

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE: 3 NOVEMBER 2005**

#### **PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN'S UNIT IN AUCHINLECK**

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

### **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To seek the approval of the Committee for the development of a new 6 bedded children's unit at Stoner Crescent/Hillside Crescent, Auchinleck.

### **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Social Work Committee on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2004 received a report from the executive Director of Educational and Social Services in relation to the Best Value Review of Services for Looked After and Accommodated children.
- 2.2 The report made a number of recommendations regarding services which were accepted by Social Work Committee.
- 2.3 Committee agreed to develop two six bedded childrens units within East Ayrshire and provide a further report to Committee in 2006 which would determine the need for a third unit dependant upon the success of recruiting additional foster carers.

### **3 PROGRESS**

- 3.1 The best value review of residential child care provision in East Ayrshire recognised a clear need to replace our existing facilities.
- 3.2 Since the review was approved we have examined planning issues regarding the replacement of the existing units.
- 3.3 This has concluded that the new units require to be developed to different timescales to ensure that we have access to one facility at all times which can receive children in the event of an emergency.
- 3.4 It is recognised that there is a clear need to locate units in the North and the South of the authority as the children currently accommodated originate from communities across the authority.
- 3.5 There is also a need to locate the children's units within already established communities where transport links and social opportunities are already developed.

- 3.6 Sites for the development of the new units have been considered across the local authority area.
- 3.7 Site visits identified one suitable plot of land in Stoner Crescent/Hillside Crescent, Auchinleck which met all of the criteria and was in the ownership of the Council. The site has good access to the communities in the South of the authority and will allow ease of access for staff and parents.
- 3.8 An Architect has carried out an initial assessment of the site and has indicated that it would be possible to construct a six bedroomed unit within the costs that have been allocated by East Ayrshire Council.
- 3.9 The development would be subject to the usual planning regulations.
- 3.10 A suitable site in the north of the authority has yet to be identified.

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

- 4.1 Initial Title investigations over the area of ground in question have so far only identified the Council's Title to part of the ground. Further searches have accordingly been instructed through a Search Company with a view to identifying the Council's Titles to the remainder of the ground and to ascertain if such Titles contain any restrictions which would prevent the ground from being used for the proposed purpose. Any decision by Committee would therefore be subject to the Council's Titles to the whole ground being identified and said Titles not containing any such restrictions.
- 4.2 In terms of Section 70(2) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, land acquired by a Local Authority for a particular purpose, if not required for that purpose, may be used in the short term for the purpose of any other of the Authority's functions.
- 4.3 Any long-term change of use will, however, require a formal transfer between Departments and will require to be treated as a disposal by one Department to the other.
- 4.4 As the area of ground in question is currently held in the Housing Revenue Account, the formal consent of the Scottish Executive to the transfer is required in terms of Section 203(2) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987.

#### **5. RECOMMENDATION**

- 5.1 The Committee is asked to:
- (i) approve the site at Stoner Crescent/Hillside Crescent, Auchinleck as the agreed location for a new 6 bedded children's unit;

- (ii) Committee is asked to instruct the Director of Educational and Social Services to seek the appropriate consents regarding the transfer of land to the Department of Educational and Social Services; and
- (iii) otherwise note the contents of the report.

**John Mulgrew**  
**Executive Director of Education & Social Services**  
**24 October 2005**  
**Enc (0)**

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. Best Value Review of Looked After and Accommodated Children

For further information please contact: Sally Ann Kelly, Senior Manager, Children and Families and Criminal Justice, telephone: 01563 576845

**IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: JACKIE DONNELLY**