

Social Services Committee
9 June 1999

Irvine, 9 June 1999 - At a Meeting of the Social Services Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

Present

Alan Munro, John Donn, Jack Carson, Stewart Dewar, David Gallagher, Jane Gorman, Elliot Gray, Elisabeth Marshall, Joseph McKinney, John Moffat, Margaret Munn, David O'Neill, and Robert Reilly.

Also Present

Jacqueline Browne.

In Attendance

G. Irving, Corporate Director (Social Services); A. Hewitt, Head of Service Management and S. Burns, Manager (Area Services) (Social Services); A. Herbert (Assistant Chief Executive, Finance); A. Osborne, Corporate Policy Officer and M. McKeown, Administration Officer (Chief Executive's).

Chair

Mr Munro in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

Ian Clarkson, Alan Hill and Samuel Taylor.

1. Information Briefing

The Corporate Director (Social Services) provided the Committee with an overview of the remit, responsibilities, structure and main contact points for Social Work Services.

2. Income Maximisation

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) on the relationship between the Income Maximisation Initiative and the effects of the amended Home Care Charging Policy.

All Home Care clients have now had a finance reassessment, and any shortfall in benefit entitlement identified through this process has been pursued on behalf of the client prior to charging being amended. In the past three years the Income Maximisation Initiative has successfully generated £1.3 million additional income on behalf of Home Care clients, thereby minimising any financial hardship as a result of the amended Home Care Charging Policy.

The Committee (a) noted the positive results of the amended Home Care Charging system and related Income Maximisation Policy; and (b) agreed that in future, benefit claims will only be generated when new clients are assessed or existing clients have changed circumstances.

3. Dreghorn: Greenwood Resource Centre: "Future Opportunities Day"

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) on the background to the "Future Opportunities Day" to be held at Greenwood Resource Centre, Dreghorn, on 15th June 1999.

The event, which is being organised jointly by Educational Services and Social Services aims to provide young people and adults with Special Needs and learning disabilities with an

opportunity to access information about possible future training/career opportunities.

The Committee agreed (a) to support the event; and (b) that the Corporate Director (Social Services) report on the outcome of the event and submit further proposals for similar initiatives which might be held in the future.

4. Day Services for the Learning Disabled

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) on developments in relation to Day Services for adults with learning disabilities and proposals to maximise the use of current resources.

Since local government reorganisation Social Services have been improving the provision of Day Services for adults with learning disabilities in North Ayrshire. Details of current and new developments were outlined and, arising from the Day Care Review carried out under the Community Care Plan, it is proposed that the resources at Hazeldene and Fergushill Resource Centres should be merged.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the proposals resulting from the Day Care Review; (b) to remit the staffing implications to the Corporate Services Committee; and (c) that the Corporate Director (Social Services) arrange a programme of visits to Social Services facilities for members of the Social Services Committee.

5. New Futures Funding

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) on the background to the "New Futures" initiative, funded by The Scottish Office through Scottish Enterprise, which is aimed at persons aged between 16 and 21 years who are unable or unprepared to access the opportunities made available through the Welfare to Work Programme e.g. the homeless, drug users, offenders, disabled people, and single parents.

Social Services have been successful in securing "New Futures" funding of £55,000 per annum until March 2002, for the appointment of two Support Workers, with clerical back-up, to assist the work of the Child Care Throughcare Team.

The Committee agreed that the Corporate Director (Social Services) submit progress reports on an annual basis.

6. Children's Services Development Fund

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) on the proposed expenditure of £314,000 additional grant, made available by The Scottish Office in financial year 1999/2000, to develop children's services in North Ayrshire.

The Fund will be directed to three main areas:- schemes to increase community based placements; the implementation of key recommendations of the Kent Report; and schemes to support families with a focus on early intervention and prevention. Details of how the grant will be spent in each of these areas were outlined.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the package of proposals designed to improve and develop child care services; (b) to remit the staffing implications to the Corporate Services Committee; and (c) that the Corporate Director (Social Services) submit progress reports to the Committee as appropriate.

7. Edinburgh's Children: A Report of the Edinburgh Inquiry into Abuse and Protection of Children in Care

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) on the Report of the Edinburgh Inquiry Into Abuse and Protection of Children in Care.

The Report contains 135 recommendations aimed at protecting children in care. Measures being taken or proposed by Social Services in response to these recommendations were highlighted.

The Committee agreed that (a) the Group concerned with implementing the key recommendations of the Kent Report should also take account of the recommendations contained in the report of the Edinburgh Inquiry, consider their implications for North Ayrshire, and submit a full combined report to a future meeting of the Social Services Committee; and (b) the Corporate Director (Social Services) submit progress reports to future meetings of the Committee.

8. Modernising Community Care: An Action Plan

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) on proposals to take up an allocation of £140,000 from The Scottish Office Incentive Fund to implement the Modernising Community Care Action Plan.

Funds are available in the first instance for the current financial year only, with the release of funds in subsequent years being dependent on the Council's performance in 1999/2000.

The Scottish Office requires Councils to implement action which will achieve better and quicker decision making; increase capacity to care for people at home; and enhance working together locally. To address these priorities five proposals for action have been developed covering Information Systems; Arrangements for Hospital Discharges; Occupational Therapy Services; Support to Locality Developments; and Mental Health Strategy.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the apportionment of the available budget in 1999/2000 between five key initiatives based on the principles set out in the Action Plan; and (b) to remit the staffing implications to Corporate Services Committee.

9. Advisory Committee on Inspection: Terms of Reference and Remit

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) on the background and current membership of the Advisory Committee on Inspection and related membership issues.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the terms and conditions and remit of the Advisory Committee on Inspection as outlined in the report; and (b) that the Corporate Director (Social Services) review the current membership and to recommend to Committee appointments for the next 3 years.

10. Appointments to Committees

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) on the requirement to nominate Members to serve on two related Sub-Committees.

The Committee agreed to appoint (a) Councillors Elliot Gray and John Donn to serve on the Advisory Committee on Inspection; and (b) Councillors Margaret Munn (Chair), Margaret McDougall (Depute Chair), Jack Carson (Depute Chair) and Alan Munro to serve on the Adoption, Fostering, Parental Responsibilities Orders and Shared Care Committee.

The meeting ended at 3.15 p.m.

