

HEALTH IMPROVEMENT AND SOCIAL JUSTICE SUB-COMMITTEE

At a Special meeting of the Health Improvement and Social Justice Sub-Committee held in the Council Chambers, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton on Thursday, 30 January 2003 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Ronnie McColl, John Trainer, Connie O'Sullivan, Margaret McGregor, Jim Bollan and Linda McColl (West Dunbartonshire Council), Mrs Vivien Dance and Rev. Ian Miller (Argyll & Clyde NHS Board),

Attending: West Dunbartonshire Council: Alexis Jay, Director of Social Work and Housing Services; Bill Clark, Head of Strategy; Helen Watson, Senior Social Worker (Strategy); William Pook, Social Worker (Strategy); Tom Jackson, Community Planning Co-ordinator and Craig Stewart, Administrative Assistant.

Greater Glasgow Health Board: Catriona Renfrew, Director of Planning and Community Care.

Argyll & Clyde NHS: Kay Eastwood, Director of Nursing.

Also

Attending: Dr Richard Brown, Medical Director, NHS Argyll & Clyde; Dr Lesley Wilkie, Director of Public Health, NHS Argyll & Clyde; Paul Ballantyne, Assistant Director – Community Involvement, NHS Argyll & Clyde; and Annette Thompson, Project Manager, Review of Maternity Services.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor James McCallum (West Dunbartonshire Council); Ron Arbuckle, Head of Service, Argyll & Clyde NHS; Andrew Robertson and Ian Reid, Greater Glasgow Primary Care NHS Trust; and David Dowie, Communities Scotland.

Councillor Ronnie McColl in the Chair

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

The Chair, Councillor R. McColl, opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and, thereafter, he introduced Dr Lesley Wilkie, Paul Ballantyne and Annette Thomson to those present. Councillor McColl then advised that a decision had been taken to invite all Members of the Council, together with interested parties, to this meeting in view of the nature and importance of the issues involved.

PRESENTATION ON MATERNITY SERVICES IN ARGYLL AND CLYDE

The Sub-Committee heard Dr Lesley Wilkie, Mr Paul Ballantyne and Ms Annette Thompson give a detailed presentation on the strategic approach which Argyll & Clyde NHS Board wished to adopt in the provision of maternity services for the area. Dr Wilkie introduced Dr Richard Brown to the meeting.

The presentation dealt with the pressures on maternity provision across Argyll and Clyde in which changes in working and clinical practices, professional standards, declining birth rate to over capacity and difficulties in recruiting some crucial members of staff were posing increasing threats to the provision of sustainable maternity services. As a consequence of this, a decision was made by the Board on 18 October 2002 to announce the activation of the contingency plan at the Vale of Leven Hospital.

It was noted that a workshop which took place on 28 October 2002 had initiated the process to address the future shape of maternity services and there was broad consensus on the need for urgent public engagement and involvement to influence and develop options for maternity services in the long term, with the following aims:-

- (1) to debate the current shape of maternity services and the nature and impact of different pressures in the system;
- (2) to consider what the vision and future shape of maternity services might be, within the context of an overall strategy for maternity services; and
- (3) to revisit the issues which precipitated the Acute Trust review and, within the context of a strategy for maternity services, to develop options generated from the engagement and involvement exercise that are compatible with the principles set out in the Maternity Services Framework and with the emerging conclusions from the Expert Group on Acute Maternity Services (EGAMS).

It was also noted:-

- (a) that as a first stage there was a need for a debate with the full range of stakeholders about the current shape of services and the way in which pressures are impacting upon the system and affecting its capacity to provide clinically safe services. Only when those involved were fully informed and engaged could a proper debate take place about the future shape of services;
- (b) that the debate required to move on to discuss the vision people see for services in the future and this would entail detailed discussion about the strategic direction statement for maternity services and how it might be implemented across Argyll and Clyde; and

- (c) that the final part of the process would be to consider all of the options generated.

Following a question and answer session, the meeting heard from Ms Kay Eastwood and Ms Catriona Renfrew in relation to the issues under discussion. Dr. Richard Brown was also heard in elaboration of the proposals and in answer to various questions from Members.

The meeting closed at 11.40 a.m. with the Chair, Councillor R. McColl, thanking everyone for their attendance and for the useful exchange of views which had taken place.