

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE : 18 MAY 2006

SEX OFFENDERS' AUDIT – OUTCOME OF STRATHCLYDE POLICE SEX OFFENDERS' AUDIT AND REVIEW

Report by the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Committee of the outcome of the Sex Offenders' Audit carried out by Strathclyde Police with reference to Strathclyde 'U' Division (within East Ayrshire).
- 1.2 To update Committee on progress and development of audit findings detailed in report to Social Work Committee on 26th January 2006.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Social Work inspection Agency (SWIA) published a report on the investigation into the Management and Post Release Supervision of a Sex Offender in North Lanarkshire on 18th April 2005.
- 2.2 As a consequence of the concerns highlighted in this report the Minister for Justice wrote to Local Authority Chief Executives, the Association of Chief Constables and the Scottish Prison Service asking that they jointly audit all medium and high risk sex offenders to ensure that:
 - (i) A completed risk assessment had been undertaken in each case;
 - (ii) Arrangements for supervision were in place and were being reviewed on a regular basis.
- 2.3 Social Work Committee was advised of the East Ayrshire Council Audit in a report to Committee on 26th January 2006.
- 2.4 The Strathclyde Police Audit and Review Team examined 175 sex offender files across the three Ayrshire local authority areas between 31st October 2005 and 10th November 2005. 57 of these files were relevant to East Ayrshire.
- 2.5 The scope of the Police Audit encompassed all medium and high risk registered sex offenders and not just those offenders being supervised on a statutory basis by the Social Work Service.
- 2.6 The 20 cases audited as part of East Ayrshire in August 2005 (refer to 2.3 of Report to Committee on 26th January 2006) were included in the aforementioned Police Audit.

3. OUTCOME OF STRATHCLYDE POLICE SEX OFFENDER AUDIT (AND HOW THIS RELATES TO THE MANAGEMENT OF SEX OFFENDERS WITHIN EAST AYRSHIRE)

- 3.1 The Police Audit Review indicated a very good working relationship between the Police and East Ayrshire Social Work Service in the monitoring of sex offenders.
- 3.2 The Police Audit highlighted good practice; that case conferences/discussions were being held on a regular basis in respect of individual sex offenders; monthly Police/Local Authority (Housing and Social Work Services) liaison meetings were being held to discuss sex offenders who were causing any of the agencies a degree of concern.
- 3.3 The report commended joint working arrangements between Police and Social Work in East Ayrshire which clearly demonstrates good practice and that it should be maintained.
- 3.4 As a result of their findings, the Audit and Review Team made a total of 10 recommendations, 4 of which directly concern Joint Working with the Social Work Service. These relate to the communication between the Police and Local Authority and regards the monitoring and supervision of sex offenders as well as information sharing. All recommendations are implemented and continue to be discussed at monthly liaison meetings.

4. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 In January 2006 the Social Work Action Plan on working with sex offenders was presented to Social Work Committee.
- 4.2 As a result of the outcomes from the Audit undertaken by Strathclyde Police, further work will now be undertaken with the Police and the Social Work Service to develop and implement a joint action plan.

5. POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The improved assessment monitoring and supervision of sex offenders required of both Strathclyde Police and Social Work Service demands a much more intensive level of involvement. This has placed greater demands on staff time which has impacted on our ability to deliver the range of Criminal Justice Services. To date, additional funding provided by the Scottish Executive for 2006-2007 for East Ayrshire is £14,816. This has been provided under the Management of Offenders Act 2005 and is specifically for the management of sex offenders.

7. COMMUNITY PLANNING

- 7.1 Practice developments arising from the Sex Offender Audit carried out by Social Work/Police in August 2005 and the Police Review Team in November 2005 will contribute to an improvement in the assessment, management and surveillance of sex offenders within East Ayrshire. This in turn will enhance Community Safety aspirations.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 Social Work Committee is asked to:
- (i) note the content of the report.

Graham Short
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services
SAK/JB
26/04/2006
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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- (1) Strathclyde Police U Division March 2006 – Sex Offenders Audit and Review
- (2) Social Work Inspection Agency Report on the Investigation into the Management and Post Release Supervision of a sex offender in North Lanarkshire, April 2005

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