

# EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE : 14 SEPTEMBER 2000

WORKING TOGETHER TO STRENGTHEN SERVICES

## Report by Director of Educational and Social Services

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Members of initial arrangements for the new Department of Educational and Social Services and to invite consideration of the proposed key targets for the new department in its first year of operation.

### 2. INTRODUCTION

#### 2.1 Setting the Policy Agenda

On 1 July 2000, the Department of Educational and Social Services was established. From that date it was necessary to ensure that the responsibilities of the Heads of Service in the department were clarified.

The roles and responsibilities of the Heads of Service are detailed in this report at Appendix 1.

The Director and the Heads of Service will work in close partnership with Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Education and Social Work committees and Members of the Education and Social Work committees to determine the policy agenda. Also, it is proposed to establish strong links with a wide range of partnership bodies within East Ayrshire and beyond to ensure that emerging policies will accurately reflect the needs of those we serve in East Ayrshire and take into consideration a wide range of views.

It is also important that monitoring and evaluation permeates all that is done within the department. This is to ensure that there is an effective delivery of quality services. In this way, best value can be achieved within the department and its sections. Close liaison with all relevant staff at all levels will be a key feature of the department.

#### 2.2 Strengthening Service Delivery

Drawing education services and social work services together within one department presents the Council with a range of opportunities to enhance existing service provision.

A greater sense of partnership, shared responsibility and support for service users, not least the most vulnerable in East Ayrshire, will be achieved. Best

practice in education and social work can be shared more widely within the new structure.

Improved and enhanced service delivery is the principal aim of the new arrangement.

- 2.3** Central to the operation of the department, a clear focus will be maintained on the needs of individuals. Raising educational achievement for all, providing strengthened support and care and addressing specific needs and concerns in a more coherent and integrated manner will result. A number of issues attributed to departmentalism will disappear.

There is no doubt that the services of education and social work working together within one strategic framework will make a difference.

### **3. FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION**

- 3.1** The framework within which the new department will operate will clearly include:

- improved quality services
- improved quality of life for the people of East Ayrshire
- development of enhanced partnerships
- development of more robust and effective quality systems
- enhanced management information systems
- more effective communication
- better resource management including enhanced delegation of resources
- clearer lines of accountability
- increased capacity for integrated local planning & service delivery
- improved joint planning and commissioning of services
- evaluation and monitoring

- 3.2** Within the framework for action, the new department is now ready to make steady progress to enhance service delivery. Already, through the new community schools initiative, the very positive Youth Support Strategy, Early Years and Childcare development, improvement of the health of young and old in communities, the potential to better deploy the personnel and resources of education and social work has been recognised.

### **4. SETTING THE INITIAL TARGETS**

- 4.1** A pragmatic approach is recommended in establishing targets for action in the new department. With a major responsibility presently invested in the delivery of quality services, it would be helpful to identify those areas of the service which will be a focus for strengthened service delivery in the present financial year.

From the wide range of possibilities, the following proposals present a coherent and realistic programme for action in the first year of the new department.

## **WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE**

### Child Protection

New social work and education child protection procedures will be implemented through a major joint training for staff from Education and Social Work backgrounds along with colleagues who can assist. This initiative will assist staff in the new department to understand their respective roles in meeting the needs of the most vulnerable children, a key priority for action.

### New Community Schools and Youth Support Strategy

New Community Schools draw together the support and skills of colleagues in Education, Social Work and Health Services. An integrated approach to raising attainment for all pupils will be further progressed through a bid to the Scottish Executive for a second New Community School project in Cumnock.

The Youth Support Strategy has been a successful partnership between Social Work and Education. Merger of the two departments creates a unique opportunity to review the progress made, consolidate the good practice and further develop provision.

The department will ensure all accommodated children and young people have a full-time educational placement based on individual personal learning plans supported by the looking after children materials. The educational underachievement of these children is well recognised and contributes significantly to their social exclusion as adults. The department is committed to addressing this issue.

### Early Years Services

In order to continue to deliver high quality pre-school education and childcare, an action plan will be developed to improve access to childcare qualifications across all sectors 0-14 years. This action plan will include the delivery of SVQs in Childcare and Education with the support of SVQ work-based assessors.

Targeted Family support through the Sure Start initiative will be developed to enhance the work undertaken in the Community Nurseries. Social Work services will be an integral part of these developments.

### Children's Service Plan

The next three year Strategic Plan requires to be prepared for the period April 2001- March 2004. The opportunity to further develop an integrated approach to planning and implementing services for children and young people is greatly enhanced. Particular attention will be given to the needs of the very young and the most vulnerable children and young people.

### **IMPROVING SERVICES FOR PEOPLE AND LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES**

Consideration of the Scottish Executive document "The Same As You", a review of services for people with learning disabilities will be taken forward. As part of the Councils approach, opportunities arising from the establishment of the new Educational and Social Services Department will be maximised and include:

- A revised Future Needs Assessment process to enable the smooth transition from children's to adult services.
- The targeting of adults with a learning disability through community learning plans.

#### Better integration of sensory impairment services

The new department has a range of staff with expertise in sensory impairment. For example, there is a hearing impairment unit at Grange Academy, Kilmarnock, a team of hearing impairment teachers, visual impairment teachers and an educational audiologist. Social work have sensory impairment staff based at Auchinleck. Much could be gained by bringing these teams of staff into a closer association so that they are better able to share knowledge and expertise and contribute to mutual staff development.

### **STRENGTHENING SUPPORT FOR OUR COMMUNITIES**

#### Integration of Community Education and Community Development

Community Education and Community Development that were formerly managed in the separate departments will be brought under one management structure led by the Head of Community Support. The overall aims of promoting active citizenship across all age groups, empowering communities and developing lifelong learning are met by a co-ordinated and integrated approach to service delivery and partnership working.

Support for women offenders

The department will increase the availability of creative and self-development activities to women offenders and work with community education and further education colleges to increase self confidence and self esteem for this group.

A corporate approach to addiction issues

Through the medium of the corporate health group, the new department will review its approach to addiction issues. There will be a continuum of service provision. This will cover all needs from early intervention with children through to services for people with serious addiction problems. Priority will be given to developing an anti-drugs initiative which will result in enhanced support and prevention initiatives being developed in communities. Good practice already exists, but required drawing together as part of an integrated approach. Colleagues from the new department will be invited to contribute to this most important issue.

Health Board Liaison

Revised joint planning arrangements will be developed between the new department and the Health Service with the aim of ensuring:

- more coherent planning
- streamlined decision making processes
- prioritisation of resources linked to strategic aims
- strategic direction informed by stakeholders, and in particular service users

**IMPROVING SYSTEMS**Integration of Information and Communication (ICT) and associated management arrangements

Within the new, merged, department there will be a continuing necessity to ensure that ICT systems are mutually compatible and that information can be readily exchanged between parts and levels of the organisation. The target of better exchange of information was originally identified in the Authority's Children's Service Plan. This must be done within a framework that follows the Data Protection Act requirements and the necessity for security. Also, the ability to transfer information will be discussed with other departments.

Expansion of Delegation of Resources (DSM/DMR) developments

Both the Education and Social Work Departments operate schemes which delegate the financial control of resources to functional and local managers. However, the delegated finance scheme operating in

educational settings provides supplementary management information for local and authority-wide use. Therefore, it is intended that a similar system is extended into all service settings across the new department, in line with other information developments.

## **PERFORMANCE REVIEW**

### **Further development of systems for performance monitoring and planning**

The new department will require to develop a coherent approach to monitoring and evaluation. This will have to reconcile a number of competing pressures. While it will be possible to unify an approach under corporate initiatives such as Best Value, the European Foundation for Quality Management Excellence Model (EFQM/EM) and statutory performance indicators, on the other hand there will be service specific issues that must accord with the particular requirements of the Social Work Services Inspectorate and Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools.

## **5. COMMENT**

- 5.1** It is recommended that these targets form the basis of the agenda for action for the new department along with targets already established separately for the education service and the Social Work Department. What is proposed reflects the strengthening of service delivery, draws together strengths in both areas of service delivery to form a more coherent package of proposals and presents, most importantly, opportunities to develop a more integrated response to the needs of the most vulnerable in East Ayrshire.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1** Members of the Committee are invited to:

- (i) agree to the targets for action for the new department of Educational and Social Services;
- (ii) ask the Director and Heads of Service in the department to circulate this information widely;
- (iii) ask the Director to present progress reports on achieving targets for action to appropriate committees; and
- (iv) otherwise note the contents of this report.

John Mulgrew  
Director of Educational and Social Services

JM/JP  
9 August 2000

**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Nil

Members wishing further information should contact John Mulgrew, Director of Educational and Social Services, Tel (01563) 576017.

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**AGENDA**