

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE: 14 JUNE, 2000

FUTURE DELIVERY ARRANGEMENTS FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE SOCIAL WORK SERVICES

Report by Director of Social Work

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.0 To advise Committee of discussions underway involving East, North and South Ayrshire Councils on future delivery arrangements for criminal justice social work services, and to seek approval for the development of a joint criminal justice strategic plan across the three authorities.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In November 1998 the then Scottish Office published a consultation document entitled "Community Sentencing: The Tough Option". A report detailing the comments of East Ayrshire Council was provided to the Social Work Committee on 1 December, 1998 [Item 14, Page 4017]. A further report outlining progress was provided to the Social Work Committee on 30 November, 1999 [Item 4, Page 535].
- 2.2 On 28 October, 1999 at the ADSW Criminal Justice Services Conference Jim Wallace, Deputy First Minister and Minister for Justice, announced that he had asked COSLA to submit, by end of December 1999, proposals for inter-council working arrangements that would deliver a more efficient and effective criminal justice social work service. He indicated that any revised arrangements would require to be managed in a more formal and structured manner than currently exists. The Minister also urged authorities to consider appropriate groupings of councils for future delivery of service.
- 2.3 Under the proposals submitted by COSLA a grouping of the three Ayrshire councils was put forward for consideration.
- 2.4 At a meeting on 25 April, 2000 the Minister indicated to COSLA his acceptance of their proposed groupings of councils. He also indicated his acceptance that each grouping should produce a joint strategic plan. Initial proposals are to be submitted to the Scottish Executive by September, 2000.

3.0 CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 In anticipation of COSLA's meeting with the Minister, two meetings have been held at which each of the three Ayrshire councils was represented by the Chair of Social Work, the Director/Head of Social Work and the Criminal Justice Service Managers. Representatives of Dumfries and Galloway Council also attended as their default position was to join with the three Ayrshire authorities to form a South West Scotland Grouping. Their preferred option, to stand alone, has now been accepted by the Minister.
- 3.2 No decisions were taken with regard to any one single management and organisational model. It was agreed that the proposed grouping would engage in further and detailed discussion around possible models for managing and delivering services. Within these discussions the following principles would remain to the fore:

- individual councils would retain the right to promote the interests of their own communities;
- core service provision would continue to be delivered at a local level;
- service planning would require to reflect, and be aligned with, each councils wider duties and plans.

3.3 The two meetings to date did acknowledge that considerable capacity existed within the current service delivery arrangements for more formal service partnerships to be developed. These lay principally in the area of support, non-core services and management arrangements.

4.0 ACTION INTENDED

4.1 It is proposed that the three councils appoint a lead officer to co-ordinate the development of a joint strategic plan from within existing resources. The lead officer would be accountable to the three authorities represented by the individual Criminal Justice Service Managers.

4.2 It is proposed that a further report outlining possible future arrangements will be available for Committee scrutiny in September 2000.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no costs to East Ayrshire Council in the proposed appointment of a lead officer. Costs incurred will be met from the 100% financial arrangement for criminal justice social work services, which currently lie within North Ayrshire Council's budgetary arrangements and will be utilised to create the necessary post.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 In agreeing the grouping of the three Ayrshire authorities the Minister for Justice has asked that initial proposals on the future management and organisational arrangements for criminal justice social work services be submitted to the Scottish Executive by September 2000.

6.2 A lead officer for the three Ayrshire Councils will be appointed to co-ordinate the development of a joint strategic plan, which will be presented to Committee for consideration prior to submission to the Scottish Executive.

7.0 RECOMMENDATION

7.1 The Social Work Committee is asked to:

- (i) approve the development of a joint strategic plan through the arrangements described at para 4.1;
- (ii) request the Head of Social Work to report to Social Work Committee for agreement on the proposals to be submitted to the Scottish Executive; and
- (ii) otherwise note the contents of this report

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BD/DB/DF/JB 08/06/00 Enc(0)

List of Background Papers - Nil

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AGENDA