

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SAFETY FORUM – 5TH JUNE 2002

MANDATORY REQUIREMENT FOR COUNCILS TO APPOINT HOME SAFETY OFFICERS: PROGRESS REPORT

Report by the Director of Community Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Community Safety Forum of a recent visit to the Scottish Parliament by members of the Mandatory Powers Sub-Group of the Scottish Accident Prevention Council Homes Safety Committee.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Forum has previously considered reports from the SAPC Home Safety Committee about the efforts of its Mandatory Powers Sub-Committee to have home safety made a statutory responsibility for all Scottish Local Authorities, together with appropriate funding being made available. It is believed that such a measure would reduce the number of accidents annually occurring in homes throughout the country.
- 2.2 The SAPC Mandatory Powers Sub-Group is Chaired by Councillor Brian Topping, Aberdeenshire Council and includes Councillor George Smith and John F Crawford, Head of Protective Services, East Ayrshire Council.
- 2.3 Although the initiative of the Home Safety Committee has had the full support of Cathy Jamieson MSP since the outset, it was felt that there was merit in visiting the Scottish Parliament to allow MSPs to hear a presentation compiled by the Mandatory Powers Sub-Group. This presentation was made to the East Ayrshire Community Forum last year.
- 2.4 A delegation of the Mandatory Powers Sub-Group led by Councillor Topping visited the Scottish Parliament on 23rd May. Councillor Smith and J F Crawford were in attendance.

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 Kenny Gibson, MSP and a researcher for Michael Matheson MSP heard the presentation on 23rd May. Kenny Gibson was particularly interested in the suggestion that there was a demonstrable need for a more uniformed gathering of statistics on accidents in the home. He seemed enthusiastic about a proposal made by the Sub-Group that Councils be given funding for a limited period in order to see if the introduction of Home Safety Officers would be effective in reducing accidents in the home.
- 3.2 While Kenny Gibson MSP gave an indication that he was prepared to sponsor a bill to support the initiative, he pointed out that it could be some considerable time before the parliamentary calendar allowed such a move.

3.3 It emerged during the subsequent discussions that there might be scope in the “Joint Futures” initiative, for appropriate funding for a trial period.

4. FINANICAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The appointment of Home Safety Officers in all Scottish Local Authorities could not be achieved without additional funding.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 New Legislation would be required to implement this initiative.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Nil.

7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1 The Mandatory Powers Sub-Group of the Scottish Accident Prevention Council Home Safety Committee continues to take every opportunity to promote the idea that every Council in Scotland should have a dedicated Home Safety Officer.

7.2 An opportunity to make an appropriate presentation to MSPs was taken on 23rd May 2002.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 The Community Safety Forum is invited to note the contents of the report.

William Stafford
Director of Community Services

4th June 2002

WS/JFC/RRS

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

Implementation Officer – john.crawford@east-ayrshire.gov.uk

AGENDA