

Social Services Committee
17 November 1999

Irvine, 17 November 1999 - At a meeting of the Social Services Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 pm.

Present

Alan Munro, John Donn, Margaret McDougall, Ian Clarkson, David Gallagher, Elliot Gray, Alan Hill, Joseph McKinney, John Moffat, Margaret Munn, David O'Neill, Robert Reilly and Samuel Taylor.

In Attendance

G. Irving, Corporate Director (Social Services); A. Hewitt, Head of Service Management; P. Bryers, Head of Planning and Development; D. Wilson, Registration and Inspection Manager; and I. Kelly, Welfare Rights Development Officer (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

Jack Carson, Stewart Dewar, Jane Gorman and Elisabeth Marshall.

1. Minutes Confirmed

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 6 October 1999, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed.

2. Budgetary Control

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Finance) on the budgetary control position for Social Services.

The Committee (a) noted the current position and the projected overspend that will occur by 31 March 1999 unless further savings measures are identified; and (b) agreed that the Corporate Director (Social Services), in consultation with the Chair, continue to monitor the situation and report.

3. Advocacy Services in North Ayrshire

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) on the development of advocacy services in North Ayrshire and of plans for further expansion.

The Council and Ayrshire and Arran Health Board currently jointly fund Advocacy Information and Management Services Ltd (AIMS) which provides advocacy services to people with learning difficulties or mental health problems. The Health Board is now seeking to expand the services available for people with mental health problems and, from 1 April 2000, to provide services to people affected by dementia and older people with mental health disabilities.

The Committee agreed that the Corporate Director (Social Services) negotiate a contract for

advocacy services with Advocacy Information and Management Services Ltd (AIMS) on the terms indicated.

4. Learning Disability Developments and Resources Worker Post

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) on a further development in the area of learning disabilities.

As part of the Learning Difficulty Strategy, Social Services staff have worked closely with colleagues in Health and Housing to identify individuals who require to be assessed within hospitals/units and those at present living in the community but who may soon require additional support, such as, those who have elderly carers.

The Committee agreed that (a) a Joint Assessment Team be established with Ayrshire and Arran Primary Care NHS Trust; and (b) a post of Resource Worker be established for a two year period and to remit this element to the Corporate Services Committee for approval.

5. Head Injury Service

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) on major developments in relation to the Head Injury Service and resultant implications for staffing.

Demand for the Service has increased 300% since its inception four years ago and the range of provision has also increased markedly. Demand on staff and their skills has also increased over the period and it has become clear that the duties undertaken by the Outreach Worker are more commensurate with those of an Occupational Therapy Assistant.

The Committee agreed to re-designate the current full time post of Outreach Worker to that of Occupational Therapy Assistant and to remit this to the Corporate Services Committee for approval.

6. The Social Work Bill

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) on imminent major developments in relation to future of Social Work Services in Scotland.

In March 1999 the Scottish Executive issued a White Paper entitled "Aiming for Excellence: Modernising Social Work Services in Scotland". The White Paper addresses new and significant developments for social work services which will have implications for the Council including the creation of a Scottish Social Services Council; the establishment of a Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care; the recommendations contained in the Royal Commission on Long Term Care for the Elderly; the function of local authority Children's Services Plans and the development of Children's Services; and future developments in Criminal Justice Services. A consultation on the White Paper will be issued shortly.

The Committee agreed that the Corporate Director (Social Services) (a) liaise with the Scottish Executive in progressing the Social Work Bill and subsequent Act; and (b) report back to the Committee on developments as and when appropriate.

7. UK National Standards in Foster Care

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) on the official launch of the UK National Standards for Foster Care produced by a working group on which Scottish interests were represented.

The UK National Standards for Foster Care have been drawn up to underpin the provision of high quality foster care for children and young people throughout the UK. The Standards are the product of wide-spread consultation with all those involved in foster caring and they make

recommendations on best practice.

The Committee agreed to (a) approve in principle the recommendations contained within the UK National Standards for Foster Care; (b) establish an Officers Group, chaired by the Principal Officer (Specialist Services), to bring forward proposals for implementing these recommendations; and (c) consider further reports in due course, including a report on the campaign to recruit Foster Carers recently undertaken by the Council.

8. The European Social Network

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) on the functions of the European Social Network and of the Corporate Director's participation in this.

The Committee (a) noted the objectives and membership of the European Social Network; and (b) agreed to the continued participation of the Corporate Director (Social Services) in his capacity as President of the Association of Directors of Social Work.

9. Victim Support Scotland Services

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) on Victim Support Scotland VS2000 Initiative and resultant changes to local services.

The Committee (a) noted the information and changes to organisational and operational arrangements within the VS 2000 Initiative and the information on local Victim Support services; and (b) agreed to support the proposed introduction of a Witness Support Scheme to Kilmarnock Sheriff Court.

10. Access to Health Project

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) on a project designed to offer a comprehensive range of Health Services to young people in North Ayrshire.

The Committee agreed that the Corporate Director (Social Services) pursue further opportunities for developing inter-agency collaboration where this is in the best interests of "looked after" or accommodated young person

11. Augmented Home Care Scheme: Three Towns

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) on developments in the Augmented Home Care services within the Three Towns area.

The Augmented Home Care service operates in the Three Towns and provides intensive domiciliary care and support to frail elderly people currently living in the community. There is an identified need to extend the services in the Three Towns to assist people with dementia and their carers. In order to meet this new commitment it was proposed to amend and increase the current staffing establishment.

The Committee agreed to the expansion of the Scheme within the Three Towns area and to remit the staffing implications to the Corporate Services Committee for approval.

12. Social Services Finance Section: Adjustment to Staffing Establishment

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Finance) on developments within the Social Services Finance Section and consequent staffing implications.

The Committee agreed to the proposed alterations to the staffing structure and to remit the

proposals to the Corporate Services Committee for approval.

13. Customer Comments Scheme

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) on Social Services management of the Council's Customer Comments Scheme.

Noted.

14. Community Care Accredited Providers List

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) seeking approval to add providers to the North Ayrshire Council Social Services Accredited Providers List.

The Committee agreed to add the providers indicated in the report to the Accredited Providers List.

15. Welfare Rights Service

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) on the activities and achievements of the Welfare Rights Service and of plans to meet future demands.

After receiving a presentation by the Welfare Rights Development Officer the Committee agreed (a) to note the activities to date and the levels of income generated by the Welfare Rights Service; (b) that the Corporate Director undertake a detailed review of the Service, relate this to the work of North Ayrshire Citizen's Advice service, and report back to Committee in due course; and (c) that proposals to extend the Service be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 3.15 p.m.