

SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the Social Work Committee held within the Council Suite, Council Offices, Rosebery Place, Clydebank on Wednesday, 30th September, 1998.

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

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

Councillor Duncan Mills in the Chair

CONVENER'S REMARKS

The Convener welcomed Councillor David Logan to his first meeting of the Social Work Committee.

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE PROBATION PROJECT

There was submitted a report by Director of Social Work and Housing informing the Committee of the work of the West Dunbartonshire Probation Project, which was handed over to West Dunbartonshire Council following organisational restructuring of Save the Children Fund, Managers of the Project since 1988.

The Director of Social Work and Housing informed the Committee that the Government had recently announced that £21.5 million would be made available to social work services in criminal justice over a three year period and that it was hoped that some of the additional monies could be used to expand the services provided by the West Dunbartonshire Probation Project. Thereafter Mr. Raymund McQuillan, Principal Officer, Criminal Justice Section and Ms Irene Scullion, Project Leader (both in attendance for this item only) gave a presentation on the work of the project during which Ms. Scullion highlighted two cases where the project had made an impact on two persons who had not re-offended since their involvement with the project.

Following discussion and having heard the Director of Social Work and Housing advise that he intended to submit a report to the next meeting of the Committee proposing a draft response to a consultation document entitled "Community Sentencing: The Tougher Option - a Review of Criminal Social Work Services" which had recently been issued by the Scottish Office, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) that the Director of Social Work and Housing would arrange for any Member of the Council to visit the West Dunbartonshire Probation Project, if they so wished;
- (2) that the Director of Social Work and Housing would arrange for a copy of the aforementioned consultation document to be available to Members in each of the Group rooms; and
- (3) to thank Mr. McQuillan and Ms. Scullion for their presentation.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of the Social Work Committee held on 5th August, 1998 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

MINUTES OF SOCIAL WORK COMPLAINTS REVIEW SUB-COMMITTEE

The Minutes of Meeting of the Social Work Complaints Review Sub-Committee held on 10th August, 1998 were submitted and approved as a correct record as shown as Appendix I to these Minutes. Having heard the Convener, the Committee agreed to approve the recommendation of the Sub-Committee that no action be taken in relation to the complaint referred to within the Minutes.

COMPLAINTS

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

- (a) informing the Committee of the complaints and representations received in respect of social work services and the action taken to resolve them; and
- (b) requesting the Committee to nominate additional elected Members to serve on the Social Work Complaints Review Panel.

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

- (1) that two members from the Labour Group and one member from the SNP Group (to be named later) be added to the panel of elected members serving on the Complaints Review Panel; and
- (2) otherwise to note the terms of the report

BUDGETARY POSITION AS AT 31ST JULY, 1998

There was submitted and noted a report by the Director of Social Work and Housing informing the Committee of the Social Work budgetary performance during the period 1st April to 31st July 1998.

INCREASE IN MAINTENANCE RATES FOR ESTABLISHMENTS LOCATED OUTWITH WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

There was submitted a report by the Director of Social Work and Housing requesting the Committee to approve revised maintenance rates for Local Authority residential homes, voluntary residential homes and day centres, applicable to West Dunbartonshire placements.

The Committee agreed to approve the revised rates as detailed in Appendix II to these Minutes.

COMMUNITY CARE: REGISTRATION OF RESIDENTIAL AND OTHER ESTABLISHMENTS FOR ADULTS AND CHILDREN - SCOTTISH OFFICE CIRCULAR SWSG 11/98

There was submitted a report by the Director of Social Work and Housing summarising the guidance contained in a Scottish Office Circular on arrangements necessary for effective registration of residential establishments for adults and children and highlighting issues for consideration by this Authority.

Having heard the Director of Social Work and Housing, the Committee agreed to note that further reports would be submitted to Committee identifying measures deemed necessary to meet the new requirements specified within the Circular.

8 BUCHANAN STREET DUMBARTON

There was submitted a report by the Director of Social Work and Housing seeking the Committee's approval to transfer 8 Buchanan Street, Dumbarton from the Social Work Account (Non HRA) to the Housing Revenue Account.

The Committee agreed that 8 Buchanan Street, Dumbarton be transferred to the Housing Revenue Account at nil value with effect from 1st October, 1997 subject to approval by the Secretary of State.

Councillor Rice left the meeting at this point.

GAY AND LESBIAN SUPPORT GROUP

There was submitted a report by the Director of Social Work and Housing on the proposed establishment of a Gay and Lesbian Support Group in West Dunbartonshire.

The Committee agreed to the establishment of an (officer led) West Dunbartonshire Gay and Lesbian Support Group.

COMMUNITY CARE NEEDS OF FRAIL OLDER PEOPLE: INTEGRATING PROFESSIONAL ASSESSMENTS AND CARE ARRANGEMENTS - SCOTTISH OFFICE CIRCULAR SWSG 10/98

There was submitted a report by the Director of Social Work and Housing summarising the guidance contained in a Scottish Office Circular on how social work, housing and health professionals can jointly contribute more effectively to community care assessments and care arrangements for frail older people.

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

- (1) to endorse the joint work already undertaken with health agencies across West Dunbartonshire; and
- (2) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

Councillor Rice re-entered the meeting at this point.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES: JOINT FUNDED PLACES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND LEISURE SERVICES AND DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK AND HOUSING

There was submitted a joint report by the Director of Social Work and Housing and Director of Education and Leisure Services:-

- (a) informing Members of the obligations upon local authorities, following the implementation of the Children's (Scotland) Act 1995, to provide integrated services for children in need and of the collaborative response of the Department of Education and Leisure Services and Department of Social Work and Housing to the arrangements for children who require care in residential schools; and
- (b) making recommendations thereon.

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

- (1) to endorse the policy of providing local services to maintain children within their own communities and that as far as possible the work of both departments should aim to prevent the need for children to be placed in residential facilities outwith West Dunbartonshire;
- (2) to note that work is being undertaken to identify those strategies which are proving most effective in achieving the above aim;
- (3) to request the Director of Social Work and Housing and the Director of Education and Leisure Services to submit a further report detailing proposals to improve on the present situation, to the meeting of Council in October, if possible;
- (4) to approve the use by the Department of Social Work and Housing of establishments used by the Department of Education and Leisure Services for this purpose; and
- (5) that arrangements be made for Members of this Committee and the Education Committee to visit Cunard School and Middlemuir School.

DUMBARTON AND DISTRICT COMMUNITY CARE FORUM NETWORKING DAY

There was submitted a report by the Director of Social Work and Housing advising the Committee of a Networking Day arranged by Dumbarton and District Community Care Forum to take place on 8th October, 1998 in Balloch, and seeking approval for the award of funds to cover expenses incurred in organising and running the event.

Having heard the Convener the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to authorise the financing of the Networking Day up to a maximum of £400; and
- (2) otherwise to note the terms of the report.

INCAPABLE ADULTS BILL - PROTECTION OF THE FINANCES AND OTHER PROPERTY OF PEOPLE INCAPABLE OF MANAGING THEIR OWN AFFAIRS

There was submitted a report by the Director of Social Work and Housing informing the Committee of issues concerning the need to protect the finances and property of persons incapable of managing their own affairs and requesting support of Committee to press for comprehensive legislation to ensure that people in these circumstances are protected from exploitation and benefit from any income or capital to which they are entitled.

The Committee agreed to endorse the action already taken to support the alliance for the promotion of the Incapable Adults Bill.