

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **COUNCIL MEETING – 22 SEPTEMBER 2011**

#### **COUNCIL APPOINTMENT TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF EAST AYRSHIRE WOMEN'S AID**

##### **Report by the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Support**

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to invite Council to consider the appointment of an Elected Member to the Board of Directors of East Ayrshire Women's Aid.

### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 East Ayrshire Women's Aid was formed in 2004 when Kilmarnock and Cumnock and Doon Valley Women's Aid Groups merged (Kilmarnock Women's Aid was established in 1981 and Cumnock and Doon Valley Women's Aid in 1991). East Ayrshire Women's Aid is affiliated to Scottish Women's Aid.

- 2.2 East Ayrshire Women's Aid main objectives are:-

- (a) The relief of women, children and young people who have experienced or are in fear of domestic abuse perpetrated by partners or ex-partners by: (i) the provision of temporary refuge accommodation; (ii) providing support and information on access to other services; (iii) providing structured supportive opportunities to allow women, children and young people affected by domestic abuse to make choices for their future; (iv) liaising with other services, including the police, and advocating for women, children and young people affected by domestic services.
- (b) The advancement of education by: (i) raising awareness of the effects of domestic abuse with the public and with young people in particular; (ii) providing opportunities for women, children and young people to shape the development of services, policy and practice at strategic level.
- (c) The promotion of equality and diversity by upholding and promoting the rights of all women, children and young people regardless of ethnicity, religion or cultural background, who have experienced domestic abuse in the belief that violence against women, is symptomatic of wider structural inequalities in society, and thus mainly perpetrated by men.

- 2.3 East Ayrshire Women's Aid is registered as a company limited by guarantee and also as a charity.

### **3. REQUEST TO APPOINT AN ELECTED MEMBER FROM EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL AS A DIRECTOR ON THE BOARD OF EAST AYRSHIRE WOMAN'S AID**

- 3.1** East Ayrshire Women's Aid are moving to Charitable Company Ltd by Guarantee status and will now be governed by a Board of Directors. The memorandum and articles of associations make provision for a maximum number of Directors being 12. The Trust has invited the Council to consider an Elected Member to be appointed as one of these Directors.
- 3.2** In requesting the nomination of an Elected Member to the Board of Directors, the interim Manager of East Ayrshire Women's Aid has advised that they are restructuring their services to ensure they better meet the needs of women, children and young people experiencing domestic abuse particularly in the Cumnock and Doon Valley Area. The Interim Manager has spoken to Councillor Kathy Morrice, one of the Council's Spokespersons for Community Health and Wellbeing, about the possibility of her joining the Board of Directors and Councillor Morrice has expressed an interest in taking on this role.
- 3.3** There are currently 6 women registered as Directors bringing a range of skills and include:
- An ex-service user;
  - A retired Care Commission Inspector;
  - A manager of Glasgow Association of Mental Health with additional experience of working with homeless families;
  - An academic from Caledonian University who is researching the difficulties faced by woman who have experienced domestic abuse when seeking employment;
  - Sandra Osborne MP;
  - A pre-five worker from a local nursery.

There are a further 3 women in the process of becoming Directors which include a local woman doing seasonal work with the Amina Muslim Women's Resource Centre; an accountant and a retired social worker.

- 3.4** The structure of the company consists of (a) the members - who have the right to attend Annual General Meeting (and any Extraordinary General Meeting) and have important powers under the Articles of Association and the Act, in particular, the members elect people to serve as Directors and take decisions in relation to changes to the articles themselves and (b) the Directors - who hold regular meetings during the period between Annual General Meetings and generally control and supervise the activities of the company, and particularly the Directors are responsible for monitoring the financial position of the company.

The Directors are legally Company Director's of East Ayrshire Women's Aid and Charity Trustees. Directors have collective responsibility to:-

- Safeguard and promote the values and aims of East Ayrshire Women's Aid;
- Determine the strategy and structure of East Ayrshire Women's Aid;

- Ensure East Ayrshire Women's Aid operates in an effective, responsible and accountable manner;
- Ensure the effective function of the Directors Group.

**3.5** East Ayrshire Women's Aid will support the Directors by providing induction, training and opportunities for development; regular accurate and relevant information on all aspects of the organisation; encouragement to question decisions and disagree on a constructive manner; and access to support and guidance to become more effective.

**3.6** The Board of Directors will meet on a monthly or six weekly basis. Meetings may be more frequent initially to meet the needs of developing the new Board. Scheduled meetings are normally held in the Offices of East Ayrshire Women's Aid, Croft Street, Kilmarnock.

**3.7** The Council will benefit from an Elected Member sitting on the Board as the Member will be able to express the views and opinions of the Council in terms of domestic violence. It will also create an opportunity for a greater understanding and appreciation of the issues around domestic violence.

#### **4. POLICY/FINANCIAL/COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

**4.1** None arising directly from this report.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

**5.1** East Ayrshire Women's Aid has confirmed that they have in place employers liability, public liability, trustee liability, theft by employee and legal expenses which is adequate and covers the extent of the relevant risks involved in members being appointed to East Ayrshire Women's Aid.

#### **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**6.1** It is recommended that Council:-

- (i) consider the appointment of an Elected Member to sit on the Board of East Ayrshire Women's Aid taking into consideration the expression of interest from Councillor Kathy Morrice; and
- (ii) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

Alex McPhee  
Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Support

23 August 2011  
JMcG/SW

#### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**1.** Letters dated 2 June and 13 July from the Interim Manager of East Ayrshire Women's Aid.

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers relative to this report should contact Julie McGarry, Administration Manager on (01563) 576147. Any person wishing further information on this report should contact Bill Walkinshaw, Head of Democratic Services on (01563) 576135.

**Implementation Officer: Julie McGarry, Administration Manager.**