

## **SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE**

At a meeting of the Social Justice Committee held in the Council Chambers, Municipal Buildings, Station Road, Dumbarton on Wednesday 13 August 2003 at 2.00 p.m.

**Present:** Councillors Denis Agnew, Jim Flynn, Linda McColl, Marie McNair, Martin Rooney and Andy White.

**Attending:** Tim Huntingford, Chief Executive; Alexis Jay, Director of Social Work and Housing Services; Bill Clark, Head of Strategy; Cy Neil, Head of Housing; Jim Pow, Manager of Resources; Jeff Stobo, Strategy Manager; David Burke, Manager of Social Work Operations; Colin Meehan, Section Head – Learning Disabilities; Vicki Ward, Disability Development Worker; Moira Swanson, Research and Information Manager; John Hepburn, Welfare Rights Officer; Tommy Gorman, Welfare Rights Officer and Nuala Borthwick, Administrative Assistant.

### **APPOINTMENT OF CONVENER**

358 With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of Council held on 25 June 2003 (Page 55, paragraph 192(b) refers), concerning the membership of Committees and the appointment of Conveners thereto, the Committee considered the appointment of Convener of the Social Justice Committee.

359 The Clerk requested nominations for the position of Convener and the Committee unanimously agreed that Councillor Flynn be appointed. Accordingly, Councillor Flynn assumed the Chair.

### **MODERNISING SCOTLAND'S SOCIAL HOUSING: A CONSULTATION PAPER**

360 A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work and Housing Services advising of issues raised in the Scottish Executive's consultation paper, "Modernising Scotland's Social Housing".

361 After discussion, the Committee agreed to note the initial response which the Chief Executive had made to the Scottish Executive in consultation with the Convener of Housing, as detailed in the Appendix to the report.

## **TAX CREDITS**

362 A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work and Housing Services advising of issues raised by the new tax credit system and drawing attention to a discrepancy in the new application form which could deprive disabled children and their families of benefits.

363 The Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the report and the successful outcome of the Welfare Rights Unit's collaboration with Tony Worthington, MP;
- (2) to approve the proposal to pursue the entitlement of disabled children and their families to Tax Credit across the authority;
- (3) that the Council, through COSLA and the Scottish Local Government Forum against Poverty, should alert all Scottish Local Authorities of the issues involved and that the Director of Social Work and Housing Services be asked to prepare briefing material for appropriate circulation; and
- (4) that Welfare Rights Officers be commended for their work on tax credits to date.

## **HOME CARE SERVICES – CHARGING POLICY**

364 A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work and Housing Services seeking approval for a revision of charging policy for non-residential services that enable older people to remain in their own homes, consistent with COSLA guidance issued in May 2002, and Supporting People's Charging & Financial Guidelines.

365 Having heard the Head of Strategy and the Manager of Social Work Operations in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to adopt the proposed policy and financial framework as detailed in the report;
- (2) to abolish charging for housing adaptations; and
- (3) to an implementation date of 1 September 2003 for the policy and financial framework.

**WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL -  
DRAFT SCHEME OF DIRECT PAYMENTS**

- 366 A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work and Housing Services seeking approval for the implementation of West Dunbartonshire Council's draft scheme of Direct Payments.
- 367 A booklet entitled, "Direct Payments Promoting Choice and Control" was circulated for information in explanation of Direct Payments.
- 368 After discussion and having heard the Director of Social Work and Housing Services, Section Head – Learning Disabilities and the Disability Development Worker in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-
- (1) to approve the Council's draft policy and procedures for Direct Payments as the basis of the implementation of the legislation;
  - (2) to forward the draft Direct Payments Policy and Procedural Guidance to the Health Improvement and Social Justice Partnership for their interest and information; and
  - (3) that the Director of Social Work and Housing Services report back to the Committee on progress with Direct Payments in one year's time.

**SOCIAL WORK GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS**

- 369 A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work and Housing Services making recommendations on the level of grants payable to voluntary organisations.
- 370 Having heard the Manager of Resources, the Committee agreed:-
- (1) to approve the recommendations in relation to the various applications, as detailed in the appendix hereto;
  - (2) to pay Dumbarton Area Council on Alcohol one half of the approved grant at this time;
  - (3) that Argyll and Clyde NHS be requested to increase their contribution to £52,275;
  - (4) that item (2) above be raised directly with the Argyll and Clyde NHS Board; and
  - (5) to remit the issue of a grant to Dumbarton Area Council on Alcohol to the Health Improvement and Social Justice Partnership for its consideration.

**WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE DOMESTIC ABUSE STRATEGY:  
COUNCIL IMPLEMENTATION PROPOSALS**

- 371 A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work and Housing Services advising of progress with the West Dunbartonshire Intra Agency Group on Domestic Abuse and updating members on action to date.

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) to accept the proposals submitted; and
- (2) to support the action as outlined in the Report.

The meeting closed at 3.00 p.m.