

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE****MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 14 NOVEMBER 1996 AT 1000 HOURS IN THE MEETING ROOM, COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS, LONDON ROAD, KILMARNOCK**

PRESENT: Councillors Jimmy Boyd, Wilma Doyle, Ronald Brailsford, Kathleen Hall, Bob Beattie, Eric Ross, Jim Kelly, David Sneller, John Smith and Eric Jackson.

ATTENDING: David Montgomery, Chief Executive; Jim Dickie, Director of Social Work; Bernadette M Docherty, Senior Depute Director of Social Work (Children, Families and Criminal Justice); Allan Y McDougall, Depute Director of Social Work (Finance and Resources); Douglas Bulloch, Depute Director of Social Work (Community Care); Robin Gourlay, Depute Director of Commercial Operations; Graham Haugh, Depute Director of Personnel; Julie Armstrong, Senior Administrative Officer; Apryl Chalmers, Solicitor; Helen Sinclair, Welfare Rights Officer and Melanie J Macleod, Administrative Officer.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Drew McIntyre, Irene Reeves, Gordon Cree, Alan Campbell, Jim O'Neill, Daniel Coffey, David Macrae, Robert McDill and Tommy Farrell.

CHAIR: Councillor Jimmy Boyd, Chair.

MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES

1. There were submitted and approved both as correct records and in respect of recommendations contained therein the undernoted Sub-Committee Minutes (circulated) as contained in Appendices I and II of these Minutes.

1.1 CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE SUB-COMMITTEE OF 23 OCTOBER 1996 - Appendix I

1.2 COMMUNITY CARE SUB-COMMITTEE OF 25 OCTOBER 1996 - Appendix II

PROPOSED ADDITIONS TO THE SCHEME OF DELEGATION (Item 5, Page 1320)

2. There was submitted a report dated 1 November 1996 (circulated) by the Director of Support Services on proposed inclusions to the Council's Scheme of Delegation to make provision for the establishment of a Social Work Inspection Unit Advisory Committee and a Social Work Complaints Review Sub-Committee.

It was agreed:-

- (i) to recommend to Council that the information contained within the report relative to the proposed composition, and terms of reference of the Social Work Complaints Review Sub-Committee and Social Work Inspection Unit Advisory Committee, be approved for inclusion within the Council's Scheme of Delegation; and
- (ii) that the necessary arrangements be remitted to the Director of Support Services.

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Councillor Ross joined the meeting during discussion of the above item.

EATING FOR HEALTH - A DIET ACTION PLAN FOR SCOTLAND

3. There was submitted a report dated 7 October 1996 (circulated) by the Director of Commercial Operation explaining and introducing "Eating for Health - A Diet Action Plan For Scotland" and offering proposals to progress this important area of work within the Departments of Education and Social Work and through staff facilities.

It was agreed:-

- (i) to note that a full policy would be formulated and submitted to the Policy and Resources Committee on the "Eating for Health" initiative based on the Scottish Diet Action Plan; and
- (ii) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

RESIGNATION OF DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK

4. There was submitted a report dated 25 October 1996 (circulated) by the Director of Personnel Services on the resignation of Mr James Dickie as Director of Social Work and seeking instructions for the filling of the post.

It was agreed:-

- (i) to note the resignation of Mr James Dickie as the Director of Social Work, with effect from 24 November 1996; and
- (ii) to remit the matter of the filling of the post to the Recruitment Sub-Committee of the Policy and Resources Committee.

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GUIDANCE TO CONTRACTED PROVIDERS

5. There was submitted a report (circulated) by the Director of Social Work on the existing contractual arrangements for the provision of Social Care and outlining the utilisation of guidance notes in relation to "call off" contracted providers to assist them in complying with the terms of the contract.

It was agreed to note the use of the guidance on contract requirements for utilisation by Social Work Department staff in relation to relevant contracted establishments.

RESIDENTIAL CHARTER OF RIGHTS

6. There was submitted a report (circulated) by the Director of Social Work on the proposed establishment of an East Ayrshire Charter of Rights for Residential Care which would build upon the existing Charter of Rights developed by Strathclyde Regional Council.

It was agreed:-

- (i) to approve the East Ayrshire Charter of Rights for Residential Care, subject to a number of minor amendments detailed at the meeting;
- (ii) that the Director of Social Work make the Charter available within all residential establishments within East Ayrshire;
- (iii) that the Director of Social Work ensure that all relevant staff are aware of the terms of the Charter;

- (iv) that the Charter of Rights be incorporated within the contract between the Council and providers of Community Care and that the Director of Social Work and Head of Legal Services agree and implement the necessary adjustments in the terms of the contract; and
- (v) that the Director of Social Work bring forward proposals for the development of a "Charter of Rights" approach in other settings, following appropriate consultation.

SIX MONTH PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF CHILDREN IN CARE

7. There was submitted a report dated 28 October 1996 (circulated) by the Director of Social Work on progress made since 1 April 1996 in respect of key areas of practice relating to the reception of children into the care of the Local Authority and identifying further action required.

It was agreed:-

- (i) that the Director of Social Work continue to develop adequate management information systems within the Department to assist ongoing performance review and management practice;
- (ii) that, where possible, future reports of this nature provide additional information including age profiles and details of the length of time children spend in care;
- (iii) that the Director of Social Work explore opportunities to enhance community based resources within Central and North Divisions as part of the Children's Service Plan;
- (iv) that the Director of Social Work continue management action to monitor closely the placement of young people in residential schools, in order to meet the target set;
- (v) that the Director of Social Work take action to recruit, select and appropriately support, foster carers to expand the fostering resources available to the Social Work Department; and
- (vi) that the Director Social Work provide Councillor Jackson with details of the number of children outwith the East Ayrshire area placed with East Ayrshire foster parents.

WELFARE RIGHTS CAMPAIGN - UPDATE

8. There was submitted a report (circulated) by the Director of Social Work on the Benefits Campaign Activity undertaken by Social Work staff in the period 1 April to 30 September 1996.

The Chair welcomed Helen Sinclair, Welfare Rights Officer, to the meeting who then spoke to the report and on the work done by the Welfare Rights Officers in the area.

It was agreed:-

- (i) that the Director of Social Work bring forward further reports on achievements within the Council's Anti Poverty Strategy;
- (ii) that the Director of Social Work register the Council's regret regarding the withdrawal of the Benefits Agency's out-of-hours advice service in the light of

the widespread underclaiming highlighted by East Ayrshire's Welfare Rights Campaign;

- (iii) that the Director of Social Work in consultation with the Head of Public Relations issue a press release on the outcome of the Council's Welfare Rights Campaign and on the right of claimants to appeal against decisions made by the Benefits Agency in respect of benefits applications; and
- (iv) otherwise to note the report.

Councillor Kelly left the meeting during discussion of the above item.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES ACTION PLAN

- 9. There was submitted a report dated 1 November 1996 (circulated) by the Director of Social Work on the proposed adoption of the Departments Equal Opportunities Action Plan.

It was agreed:-

- (i) to approve the priorities contained in the report in terms of equal opportunities in employment, service delivery and the wider community;
- (ii) to approve the formation of a Departmental Action Team to implement the Action Plan; and
- (iii) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

SCOTTISH ANTI POVERTY NETWORK - SCOTTISH DECLARATION ON POVERTY

- 10. There was submitted a report (circulated) by the Director of Social Work on the Council's participation in an event organised by the Scottish Anti Poverty Network to make a Scottish Declaration on Poverty in support on the UN day for the eradication of poverty. The event took place on Friday 18 October 1996 in the City Chambers, Glasgow.

It was agreed to note the contents of the report and the further National perspective in relation to the Council's Anti Poverty Strategy.

REVIEW OF CHILD PROTECTION WORK IN EAST AYRSHIRE

- 11. There was submitted a report dated 27 October 1996 (circulated) by the Director of Social Work on the current position of the Departments Child Protection Register and providing an overview on developments since 1 April 1996.

It was agreed:-

- (i) to approve the Department's practice in child protection work which ensured that only those families who required the particular measures of the Child Protection procedures were drawn into these. These were families where a significant degree of harm had happened to a child or where there was the likelihood of significant harm to a child and this was coupled with a significant degree of parental/familial responsibility, directly or indirectly, for that harm;
- (ii) that the Director of Social Work report further to the Committee on the content of the Scottish Office Guidance on "Children in Need"; and
- (iii) that the Director of Social Work report to Committee any change in practice required as a result of future Government guidance.

QUALITY PLAN

- 12.** There was submitted a report dated 1 November 1996 (circulated) by the Director of Social Work on the Department's Quality Plan.

It was agreed:-

- (i) that the Director of Social Work report to a future meeting of the Committee on progress with the Quality Plan; and
- (ii) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

RESIGNATION OF DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK - CHAIR'S REMARKS

- 13.** The Chair expressed his warm appreciation of the work carried out by Mr Jim Dickie as Director of Social Work since the Department's inception, and wished Mr Dickie every success in his new post as Director of Social Work with North Lanarkshire Council. Thereafter, he extended an invitation to Members of the Social Work Committee to attend an informal reception to be held at 1600 hours on Wednesday 20 November 1996 at Council Headquarters.

The Leader of the Council and Councillor Brailsford joined the Chair in thanking Mr Dickie for his service to the Council and in wishing him success in the future.

Mr Dickie thanked Members for their support and good wishes.

The meeting terminated at 1200 hours.