

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 20 SEPTEMBER 2005

EAST AYRSHIRE CHILDREN'S PANEL - CONCURRENT MEMBERSHIP

Report by Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** To seek approval, following a request by the Depute Panel Chair, for the establishment of a concurrent membership scheme with either North Ayrshire Children's Panel or South Ayrshire Children's Panel 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 males and females. 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 2005 recruitment campaign, which is currently under way, has a strong focus both nationally and locally on encouraging men to participate in the Children's Panel.
- 2.2** Currently, there are only 13 male Panel members on East Ayrshire Children's Panel, several of whom have restricted availability in respect of serving on panels.
- 2.3** The Scottish Executive recognises that panels do experience difficulties particularly with the shortage of male panel members and has made provision for concurrent Panel membership. Where there is a lack of Panel members available for scheduled Hearings due to falling numbers, where a change in the availability of Panel members presents difficulties or where a Panel member experiences a temporary conflict of interest, a concurrent Panel Membership Scheme might be considered as providing an appropriate solution. This is an agreement between two Children's Panel Advisory Committees (CPACs) and their Panel Chairs that willing Panel members from one area might be appointed as Panel members to a second area as a short term solution.
- 2.4** Following a request from the Depute Chair of East Ayrshire Children's Panel (the post of Chair has been vacated recently and a recruitment process is under way) to establish a concurrent membership panel with one of the other local Ayrshire panels, and in terms of Scottish Executive procedures, all participating Local Authorities, Chairs of Children's Panels, participating panel members, and CPACs require to agree, before Scottish Ministers' approval is

sought. Accordingly, approval to commence the process of establishing a concurrent membership is sought from this Committee.

3. POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Schedule 1 of the Children's (Scotland) Act 1995 indicates that the Local Authority may pay the expenses of Children's Panel members.
- 4.2 East Ayrshire Council provides financial provision to meet the work of the Children's Panel and the introduction of a concurrent membership may see an increase in expenses as a result of Panel members from another Local Authority area travelling to Hearings within East Ayrshire. It is anticipated that there will not be a significant increase. Further, the establishment of a concurrent panel membership will be for a total period of not more than one year.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 The Committee is asked to:
- (i) agree to the establishment of a concurrent membership scheme with either North Ayrshire Children's Panel or South Ayrshire Children's Panel for a period of one year; 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 the requisite Authorities, Panel Chairs, CPACs and the Scottish Ministers.

Elizabeth Morton
Depute Chief Executive/
Executive Director of Corporate Support

LC/FM

31 August 2005

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Correspondence from the Depute Panel Chair; and
2. Scottish Executive Circular No: SEED 2002.05

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers relative to this report should contact Lynn Chapman, Administrative Officer, on telephone number 01563 576283. Any person wishing further information on this report should contact Bill Walkinshaw, Administration Manager, on telephone number 01563 576135.

Implementation Officer: Lynn Chapman