

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE : 4 NOVEMBER 2004**

#### **DRAFT GUIDANCE IN RESPECT OF CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEES**

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

## **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 This report advises members on the consultation regarding the draft guidance for Child Protection Committees (CPC) which forms part of the reform programme and seeks committee approval for the response to the consultation. The Scottish Executive requires responses to be submitted by 5 November 2004.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Scottish Executive had previously consulted on a range of models for the construction and remit of Child Protection Committees and the Council responded to this consultation on the basis of a report submitted to social work committee on 18 March 2004 (Item 6, pages 21-23).
- 2.2 As a result of the consultation the Executive then announced in March of this year its preferred model, which accorded with the views presented by East Ayrshire Council and the majority of other respondents.
- 2.3 Committee has received previous reports (18 March 2004, Item 6, pages 21-23 and 20 May 2004, Item 13, pages 153-157) on the child protection reform programme.
- 2.4 The draft guidance now issued for consultation relates to the operation of that model and is in three main parts; the role of chief officers, the resourcing of Child Protection Committees and the functions of Child Protection Committees.

### **2.5 Chief Officers**

For the purposes of the guidance Chief Officers are deemed to be the Chief Executive of the Local Authority, the Chief Executive of the Health Board and the Chief Constable.

### **2.6 Chief Officers are required to:**

- Be accountable for Child protection work, including the functions of the Child Protection Committee.
- Agree a strategic agenda and/or plan.
- Agree the constitution of the CPC, including delegation of roles and functions.
- Agree the agencies to be represented on the CPC.
- Agree the future chairing of the CPC.
- Appoint representatives from their own agencies.
- Invite nominations from other agencies.
- Agree reporting mechanisms to the respective governance bodies of members of the CPC.
- Agree and endorse the annual report and business plan of the CPC.

### **3. RESOURCES**

3.1 In relation to the resourcing of the CPC Chief Officers also require to ensure:

- That members of the CPC have dedicated time to commit to the work of the Committee, including staff time for any working groups and staff time for training and development.
- That finance is in place for the work of the CPC with each agency being clear about its level of commitment. For the first year of the Committee the Executive will make available new funding being a sum of £30,000 per Committee, with this payment spread over the financial years 2004/05 – 2005/06.
- That the CPC receives professional, operational and administrative support.

### **4. FUNCTIONS OF CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEES**

4.1 The guidance proposes that CPC's perform a number of key functions as noted below;

- Should provide public information.
- Should ensure continuous improvement in the areas of policies, procedures and protocols, management information, quality assurance, practice and training and staff development.
- Strategic planning including communication, planning and connections and public information.

### **5. VIEW OF THE CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE**

5.1 The draft guidance was discussed at the meeting of the Child Protection Committee on 13 October 2004.

5.2 In general terms the guidance was welcomed and it was felt that it covered the areas that were required at this time given that the preferred model of operation was the one supported by both the CPC and the Council during the first round of consultation by the Executive on the model to be adopted.

5.3 The draft guidance also gives an indication of the areas to be covered in both the constitution of the CPC and the contents of the annual report and this was welcomed as a useful tool to ensure consistency of application across Scotland.

5.4 The CPC were of the view that the Joint Statement of Assurance, which each of the key agencies signed up to in January 2004 would form the basis of the Action Plan which would be progressed by the new CPC in 2005/06.

5.5 The one area where the CPC felt the guidance could be strengthened was in relation to the accountability relationship between the CPC and the Chief Officers. Members felt that further guidance could be given in relation to the reporting frequency as an annual report was felt to be insufficient in keeping Chief Officers appraised of progress and allowing them to take corrective action where difficulties had to be addressed.

## **6. POLICY AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no policy or legal implications at this stage as the guidance is still in draft format.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 The Scottish Executive has made the sum of £30,000 available to Child Protection Committees for their first year of operation following implementation of the revised structure. The Chief Officers will require to review whether or not this is sufficient to ensure that the CPC can meet the operational requirements of the Executive and if not what additional resources are required from each agency to ensure effective implementation of the guidance.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 The Committee is asked to;

- (i) endorse the views of the current CPC in respect of the guidance and respond accordingly to the Executive;
- (ii) refer the guidance to the Chief Executive and ask her to meet with other Chief Officers to agree the membership and resourcing of the CPC and reporting arrangements, as indicated in the draft guidelines;
- (iii) ask the Chief Executive to report back to Social Work Committee on the outcome of that discussion; and
- (iv) otherwise note the contents of the report.

**John Mulgrew**  
**Executive Director of Educational and Social Services**  
**15 October 2004**  
**Enc (0)**

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Nil

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