

Social Work Committee
13 January 1999

Irvine, 13 January 1999 - At a Meeting of the Social Work Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

Present

James Jennings, Margaret Munn, Elliot Gray, Jack Carson, Ian Clarkson, John Donn, Joseph McKinney, Elizabeth McLardy, Robert Reilly, Gena Seales, and Samuel Taylor.

In Attendance

The Corporate Director (Social Services); P Bryers, Head of Planning and Development; A Hewitt, Head of Service Management (Social Services); R Lee, Assistant Principal Officer (Financial Services); J Paul, Head of Technical Services (Property Services); M McCormack, Media Relations Officer and S Paxton, Administration Officer (Chief Executive).

Chair

Mr Jennings in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

James Clements, David Gallagher, Jane Gorman, George Steven and Richard Wilkinson.

1. Minutes Confirmed

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 18 November 1998, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed.

2. Kilbirnie: Craigton Road: Proposed Garnock Area Social Work Office

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Property Services) on tenders received for a Several Works Contract to construct a new Garnock Area Social Work Office at Craigton Road, Kilbirnie.

The Committee agreed to authorise the Corporate Director (Property Services) to accept the lowest tender of £747,939.27 from McTaggart Construction Limited, Dalry, in respect of the construction of a new Garnock Area Social Work Office.

3. BBC Scotland: Frontline Scotland: "Crisis in Residential Care"

The Corporate Director (Social Services) advised that he had been interviewed by S BBC Frontline Scotland in early December 1998 as part of a proposed programme on residential care provision and funding in Scotland. Frontline Scotland had chosen North Ayrshire Council for this programme as a result of (a) the current waiting list for nursing home/residential care; and (b) the Council's openness regarding the situation.

The Corporate Director advised the BBC on the actions being taken by the Council in conjunction with the Health Board to address the issue. Frontline Scotland will also interview Consultant Geriatricians and clients. If completed it is likely that the television programme will be broadcast towards the end of January or beginning of February 1999. The BBC will inform the

Corporate Director of progress.

Noted.

4. Children's Safeguard Review: The Kent Report

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) regarding the Government's response to the recommendations contained in the Children's Safeguard Review (The Kent Report) and actions taken by the Council to implement the Report's recommendations.

A number of recommendations have already been implemented by the Council including the introduction of new application forms for persons wishing to work with young people, a probationary period of employment and the appointment of a Young Person's Worker in conjunction with East Ayrshire Council. The Government has accepted that it will not be possible to implement all the recommendations contained in the Kent Report and, following a period of consultation with local authorities, has issued a formal response to the Report.

The Secretary of State for Scotland has indicated that there will be an additional £36.7m for a Children's Services Development Fund over the next three years to assist authorities in the implementation of the Report. The Fund has three component parts:-

(a) a transitional scheme to introduce community based placements (£2.2m in 1999/2000);

(b) the implementation of key proposals in the Report to improve children's advocacy services and the educational attainment of children looked after away from home (£4m in 1999/2000); and

(c) supporting families with children in the 0-3 age group (early intervention and prevention) (£3m in 1999/2000).

The additional resources will be available to local authorities committed to taking action across these three areas. The Council has already advised the Government of its commitment to the Report's findings and has been allocated £314,000 in financial year 1999/2000.

The Committee agreed that the Corporate Director (Social Services) submit further reports in due course on the implementation of the Kent Report's recommendations.

5. Winter Emergencies: Non-Recurring Funding

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) regarding proposals for the expenditure of the £478,000 Winter Emergency Funding obtained from Ayrshire and Arran Health Board.

Ayrshire and Arran Health Board were advised by the Scottish Office in November 1998 that its share of non-recurring funding to support the additional workload of the NHS over the winter period and maintain the downward trend in waiting lists amounted to £1.63m which must be spent within the current financial year. Councils and NHS Trusts in Ayrshire were invited to make bids for a portion of the resources which had to meet the objectives of (a) maintaining existing in-patient guarantees; (b) keeping people out of hospital; (c) shortening the length of stay in hospital; and (d) managing the pressure of admissions to due winter illnesses.

The Council submitted 13 projects for consideration by the Health Board for funding based on existing proven services which could be immediately extended with no additional start-up costs. The results of the Council's application were as undernoted:-

Description	Proposed £	Awarded £
-------------	---------------	--------------

Discharge from Hospital: Clearing Of Hospital Beds	88,000	88,000
Prevention of Hospital Admission: Vulnerable Elderly	41,000	41,000
Joint Occupational Therapy Support: Emergency Services	4,000	4,000
Community Alarm Service: Vulnerable Housebound	19,000	19,000
Islands Early Discharge Scheme	28,000	Nil
Augmented Home from Hospital Scheme: Early Discharge (Garnock Valley/North Coast Area)	28,000	21,000
Intensive Domiciliary Care Support: Services For Older People in the Irvine Area	50,000	40,000
Provision of Aids and Adaptations (Joint Application with Property Services)	90,000	65,000
Home From Hospital Services: Three Towns and Irvine Areas (Early Discharge)	18,000	18,000
Respite Care Scheme	27,000	27,000
Intensive Home Support Services: Three Towns and Kilbirnie/Largs Area	100,000	100,000
Terminal Illness Service (Garnock Valley/North Coast and Arran Area)	15,000	15,000
"Winter Visitors" Befriending Scheme For Isolated Vulnerable People	40,000	40,000
Total	<u>548,000</u>	<u>478,000</u>

The awards will enhance services to the elderly and other vulnerable groups during the winter period and the results of the monitoring and evaluation of the projects will be submitted to Ayrshire and Arran Health Board.

The Committee endorsed the action taken to utilise the funding provided.

6. Kilwinning: Smithstone House: Garden Project

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) on a proposal to develop a new Outreach Project for people with learning disabilities based at Smithstone House, Kilwinning.

Social Services, in accordance with the North Ayrshire Community Care Plan 1998-2001, endeavour to provide opportunities for people with learning difficulties to participate in outreach

projects or individual programmes within the community.

The Sacred Heart Fathers, who manage Smithstone House, Kilwinning, have approached the Council with a view to establishing a project to develop a walled garden as a sheltered and productive growing area. The garden would be leased to the Council at no cost and revenue accrued through the sale of plants would be re-invested in the Project. The Project will provide horticultural work/training experiences for adults with learning difficulties for three days per week and be staffed by existing Social Work staff and volunteers. Kilmarnock College will provide a tutor one day per week to deliver a number of modules ranging across all areas of garden work and horticulture including Health and Safety, working with tools, and plant cultivation.

The Committee agreed (a) the proposals for the development of a Garden Project at Smithstone House, Kilwinning; and (b) that the Corporate Director (Social Services) submit a further report on progress to the Committee by October 1999.

7. Modernising Community Care: An Action Approach

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) on a Scottish Office report published in October 1998 entitled "Modernising Community Care: An Action Plan", the main theme of which is the development of partnership approaches to community care involving Social Work, Health and Housing agencies. In December 1998 the Scottish Office Development Department issued a consultation draft on "Modernising Community Care: Guidance on the Housing Contribution" and allocated £5m in financial year 1999/2000 to assist authorities in the implementation of the Action Plan. The Council, following intimation of its commitment to the Government's Action Plan will receive an additional £140,000 Grant Aided Expenditure for 1999/2000. The level of funding in the following year will depend on performance in the first year and satisfactory plans for the second year.

Current community care practice in North Ayrshire already reflects progress towards many of the objectives set out in the Action Plan. These include:-

- (a) the establishment of good working relationships between Health, Housing and Social Work services;
- (b) the delegation of decision-making and budgets;
- (c) the establishment of Community Care Forums which involve users and carers in the planning and delivery of services; and
- (d) the provision of a Home from Hospital Service to facilitate hospital discharge and to provide intensive support for the initial period after discharge.

Other developments currently underway address other aspects of the Plan. These include (i) a review of the Occupational Therapy Service within Social Work together with an examination of policies for the provision of aids and equipment and links with the Health Service Occupational Therapy Service; and (ii) the provision of public information leaflets on Community Care.

There are, however, significant opportunities to develop further key themes of the Action Plan throughout Ayrshire. Partnership working with other agencies can be further enhanced and procedures improved to permit faster decision-making. The final chapter of the Action Plan posed a series of questions about the need for new powers for joint working, the responses to which will be submitted to the Scottish Office following discussions with Legal and Regulatory Services.

The Committee agreed (A) to endorse the Scottish Office document entitled "Modernising Community Care: An Action Plan" as a basis for future community care policy in North Ayrshire; (B) that the Corporate Director (Social Services) in consultation with Community Care Partners and Legal and Regulatory Services submit comments by the end of January 1999 on the need for new powers for joint working; and (C) that the Corporate Director (Social Services) submit a further report in due course detailing the proposals for the use of the additional funding linked to

the implementation of the Action Plan.

8. Advisory Committee on Inspection: Minutes

Submitted report by the Chief Executive, being the Minutes of the Meeting of the Advisory Committee on Inspection held on 14 December 1998.

Noted.

9. Irvine/Saltcoats: Addiction Centre Developments

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) regarding the provision of the substitute prescribing service operated from Townhead (Irvine) and Vernon Street (Saltcoats) Addiction Centres.

Social Work has assisted Ayrshire and Arran Health Board and the Community Health Care NHS Trust by providing a location and back-up counselling support for the substitute (methadone) prescribing service. The NHS Trust appoint medical staff to provide the substitute service while Social Work provides the counselling. The service has proved very effective in encouraging drug abusers to change their lifestyle but, due to the limited resources available, no new referrals have been accepted since April 1998.

Ayrshire and Arran Health Board and the Community Health Care NHS Trust have identified funding to increase the methadone prescribing service which will cover the cost of the increased use of methadone, pharmacy services, supervision and administration for the system and back-up counselling services. It is proposed to appoint two additional Addiction Counsellors to be deployed in Irvine and Saltcoats to support the extended methadone prescribing service and to re-grade the administrative and clerical staff located within both centres from GS1/2 to GS3 to reflect the additional workload on them resulting from the increased staffing level.

The total cost of implementing the proposal, £39,000 in a full year, will be met by Ayrshire and Arran Health Board.

The Committee agreed (a) to authorise the further development of the substitute prescribing service; and (b) to remit to the Support Services Committee consideration of the proposed amendments to the staffing structure at the Townhead and Vernon Street Addiction Centres.

10. Irvine: Structure of the Disability Resource Centre

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) on proposed alterations to the staffing structure of the new Disability Resource Centre, Irvine.

In April 1998, the Council, in partnership with North Ayrshire and Arran NHS Trust established a large, comprehensive Disability Resource Centre in the former Pavilion 9, Ayrshire Central Hospital. The Centre works closely with the Head Injury Project based at the Dirrans Centre, Kilwinning. Community and hospital-based Occupational Therapists, medical and nursing staff now make extensive use of both of these facilities. In addition, effective joint use of facilities and resources has been established with resulting savings for both the NHS Trust and the Council. The staffing structure for the Disability Resource Centre, inherited from Strathclyde Regional Council, is now inappropriate for a new comprehensive service and the staffing structure of the Disability Resource Centre has been subjected to an intensive review. It is proposed:-

- to delete the Caretaker/Cleaner post at the Head Injury Project, Dirrans Centre and transfer the existing staff member to the currently vacant post of Escort/Attendant at the Centre;
- to delete one post of Occupational Therapy Technical Assistant and one post of Therapy Assistant to be replaced by one post of Qualified Occupational Therapist;
- to replace the post of Information and Advice Worker with a post of Occupational Therapy Assistant;

- to re-designate the post of Personal Assistance Adviser to that of Resource Worker at no additional cost and with no change to grade;
- to re-grade one post of Occupational Therapy Assistant from GS1/2 to Technician Grade 2;
- to increase the working hours of a Qualified Occupational Therapist located within the Head Injury Service, Dorrans Centre, from 17.5 hours to 23.5 hours per week; and
- to re-grade the post of Clerical Assistant GS1/2 to GS3.

The cost of the proposals will be met from within the Social Work Revenue Budget 1998/99 and will result in an overall cost saving to the Council of approximately £3,000 in a full year.

The Committee (a) noted for their interest the proposed alterations to the staffing structure as detailed in the Director's report; and (b) agreed to remit the staffing proposals to the Support Services Committee for its consideration.

11. Kilbirnie: Amendment to Staffing Establishment

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) on amendments to the designation and duties of the post of Community Worker in the Kilbirnie Area Office in the light of the implementation of the Council's Social Inclusion Strategy.

The Corporate Strategy Committee at its meeting on 29 September 1998 agreed to the establishment of a Social Inclusion Strategy for Young People which sought wherever possible to support school age children with difficulties within their own communities. Social Work and Educational Services have collaborated to develop effective ways to achieve the aims of the Strategy and, in advance of its implementation, Social Work staff in the Kilbirnie Area developed effective working relationships with staff at Garnock Academy. A Social Group Worker assisted the school to provide intensive support to the most vulnerable young people engaged in the school's Flexible Education Programme and is now very heavily committed to joint work with Garnock Academy. The successful programme could be replicated in Largs Academy if another post of Social Group Worker was available.

It is proposed that the currently vacant post of Community Worker within the Kilbirnie Area be replaced by the post of a Social Group Worker to facilitate the further introduction of the Social Inclusion Strategy and enable resources to be targeted to support Largs Academy in particular. The cost of the proposal can be met from within the existing Revenue Budget as the salary grades for Community Workers and Social Group Workers are the same.

The Committee (a) noted the proposed changes to the designation and duties of the Community Worker to that of a Social Group Worker; and (b) agreed to remit the matter to the Support Services Committee for its consideration.

12. Irvine: Area Team: Re-alignment of Clerical Post

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) on an amendment to the clerical staffing establishment within the Irvine Area Team, arising from an examination of Community Care Clerical Services.

Following the re-organisation of local government, an examination of the administrative and clerical support within Social Work was undertaken, which recommended an increase to the clerical staffing establishment. The recommendations were not implemented however, due to financial constraints. A further examination of service provision and developments within Social Work practice has resulted in a more flexible and inter-changeable approach to clerical support in the intervening years. A requirement for additional clerical and administrative support has now been identified in the Irvine Area Team which cannot be met from existing resources.

It is proposed that an existing post of Part-time Clerical Assistant, graded at GS1/2 be increased from 17.5 hours per week to 35 hours per week and located in the Irvine Area Team to assist with the increased workload. This will incur additional full year costs of £4,640 which can be accommodated within the current Revenue Budget and will be included in the 1999/2000

Revenue Estimates.

The Committee (a) noted the proposal to increase the hours for one Clerical Assistant post from 17.5 hours per week to 35 hours per week and to re-locate the post in the Irvine Area Team; and (b) agreed to remit the matter to the Support Services Committee for its consideration.

13. Irvine: Children's Unit, 24 Kilwinning Road: Review of Staffing

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) regarding the reinstatement of two posts of Senior Residential Worker to the staffing establishment of the Children's Unit at 24 Kilwinning Road, Irvine.

In 1993 Strathclyde Regional Council commenced a review of residential childcare selecting several Children's Units in the Region including 24 Kilwinning Road, Irvine, to pilot an experimental flatter management structure which differed from the management structure of other Children's Units. As a result of a variety of factors including the re-organisation of local government, the experimental structure was not evaluated.

Operational experience has, however, revealed that a flatter management structure is difficult to operate within the context of a residential care setting and has resulted in a lack of senior staff coverage at critical times given that such Units operate twenty-four hours per day, every day of the year. Accordingly, it was necessary, as an interim measure, to reinstate the two previously deleted Senior Residential Worker posts on a temporary basis to ensure continuity and consistency of practice.

It is proposed that the two posts of Senior Residential Worker be reinstated on a permanent basis to the staffing structure of the Children's Unit at 24 Kilwinning Road, Irvine, at a cost of £44,100, as this would bring the staffing structure into line with compatible and comparable residential units in North Ayrshire. No budgetary provision, however, is available to meet the cost for the reinstatement in 1998/99.

The Committee agreed, subject to budgetary provision being made for 1999/2000, to increase the staffing establishment at the Children's Unit at 24 Kilwinning Road, Irvine by two posts of Senior Residential Worker.

14. Conferences and Seminars

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) on an invitation to attend the Annual Conference of the Association of Directors of Social Work (Scotland) (ADSW) which will take place from 13 to 16 April 1999 in the Stakis Dunblane Hydro Hotel.

The Committee agreed that the Chair and both Vice-Chairs attend the ADSW Conference.

The meeting ended at 2.40 p.m.