

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **NORTHERN AREA LOCAL COMMITTEE - 24 JANUARY 2001 REVIEW OF EAST AYRSHIRE'S SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS**

#### **Report by Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources**

#### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform Local Committees of the outcome of the Council's review of social inclusion implementation arrangements.

#### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Council's Policy and Resources Committee agreed, at its meeting on 28 March 2000, to instigate a review of the Council's arrangements for implementing its social inclusion approach.
- 2.2 The review was conducted by East Ayrshire Council following concerns about the decision making process associated with social inclusion; in particular the effectiveness of the current arrangements for securing partner involvement and concern about the effectiveness of the support given to social inclusion funded projects. Consultation was undertaken during the summer with Community Representatives, partners and support officers .
- 2.3 During September and November 2000, the East Ayrshire Social Inclusion Strategic Partnership Group, and the Council's Policy and Resources Committee considered the review findings, agreed new decision making arrangements for social inclusion and endorsed the revised implementation arrangements.

#### **3. REVIEW FINDINGS**

- 3.1 The review highlighted that confusion existed amongst Local Committee Community Representatives regarding their role as members of the Social Inclusion Strategic Partnership Group and whether they represented the Local Committee, their local community or their parent organisation.
- 3.2 There was a need to streamline the decision making process which, at that time, involved Local Committees approving action plans, and the Social Inclusion Strategic Partnership Group then endorsing them with overall financial decisions being referred to the Council's Policy and Resources Committee for final approval.
- 3.3 The review identified that a strain was placed on the resources of both the Council and its partners by operating three separate social inclusion areas (Coalfield area, Northern area/Irvine Valley and the Kilmarnock area) and this

also led to a fragmented approach being taken on strategic issues such as employment and training.

#### **4. OUTCOME OF REVIEW**

**4.1** The main changes to the arrangements for delivering social inclusion are:

- Creation of a new Coalfield Area Social Inclusion Partnership Board with increased representation from the community, more autonomy and direct responsibility for budget matters.
- Creation of a separate Board for the North Area of East Ayrshire (former Kilmarnock and Loudoun area) in recognition of the fundamental difference between the resources that exist for tackling social inclusion in the two parts of East Ayrshire. This Board to have increased community representation, increased autonomy and direct responsibility for budget matters. The Council will maintain its efforts towards securing finances to support new social inclusion initiatives outwith the Scottish Executive designated Coalfield area.
- Both Boards will be able to establish themed sub-groups that can build upon the Area Team approach developed under the former structure and will allow officers and various partners, often with Community Representative support, to come together to consider detailed issues relevant to their communities. The new themed sub-groups will report directly to the respective Social Inclusion Partnership Board.
- Each Social Inclusion Board is autonomous and procedural rules are being developed to secure decisions by consensus, with referral to an Executive Group when this cannot be achieved. The Executive Group of Officers has been formed to work with both Boards to ensure that overall objectives for social inclusion for the whole of East Ayrshire are being met and will take urgent decisions between Board meetings.
- Overall co-ordination of both Boards will be secured via the Council's current Chair of Social Inclusion who will Chair each of the new Boards.

#### **5. COMMUNITY REPRESENTATION**

**5.1** Existing Community Representatives and their substitutes on the Strategic Partnership Group have been appointed to the new Boards to represent their parent organisation, rather than their Local Committee. Community Representatives and their substitutes have indicated their general approval of this arrangement, subject to formal ratification by their parent organisation.

**5.2** Partnership Boards are able to review their membership at any time. In relation to the Coalfield area, the representation from the Coalfield Communities Federation has been increased from one to four.

## **6. CURRENT PROGRESS**

- 6.1** The inaugural meeting of the Coalfield Area Social Inclusion Partnership Board is planned for March 2001, while that of the North Area Social Inclusion Board will take place also in March when it is expected the finalised Constitution will be approved. Meetings will be held regularly thereafter.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1** There are no legal implications arising from this report.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS - Nil.**

## **9. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1** The establishment of a Coalfield Area SIP Board and a North Area social Inclusion Board is in line with the Scottish Executive's requirements that the community be involved at the heart of the social inclusion process.

## **10. RECOMMENDATION**

- 10.1** It is recommended that the Local Committee note the outcome of the review and the establishment of the new arrangements to secure social inclusion initiatives throughout East Ayrshire Council.

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RB/FM

17 January 2001

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**Nil**

Any person wishing further information on this report should contact Gwen Barker, Social inclusion Manager on 01563 574602.

**AGENDA**