

Social Services Committee
26 September 2006

IRVINE, 26 September 2006 - At a Meeting of the Social Services Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

Present

Alan Munro, Anna Donn, Margaret Munn, Ian Clarkson, Jane Gorman, Elisabeth Marshall, John Moffat, John Reid, Samuel Taylor and Nan Wallace.

In Attendance

L. Raeside, Head of Service (Finance and Performance) and S. Gault, Manager, Community Care (Adults) (Social Services); A. Grossart, Finance Manager (Finance); and G. Lawson, Head of Corporate and Democratic Support; M. McKeown, Corporate and Democratic Support Officer, and J. Stevenson, Communications Officer; (Chief Executive's).

Chair

Councillor Munro in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

John Bell, Margie Currie, Drew Duncan, Jean Highgate and David O'Neill.

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 15 August 2006, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed.

2. Social Services Standing Sub Committee

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on an informal meeting of Members of the Social Services Standing Sub Committee held on 6 September 2006.

Noted.

3. Revenue Budget 2006/07: Budgetary Control

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Finance) on the budgetary control position for Social Services at the end of July 2006 and on projections to the end of financial year 2006/07.

At the end of July 2006 the revised budget for Social Services stood at £57.097m. The report provided an explanation of variances against the approved revenue budget for 2006/07 and the projected year-end overspend of £410,000.

The Committee agreed (a) to note the budgetary control position for Social Services at the end of July 2006; and (b) that the Corporate Director take appropriate steps to address the budgetary pressures highlighted in the report.

4. Mental Health Services

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) on proposals for the delivery of Mental Health Services.

The Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000 and the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 introduced changes to the way that mental health services are delivered in Scotland. Action taken by the Council in response to these legislative changes has resulted in enhanced services and support for individuals with mental health problems. Application of the legislation, and constraints on services and budgets, have however proved to be problematic in a number of areas, as identified in the report.

Reconfiguration of hospital based mental health services will result in fewer adults with mental health problems being admitted to Crosshouse and Ailsa Hospitals. In-patient acute beds will reduce from 104 to 74 and all acute beds being located in Ailsa Hospital. Continuing Care beds will reduce from 60 to 35. This means that 10 service users who originate from North Ayrshire and who are currently in an acute psychiatric bed will require to be cared for in the community. A further 10 North Ayrshire service users who would have previously been in Continuing Care NHS beds will also require community based care with appropriate supports from both NHS Services and Council Services.

The infrastructure to support hospital retraction is only partially in place in North Ayrshire. This infrastructure cannot be fully put in place, nor new services commissioned, until funding streams have been identified and agreed with Health partners. Negotiations with NHS Ayrshire and Arran to develop sufficient local accommodation and support services are ongoing. Service delivery capacity problems will be addressed by training 4 Social Workers as Mental Health Officers (MHOs) beginning in October 2006. MHO activity and workloads will be closely monitored.

Councillor Reid, seconded by Councillor Munn, moved that the Committee should approve the proposed approach to the delivery of Mental Health Services as set out in the report.

As an amendment, Councillor Wallace, seconded by Councillor Marshall, moved that the Committee do not agree to approve the proposed approach until funding streams have been fully identified and agreed with NHS Ayrshire and Arran.

On a division, there voted for the amendment 2 and for the motion 8, and the motion was declared carried.

Accordingly, the Committee agreed to approve the proposed approach to the delivery of Mental Health Services as set out in the report.

5. Increase in Community Charges for Community Alarms and Introduction of Day Care Charges for Older People

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) on a proposed increase to current Community Alarm charges and the introduction of new Day Care charges for older people

North Ayrshire Council currently follows COSLA guidance on charging for non-residential services. In April 2000, the Committee approved charges for Community Alarms of £2.00 per week for service users living on the mainland and £1.00 per week for service users living on the islands of Arran and Cumbrae. At present the Council, in line with COSLA's recommendation, does not charge for day care services for older people, although it is free to do so.

The report set out proposals to increase charges for Community Alarms for service users on the mainland, and to introduce a charge for day care services for older people. The proposed charges reflect the challenging budgetary position of Social Services and the need to cover costs and generate income to protect frontline services.

The report also set out how the proposed charges will be applied, reflecting the ability of service users to pay. Every effort will be made through the Welfare Rights and Debt Advice Service to assist service users to maximise their income.

The Committee agreed (a) to increase the Community Alarm charge from £2.00 to £3.00 per week from 1 November 2006 for service users on the mainland; (b) that the charge for service users on Arran and Cumbrae should remain at £1.00 per week; and (c) to introduce charges for Day Care services for older people from 1 January 2007 at a rate of £10.00 per day, all as detailed in the report.

The meeting ended at 2.40 p.m.