

## ANGUS COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the **SOCIAL WORK AND HEALTH COMMITTEE** held in the Town and County Hall, Forfar on Thursday 21 May 2009 at 4.00 pm.

**Present:** Councillors ALISON ANDREWS, RUTH LESLIE MELVILLE MBE, COLIN BROWN, MAIRI EVANS, PETER NIELD, IAN MACKINTOSH, BOB MYLES, BILL MIDDLETON, GLENNIS MIDDLETON, DONALD MORRISON, ROB MURRAY, RALPH PALMER, MARGARET THOMSON, PAUL VALENTINE and JOHN WHYTE.

Councillor ANDREWS, Convener, in the Chair.

### 1. APOLOGIES/SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors David Fairweather, David May and Helen Oswald with Councillors Peter Nield, Bob Myles and Ralph Palmer substituting respectively.

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Committee agreed to note that no declarations of interest were made.

### 3. MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The [minute of meeting of this Committee of 9 April 2009](#) was approved as a correct record and signed by the Convener.

With reference to Article 4(x) therein, the Convener repeated the statement by the Head of Law & Administration at the Council meeting on 14 May 2009 that the setting of fees and charges would continue to be undertaken at the annual statutory budget setting meeting as indicated in Report No 152/09. The decision on the setting of fees and charges would therefore continue to be made by elected members and the implementation of the agreed fees would be delegated to the Director of Social Work and Health.

### 4. REQUEST FOR WRITTEN EVIDENCE FOR THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND LICENSING (SCOTLAND) BILL 2009

With reference to Article 7 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 9 April 2009, there was submitted [Report No 407/09](#) by the Director of Social Work and Health advising the Committee of the comments made in respect of the Scottish Government's call for written evidence for the Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Bill 2009 which had been introduced to the Scottish Parliament on 5 March 2009. A copy of the Bill had been placed in the Members' Lounge.

The Report indicated that the Bill built upon the work of the Scottish Government's Report "Protecting Scotland's Communities: Fair, Fast and Flexible Justice", which had been published in December (Report No 272/09 refers). The Bill's provisions covered three main purposes, namely: sentencing, criminal procedure and licensing. The comments submitted related specifically to Criminal Justice Services in Angus Council Social Work and Health and were appended to the Report.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report;
- (ii) to endorse the comments on the Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Bill 2009;
- (iii) to instruct the Director of Social Work and Health to submit the comments on behalf of Angus Council;
- (iv) to note the potential implications for service delivery as detailed in the Report; and
- (v) to instruct the Director of Social Work and Health to update the Committee as appropriate regarding the progress of the Bill

## 5. ENHANCEMENT OF SOCIAL WORK AND HEALTH DRUG AND ALCOHOL SERVICE

There was submitted [Report No 408/09](#) by the Director of Social Work and Health advising the Committee of the enhancement of the Social Work Drug and Alcohol Service by the creation of three new posts with the specific remit of addressing alcohol related problems in Angus.

The Report indicated that following the provision of additional funding by the Scottish Government to tackle alcohol misuse, NHS Tayside Strategic Resources and Policy Committee had approved a report in December 2008 highlighting work undertaken with partners in the three Tayside Drug and Alcohol Action Teams (DAATs). One of the range of developments approved in the Report had been an enhancement of the capacity of services to meet the anticipated increase in referrals to the Tayside Alcohol Problem Service (TAPS) Community Teams, Social Work Drug and Alcohol Teams and Tayside Council on Alcohol and funding had been identified for each local authority in Tayside in relation to this.

Funds totalling £112,500 had been allocated to Angus Council for 2009/10 and subsequently three full time Social Workers would be appointed and based within the Social Work and Health Drug and Alcohol Team currently based in Arbroath. Each would have a particular role in relation to the expected outcomes highlighted in the Report. The effectiveness of the new posts would be monitored by the Angus Alcohol and Drug Partnership (formerly known as the Drug and Alcohol Action Team). These posts would enhance the ability of Angus Council to meet objectives within the Angus Single Outcome Agreement relating to reducing harm caused by alcohol misuse and improving quality of life, and compliment the work of the Focus on Alcohol initiative, in addressing alcohol use across Angus.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report;
- (ii) to approve the further enhancement of the Alcohol and Drug Service by the creation of three new posts as detailed in the Report; and
- (iii) to instruct the Director of Social Work and Health to write to the appropriate Scottish Government Minister to seek continuing funding and for it to be paid directly to the local authority.

## \*6. REVISED SMOKING POLICY FOR FOSTER CARERS/ADOPTIVE PARENTS

With reference to Article 11 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 30 May 2006, there was submitted [Report No 409/09](#) by the Director of Social Work and Health seeking approval for a revision of the smoking policy for foster carers and prospective adopters. In line with emerging medical evidence about the dangers of passive smoking, it was proposed that children under five should not be placed with carers who smoked.

The Report indicated that the revised policy, a copy of which was appended to the Report, was broadly based on the advice published by the British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) and strengthened the current position, increasing the age below which a child would not be placed with foster carers who smoked, from two to five. The rationale for the increased age limit was the emerging evidence that passive smoking was more damaging than had been previously understood, combined with an acknowledgement that pre-school children were particularly vulnerable, both because of their age and because they were likely to be physically close to the carer for longer periods of time. The policy recognised that the situation was likely to evolve overtime towards a position where carers who smoked would not be approved and this view was reflected in the proposed policy.

It was anticipated that the revised policy could be introduced without a significant impact on the Council's ability to recruit and retain foster carer and adoptive parents. The two current foster carers who would be directly affected had indicated an intention to care for older children or stop smoking. Although policies in other authorities and independent fostering agencies varied significantly, the proposed change was in line with practice elsewhere.

Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Leslie Melville, moved that the Committee agrees to adopt the revised smoking policy set out in the Appendix to the Report.

COUNCILLOR GLENNIS MIDDLETON, SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR NIELD, MOVED AS AN AMENDMENT, THAT THE COMMITTEE AGREES:-

- (I) TO NOT APPROVE THE REVISED SMOKING POLICY AS SET OUT IN THE APPENDIX TO THE REPORT; AND
- (II) TO INSTRUCT THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK & HEALTH TO BRING BACK A FURTHER REPORT ON A VOLUNTARY CODE OF CONDUCT WITH FOSTER CARERS, TO BE REVIEWED IN TWELVE MONTHS.

On a vote being taken, members voted:-

For the motion:-

Councillors Andrews, Leslie Melville, Brown, Mackintosh, Myles and Thomson (6)

For the amendment:-

Councillors Evans, Nield, Bill Middleton, Glennis Middleton, Morrison, Murray, Palmer, Valentine and Whyte (9).

The amendment was declared carried and became the finding of the meeting.

*In accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 39(3)(i), Councillors Leslie Melville and Myles indicated that they wished the matter referred to the Council for a decision.*

## **7. ANGUS DOMESTIC ABUSE ALARM SCHEME**

With reference to Article 17 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 27 February 2007, there was submitted [Report No 410/09](#) by the Director of Social Work and Health advising the Committee of the launch of a new initiative to support victims of domestic abuse, the Angus Domestic Abuse Scheme, which was being funded through the Telecare Development Programme.

The Report indicated that the Angus Domestic Abuse Scheme was a joint initiative between Tayside Police, Social Work and Health and the Angus Partnership on Domestic Abuse and would involve the rapid installation of a community alarm package in the homes of households identified as being at particular risk of domestic violence. The aim of the scheme was to provide an additional level of security and reassurance to around six to twelve households at risk of domestic abuse at any one time. It was likely to be installed at the early stages following Police intervention, for example while an interdict was being sought, and was likely to be left in place for only a few months until all parties were confident that the risk had receded. Access to the scheme would be by referral from a Police Domestic Abuse Officer as part of an on-going package of support. A protocol for referrals, installation, call handling and response had been agreed between Social Work and Health and Tayside Police.

As provision of alarms under the scheme was intended to be a short term measure service users would not be charged for the service. The scheme would be formally launched by partner agencies on 28 May 2009 and was a good example of how the strong partnership between the Council and its community planning partners could deliver innovation services.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report; and
- (ii) to approve, and welcome the proposals set out in the Report which would provide essential support to victims of domestic abuse.

## **8. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

The Committee resolved, in terms of Standing Order 27(2), that the public and press be excluded during consideration of the following item, so as to avoid the disclosure of information which was exempt in terms of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 paragraph 1.

**9. SOCIAL WORK AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT: REVIEW OF MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS**

With reference to Article 4 of the minute of meeting of the Executive Sub-Committee of the Strategic Policy Committee of 21 May 2009, there was submitted [Report No 411/09](#) by the Director of Social Work and Health setting out a revised structure of management following a review of management arrangements within the Social Work and Health Department which would assist in taking the various agendas pertinent to social work forward in the medium-term.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report; and
- (ii) to approve the proposed management arrangements as set out in the Report.