noted.

6. Single Shared Assessment

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) on the progress being made to implement the Scottish Executive's National Policy of Single Shared Assessment.

Single Shared Assessment recognises the lead responsibility of social services within local authorities, and the importance of effective partnerships with both health and housing professionals, in achieving the best outcome for people using community care services. It is anticipated that Single Shared Assessment will benefit service users, agencies and professionals alike, streamlining systems and speeding up the delivery of services. The Executive expects that Single Shared Assessment will start for Older People in April 2003 and be applied across the rest of the Community Care Groups thereafter.

The introduction of Single Shared Assessment will have a considerable impact on the delivery of services for older people and other care groups and a considerable amount of work has been undertaken to prepare for its implementation. A detailed work plan has been drawn up by the Joint Planning Group (Community Care) and this was appended to the report. In addition a programme of staff training will be delivered on a multi-agency basis to ensure that staff are aware of how the new system will operate.

The Committee agreed to approve the arrangements in place to progress Single Shared Assessment within North Ayrshire.

7. Scottish Social Services Council: Codes of Practice for Social Services Workers and Employers

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) on the new Codes of Practice introduced by the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and their implications for social work services workers and employers.

The SSSC was established by the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 and began its work on 1st October 2001. Its main purpose is to regulate the social service workforce and their education and training and, in so doing, protect those who use services, promote the highest standards of conduct and practice among social service workers, and strengthen and support the professionalism of the workforce.

Copies of the Codes of Practice produced by SSSC were issued with the Agenda for the meeting. The Codes of Practice are a key first step in introducing regulatory systems for social work across the UK and will have a significant impact on North Ayrshire Council as employers, and for all Social Services staff.

The Committee agreed to approve arrangements for implementing the requirements of the Scottish Social Services Council within North Ayrshire as set out in the report.

8. Revenue Budget 2002/2003: Budgetary Control

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Finance) on the budgetary control position for Social Services at the end of September 2002, and on projections for the financial year 2002/2003.

Noted.

The meeting ended at 3.30 p.m.