

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE : 23 MAY 2002

DALSALLOCH SITE, AUCHINLECK : FUTURE OPTIONS

Report by Director of Educational and Social Services

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To present options for the future use of the Dalsalloch site and to seek authority to implement the preferred option, namely the development of a social care facility on the site.

2. Background

- 2.1 During the night of 26/27 December 2001, a major fire completely destroyed the Social Work Office at Dalsalloch, Auchinleck.
- 2.2 Despite the seriousness of the situation, social work services to the public have been maintained throughout, based in interim accommodation in Cumnock, Auchinleck and Lugar, details of which were notified to all elected members at that time.
- 2.3 On 9 April 2002, Social Work Committee considered a general report on future use of the Dalsalloch site and noted that a further report would be presented to its next meeting, setting out options for the future use of the site.

3. Criteria

- 3.1 In considering future options, it has been recognised that specific criteria need to be met, namely:
 - a) The **service priorities** for the delivery of social work services to the residents in the south of the Council area must be promoted, in particular strengthening frontline services, consistent with the Council's key commitments to :

- **Quality**

To develop improved services following current service reviews, e.g. Older People's Residential Services, and in response to the implementation of challenging national care standards from 1 April 2002.

- **Equality**

To deploy social work resources where they can have the greatest impact on tackling social exclusion and meeting need.

- **Access**

To make social work services easier to contact by locating staff in a number of bases across the Council area and in locations shared by other key Council and non-Council services.

- **Partnership**

To build on the already well developed partnership model of working with Education and with service providers in the independent sector.

To address the Joint Future agenda, involving closer joint working between Social Work, Housing and the Health Service in the provision of Community Care services, particularly for older people.

- b) The **financial interests** of the Council must be safeguarded, with particular reference to ensuring that future plans are framed in such a way that the final settlement of claims against the Council's insurers results in the best outcome for the Council in the long term.

In this regard, it is important to acknowledge that risk management analysis suggests that pursuing an option of full re-instatement of the lost facility may jeopardise the continuing availability of insurance cover for the Council's full property portfolio.

- c) **Staff interests** must be taken into account, with sensitive attention being paid to the standard of accommodation available to the staff formerly based in Dalsalloch.

- 3.2 The criteria set out above will be used to appraise the relative merits of the options set out in Section 4 below, with a simple rating system being applied to each option.

4. Options for the Future

4.1 Option 1 – No Action

No re-development takes place and the interim arrangements for delivery of social work services which have been in place since the fire become the long term arrangements.

Appraisal

This option scores **low** on service priorities and **low** on staff interests. It does, however, score **high** in terms of financial interests because it does not involve re-instatement.

4.2 **Option 2 – Re-instate Office Development**

The site is re-developed by building a replacement for the lost office facility. Effectively, the status quo before the fire is restored.

Appraisal

This option scores **low** on service priorities and **low** on financial interests. It also scores **low** in terms of staff interests, with only a minority of staff favouring this option.

4.3 **Option 3 (A and B) – Build a Social Care Facility on the Site**

The site is re-developed as a social care facility, probably providing residential services for older people, which is where there is the greatest need for new, good quality social care provision in order to meet new national standards.

The re-development could be undertaken in-house (Option 3A) or in partnership with an independent sector provider (Option 3B), who would bring resources into the project to add value to the Council's investment.

In parallel with the re-development of the site, staff displaced from Dalsalloch are re-located in office accommodation at various locations across the south of the Council area. A share of the insurance settlement for the fire is committed to ensuring that the standard of accommodation is high.

Appraisal

This option scores **high** on service priorities, **high** on financial interests and **high** on staff interests. The benefits of option 3B are marginally greater than those of option 3A because of the financial benefit arising from attracting outside resources to complement the Council's investment.

5. Policy, Financial and Legal Implications

5.1 The financial implications arising from the option appraisal are as set out in sections 3 and 4 above.

5.2 The legal implications of the option appraisal are straightforward. Any re-development on the site would be carried out in accordance with the relevant planning and building control regulations. Any partnership working would be set in a proper contractual and service level agreement framework.

- 5.3 There are no policy implications for the Council arising from the option appraisal. The Council already operates on a partnership model to provide added value services for its citizens.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

- 6.1 A number of options for future use of the Dalsalloch site and for the deployment of staff formerly based there have been described. Each option has been appraised in terms of its consistency and fitness with a number of key criteria, comprising the Council's service priorities, its long term financial interests and the interests of its staff.
- 6.2 On the basis of the option appraisal, the preferred option is option 3, the re-development of the site by building a social care facility, which scores high against all three criteria.
- 6.3 Committee is requested to :
- a) approve the implementation of option 3, as described in Section 4 above;
 - b) instruct the Directors of Educational and Social Services and of Finance to conclude the settlement of the Council's insurance claims on that basis;
 - c) instruct the Director of Educational and Social Services to prepare detailed plans for realising option 3, in consultation with relevant interests, and to bring forward a further report on progress for Committee's consideration at the earliest feasible opportunity;
 - d) refer the report to the Policy and Resources Committee in terms of the financial aspects of the future plan;and
 - e) otherwise, note the content of the report.

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Director of Educational and Social Services

15 May 2002

For further information, please contact Stephen Moore, Head of Social Work (tel. 01563 576920)

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER:STEPHEN MOORE

AGENDA