

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE : 4 MAY 2000

SCOTTISH ASYLUM SEEKERS CONSORTIUM

Report by the Director of Social Work

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To recommend that East Ayrshire Council join the Scottish Asylum Seekers Consortium.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Issues in relation to Asylum Seekers were considered by Policy and Resources Committee on 21 October 1999 [Item 17, Page 420] when it was concluded that East Ayrshire Council would support CoSLA's initiative in establishing the Scottish Consortium but at that stage this Council would not become a partner in the Consortium.
- 2.2 The Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 came into force on 3 April 2000 and support arrangements for all asylum seekers in Scotland apply from that date.
- 2.3 The Scottish Asylum Seekers Consortium is developing detailed proposals for the provision of accommodation and support services in Scotland as the basis for discussion with the National Asylum Support Service (NASS).
- 2.4 It is now essential that the Consortium takes a clear view on the numbers of asylum seekers who can be accommodated within Scotland and the arrangements to be put in place.

3. PRESENT POSITION

- 3.1 The Scottish Asylum Seekers Consortium is now asking that those Councils which have not yet joined the Consortium give consideration to doing so, and, together with those who are already members, consider the extent to which accommodation can be provided within their area.
- 3.2 Joining the Consortium would provide an opportunity to influence the national agenda. The Home Secretary has powers within the legislation to disperse asylum seekers with or without the consent of the Consortium or individual Council, therefore, it would seem important to establish a relationship that ensures full discussion of options for the location of asylum seekers. NASS has powers to contract directly with private sector accommodation providers which could result in Councils finding asylum seekers in their areas, with the consequent need to provide services such as education and social care, without prior involvement.

3.3 It is therefore recommended that the Council should now join the Consortium and fully participate in the discussions currently taking place. There is no automatic expectation that Councils which are members of the Consortium will provide accommodation for asylum seekers within their area.

4. FINANCIAL / PERSONNEL / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None at the present time.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Policy & Resources Committee is asked to agree that East Ayrshire Council joins the Scottish Asylum Seekers Consortium.

Douglas Bulloch
Director of Social Work

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May 2, 2000

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS – Nil

For further information please contact the implementation officer Douglas Bulloch,
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AGENDA