

SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the Social Work Committee held within the Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton on Wednesday, 31 March 1999.

Present: Councillors Duncan Mills (LAB); John Syme (LAB); Andrew White (LAB); Anthony Devine (LAB); Patricia Rice (LAB); David Logan (SNP); Geoffrey Calvert (LAB & CO-OP); Margaret McGregor (SNP); William Mackechnie (SNP); James Flynn (LAB) and James Chirrey (SNP).

Attending: Tim Huntingford, Director of Social Work and Housing; Iain M Murray, Resources Manager; Anne Ritchie, Operational Services Manager; William Clark, Planning and Development Manager and Stephen Brown, Manager - Legal and Administrative Services.

Councillor Duncan Mills in the Chair

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of the Social Work Committee held on 3 February 1999 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

ALZHEIMER SCOTLAND - ACTION ON DEMENTIA WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE PROJECT

There was submitted a report by the Director of Social Work and Housing informing the Committee of the work of Alzheimer Scotland - Action on Dementia in West Dunbartonshire and seeking approval for a grant to supplement the work of the organisation.

Having heard the Director of Social Work and Housing in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to award Alzheimer Scotland - Action on Dementia the sum of £13,800, to be met from the Social Work Section 10 grant budget.

CARE IN THE BALANCE: ACCOUNTS COMMISSION REPORT

There was submitted a report by the Director of Social Work and Housing informing of the Accounts Commission's study findings on the residential and nursing home care and implications for the review and improvement of services provided or funded by the Council.

Having heard the Director of Social Work and Housing, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) that a copy of the full Accounts Commission Report be placed in both group rooms; and
- (2) otherwise to note the terms of the report.

NEW DEAL FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

There was submitted and noted a report by the Director of Social Work and Housing outlining service enhancements for disabled people which were approved by the Council at its special meeting on 4 March 1999.

Following discussion the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the decisions of the Council meeting on 4 March 1999; and
- (2) to remit for consideration, the posts set out in paragraph 4.1 of the aforesaid report, as necessary, to the Personnel Sub-Committee.

COMMUNITY CARE DEVELOPMENTS (COMPREHENSIVE SPENDING REVIEW)

There was submitted and noted a report by the Director of Social Work and Housing describing the range of Community Care Service Developments funded through the Comprehensive Spending Review allocation, additional Council spend and other funding sources.

Having heard the Director of Social Work and Housing in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the considerable level of Council investment in the services;
- (2) to approve the developments detailed in paragraph 2.6 of the aforesaid report at a total cost of £92,000; and
- (3) that where necessary issues relating to staffing be referred to the Personnel Sub-Committee for consideration.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES DEVELOPMENT (COMPREHENSIVE SPENDING REVIEW)

There was submitted a report by the Director of Social Work and Housing requesting the Committee to approve the department's spending plans on children's services linked to the Secretary of State's allocation of Grant Aid Expenditure to the Council.

Having heard the Director of Social Work and Housing, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the range of developments proposed within the report; and
- (2) to approve the funding for posts required as detailed in paragraph 3 of the aforesaid report and remit these posts, as necessary, to the Personnel Sub-Committee for consideration.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY SERVICES

There was submitted a report by the Director of Social Work and Housing:-

- (a) informing the Committee of the success achieved in providing a service to people requiring an occupational therapy assessment over recent months;
- (b) updating Members on improvements in service delivery since the introduction of the occupational therapy charging policy; and
- (c) outlining proposals for further development of the service.

Having heard the Director of Social Work and Housing in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the terms of the report.

ACCOUNTS COMMISSION PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 1997/98

There was submitted and noted a report by the Director of Social Work and Housing informing the Committee of the performance of the Department of Social Work and Housing in relation to the Accounts Commission's Performance Indicators for 1997/98.

THE JANE MOORE TRUST - FAMILY PLACEMENT SERVICE

There was submitted a report by the Director of Social Work and Housing seeking the Committee's approval to use the Jane Moore Trust - Family Placement Service for the provision of family placements for children in West Dunbartonshire.

Having heard the Director of Social Work and Housing in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to approve the use of the aforementioned Family Placement Service at a cost of £695 per week.

PARENTAL CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS THE COST OF ACCOMMODATED CHILDREN

There was submitted a report by the Director of Social Work and Housing requesting the Committee to approve the revised system of calculating the contribution parents make towards the cost of their child being accommodated by the Council.

Having heard the Director of Social Work and Housing, the Committee agreed to endorse the principle of parental contributions and that this should be implemented in West Dunbartonshire on the basis of the proposals detailed within paragraphs 3 and 4 of the aforesaid report.

VARIATION IN ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Committee agreed to vary the order of business as hereinafter minuted.

PRESENTATION TO MRS JUNE WYLIE

The Convener presented Mrs. June Wylie with a bouquet of flowers and thanked her, on behalf of the Council, for her and her husband's (Ian) services as foster carers since 1981 during which time they had cared for over 100 children from a wide variety of backgrounds and ages. Having heard the Director of Social Work and Housing, the Committee noted that Mr. and Mrs. Wylie presently had seven children permanently placed with them and that it is the widely held view of social work staff and the fostering panel that the couple are exceptional in their abilities and capacity to provide a very high level of care to the children placed in their care. Thereafter Mrs. Wylie thanked the Committee and left the meeting.

BUDGETARY POSITION AS AT 31 JANUARY 1999

There was submitted and noted a report by the Director of Social Work and Housing informing the Committee of the Department's budgetary performance during the period 1 April 1998 to 31 January 1999.

INCREASE IN MAINTENANCE RATES FOR ESTABLISHMENTS LOCATED WITHIN WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE

There was submitted a report by the Director of Social Work and Housing advising Members of the uplifted maintenance rates for voluntary residential homes located within West Dunbartonshire placements and making recommendations thereon.

Having heard the Director of Social Work and Housing advise that agreement had now been reached with Cornerstone Care on the rates as detailed within the report, the Committee agreed to approve the revised maintenance rates for establishments located within West Dunbartonshire as detailed in Appendix I to this Minute.

INCREASE IN MAINTENANCE RATES FOR ESTABLISHMENTS LOCATED OUTWITH WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE

There was submitted a report by the Director of Social Work and Housing advising Members of revised maintenance rates for voluntary residential homes, schools and day centres, applicable to West Dunbartonshire placements and making recommendations thereon.

Following discussion and having heard the Resources Manager in further explanation, the Committee agreed to approve the revised maintenance rates as detailed in Appendix II to this Minute.

UPRATING OF NURSING AND RESIDENTIAL HOME RATES

There was submitted a report by the Director of Social Work and Housing:-

- (a) requesting the Committee to approve an increase in the Council's rates for voluntary and private sector residential care homes and nursing homes, in line with the Benefit Agency uprating for 1999/2000; and
- (b) seeking approval for the increase in standard respite care charges for voluntary and private residential care homes, and the local authority establishments.

Having heard the Resources Manager advise that the revised rates become effective from 19 April 1999 and not 12 April 1999 as shown in the report, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to approve the uprated levels of Benefit Agency residential care allowances which will apply from April 1999 and authorise the payment of private and voluntary nursing and residential care homes at the revised rates as detailed in Appendix III to this Minute, with effect from 19 April 1999;
- (2) that for 1999/2000 the standard weekly charge to Council funded clients for respite care in private and voluntary nursing homes and residential care homes should be increased from £107.75 to £111.40 (an increase of 3.39%); and
- (3) that the standard weekly charge to residents utilising local authority homes for respite care should be increased from £50.25 to £52.00 (an increase of 3.48%).

INCREASE IN FOSTERING AND RELATED ALLOWANCES

There was submitted a report by the Director of Social Work and Housing seeking the Committee's approval of an increase in fostering and related allowances for 1999/2000.

Having heard the Convener, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to endorse West Dunbartonshire Council's application of the COSLA rates; and

- (2) to approve the undernoted increases in the basic weekly rates with effect from 1 April 1999:-

AGES	1999/2000
0-4	£57.13
5-10	£70.89
11-15	£88.24
16-18	£114.26

PANEL OF SAFEGUARDERS

There was submitted a report by the Depute Chief Executive and Solicitor to the Council requesting the Committee to consider the re-appointment of those persons currently serving on the Panel of Safeguarders in West Dunbartonshire and issues relating to the size and composition of the Panel.

Having heard the Manager - Legal and Administrative Services, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to re-appoint for a period of one year, those persons wishing to serve as a Safeguarder in West Dunbartonshire, as detailed in Appendix IV to this Minute; and
- (2) to instruct the Depute Chief Executive and Solicitor to the Council to consult with the Sheriff Principal for North Dunbartonshire, Authority Reporter to the Children's Panel, Chairman of the Children's Panel and the Director of Social Work and Housing on the use of the Panel of Safeguarders in West Dunbartonshire and report the outcome to a future meeting of this Committee.

VALEDICTORY

The Director of Social Work and Housing informed the Committee that this was the last time Councillor Duncan Mills would chair the Social Work Committee as he had decided not to stand for re-election in the forthcoming Local Government elections in May. He then paid tribute to Councillor Mills who, in his role as Convener, had been very supportive of the social work function and in particular the fostering and adoption service. In conclusion the Director, on behalf of all the staff within the Social Work Department, thanked Councillor Mills for his help and support and wished him a long and happy retirement.

Councillor White, on behalf of the Labour administration, thanked Councillor Mills for his services to the Labour Party and paid tribute to his work not only as Convener of Social Work but also in his capacity as Depute Provost of West Dunbartonshire Council. In particular he praised Councillor Mills' contribution to the improvement of home care services to the elderly and services to the disabled in West Dunbartonshire.

Councillor McGregor, on behalf of the SNP Group, paid tribute to Councillor Mills for his services to the people of West Dunbartonshire and in particular the Vale of Leven and in so doing thanked him for his support of the Dumbarton District Drugs Initiative. Councillor Rice also paid tribute to Councillor Mills and wished him a long and happy retirement.

Thereafter Councillor Mills responded in the appropriate terms and informed the Committee that although he was retiring as an elected member he hoped to continue his involvement with the Loch Lomond Park Authority.