

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **EMERGENCY POWERS COMMITTEE – 20 MARCH 2007**

#### **EAST AYRSHIRE CHILDREN'S PANEL – EXTENSION OF CONCURRENT MEMBERSHIP SCHEME WITH NORTH AYRSHIRE CHILDREN'S PANEL**

##### **Report by the Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support**

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

- 1.1** To seek approval for a further extension to the concurrent membership scheme with North Ayrshire Children's Panel for the period up to and including 31 May 2008, in order to populate East Ayrshire Children's Panel with male Panel Members.

### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** There is a requirement to ensure that a Children's Panel comprises of both male and female Panel Members. There has always been a difficulty in recruiting and retaining male Panel Members and recent recruitment campaigns have focussed on recruiting additional men to the Children's Panel. The Scottish Executive recognises that Panels experience such difficulties with the shortage of male Panel Members and has made provision for concurrent Panel Membership. This is an agreement between the 2 Children's Panel Advisory Committees (CPAC's) and their Panel Chairs for North Ayrshire and East Ayrshire which that will allow Panel Members from one area to be appointed as Panel Members to the second area as a short term solution.
- 2.2** The Policy and Resources Committee at their meeting held on 20 September 2005, (Item 23, page 1704, 03/07) agreed to the establishment of a concurrent membership scheme, and accordingly the scheme was established with North Ayrshire Children's Panel for a period of one year, up to and including 1 November 2006.
- 2.3** Emergency Powers Committee at their meeting held on 19 July 2006 (Item 2, page 2314, 03/07) agreed to the extension of the concurrent membership scheme for a period of 6 months, up to and including 1 May 2007.

### **3. PROPOSALS**

- 3.1** As a result of resignations from male Panel Members, East Ayrshire Children's Panel male Panel Membership is low. At present East Ayrshire Children's Panel is populated by 9 male Panel members, some of whom have restricted availability. However, following a successful local recruitment exercise there are potentially 9 additional male Panel Members, who are currently undertaking their pre-service training, and if all successfully complete their training, will populate hearings from June 2007.

- 3.2** Following discussion with the Depute Panel Chair of East Ayrshire Children's Panel it has been proposed to extend the existing concurrent membership scheme with North Ayrshire Children's Panel subject to the agreement of all participating organisations. In terms of the Scottish Executive procedures, all participating local authorities, Chairs of Children's Panels, participating Panel Members, and CPAC's require to agree, before Scottish Ministers approval is sought.
- 3.3** Accordingly approval to extend the concurrent membership with North Ayrshire Children's Panel is sought from this Committee for the period up to and including 31 May 2008.
- 3.4** East Ayrshire Children's Panel Advisory Committee will be considering the proposal to extend the Concurrent membership at their meeting held on 27 March 2007, however, it is anticipated that they will support the request by the Depute Panel Chair.
- 3.5** By extending the concurrent membership scheme for the period up to and including 31 May 2008, East Ayrshire Children's Panel will be populated by an appropriate number of male Panel Members to deal with the Hearings which might require to be addressed. It will also allow the new male Panel Members, as referred to in paragraph 3.1 above, time to gain experience in a more managed way, rather than having to cover too many Hearing Slots early in their programme of work. Furthermore, the period up to end including 31 May 2008 will also tie in with the timescales for the National Pre-Service Training which will run from January until May 2008, after which new recruits from the National Recruitment Campaign will also be eligible to sit on hearings.

#### **4. POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1** East Ayrshire Council has responsibility for maintaining a Children's Panel in terms of the Children's (Scotland) Act 1995.

#### **5. COMMUNITY PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1** The work of the Children's Panel links with two of the main themes from the Community Plan, Improving Opportunities and Improving Community Safety.

#### **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1** Schedule 1 of the Children's (Scotland) Act 1995 indicates that the local authority may pay the expenses of Children's Panel Members.
- 6.2** East Ayrshire Council provides financial provision to meet the work of the Children's Panel. The extension of the concurrent membership scheme may cause a slight increase in expenses as a result of the North Ayrshire Panel Members travelling to Hearing within East Ayrshire. However, it is anticipated that this will not be a significant increase.

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **7.1** The Committee is asked to:-

- (i) agree to the extension of the concurrent membership scheme with North Ayrshire Children's Panel for the period up to and including 31 May 2008; and
- (ii) to remit authority to the Administration Manager, in his capacity as Clerk to the CPAC, to carry out the necessary consultation arrangements to obtain approval from North Ayrshire Council, Panel Chairs, CPACS and the Scottish Ministers.

Elizabeth Morton  
Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support

LY/SW  
26 February 2007

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. Scottish Executive Circulars no SEED 2002.05

Any person wishing further information on this report should contact Bill Walkinshaw, Clerk to the CPAC on Tel No (01563) 576135. Any person wishing to inspect the background papers in respect of this report should contact Lynn Young, Administrative Officer on Tel No (01563) 576283.

**Implementation Officer: Lynn Young, Administrative Officer**