

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE : 18 MARCH 2004**

#### **YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICES**

##### **Report by Director of Educational and Social Services**

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To advise Committee of additional funds being made available to further develop Youth Justice Services in East Ayrshire, and to seek approval for the action intended.

### **2.0 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 A number of reports have been brought before, and had approval given, by Committee in the past: Social Work Committees 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2000; 9<sup>th</sup> April, 2002; 7<sup>th</sup> November, 2002.
- 2.2 Each of these past reports have advised the Committee of developments in Youth Justice including the funds made available to the Council through the Children Services Development Fund (Youth Crime). For the financial year 2004/2005 an additional £80K is being added to the Social Work budget to continue these developments.

### **3.0 INTENDED ACTION**

- 3.1 Within Youth Justice services much of the focus to date has been concentrated in two areas: a) serious and/or persistent offenders, and b) minor, first-time offenders through the introduction of a restorative justice scheme in partnership with a voluntary sector agency (SACRO).
- 3.2 The increasing referral rate in both areas, coupled with the intensity of demand placed on existing services by the more serious and/or persistent offenders, indicate a need to further strengthen Youth Justice services.
- 3.3 In addition to the above there is a clear need to tackle the turnaround time for reports requested by the Children's Reporter: an area in which East Ayrshire has been under-performing. The Fast-Track Children's Hearing Pilot, in which the Council is participating, is currently evidencing that where appropriate resources are made available, it is possible to meet the standards set nationally.

- 3.4 To meet both the increasing level of demand faced by existing services, and to manage more efficiently the need to turn around reports more speedily it is proposed that Youth Justice services seek to recruit two additional qualified social workers and one half time administrative post to deal with the additional workload.
- 3.5 The primary focus of the additional social work posts would be to address the issue of assessment reports for the Reporter and the Children's Panel although they would also assist with the delivery of offence focussed work for young offenders.

#### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Costs associated with the proposed additional staff will be met from the £80K which is being added to the social work budget for the further development of Youth Justice services.

#### **5.0 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The strengthening of Youth Justice services requires the recruitment of two additional social workers, and one part time administrative post.

#### **6.0 LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 None.

#### **7.0 CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 To meet the increasing demand being placed on Youth Justice services, and to manage more efficiently the turnaround time for reports requested by the Children's Reporter, it is proposed that two additional social workers and one part time administrative post are created.

#### **8.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 8.1 It is recommended that Committee:
- (i) Approve the proposed staff increase referred to at 3.4;
  - (ii) Refer the staffing proposal for further consideration to the Corporate Governance Committee;

- (iii) Require the Director of Educational and Social Services to report back to Committee on progress being made;
- (iv) Otherwise note the content of the report.

John Mulgrew  
Director of Educational and Social Services  
Enc (0)  
25<sup>th</sup> February, 2004

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**NIL.**

For further information please contact Bill Eadie, Principal Officer, Children and Families Services and Criminal Justice, Council Offices, Civic Centre, Kilmarnock. (Tel 01563 576728).

**IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: JACKIE DONNELLY**