

ANGUS COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the **SOCIAL WORK AND HEALTH COMMITTEE** held in the Town and County Hall, Forfar on Thursday 22 May 2008 at 4.00 pm.

Present: Councillors ALISON ANDREWS, RUTH LESLIE MELVILLE MBE, COLIN BROWN, MAIRI EVANS, DAVID FAIRWEATHER, BOB MYLES, DAVID MAY, FRANK ELLIS, RALPH PALMER, DONALD MORRISON, ROB MURRAY, HELEN OSWALD, 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 Ian Mackintosh, Bill Middleton and Glennis Middleton with Councillors Bob Myles, Frank Ellis and Ralph Palmer substituting respectively.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors May and Valentine declared an interest in item 15 as Trustees of Dorward House, Montrose.

3. MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The [minute of meeting of this Committee of 10 April 2008](#) was approved as a correct record and signed by the Convener.

With reference to Article 7 of the minute of meeting of Angus Council of 15 May 2008, Councillor Murray, on behalf of the SNP Group, congratulated Councillor Andrews on her appointment as Convener of the Social Work and Health Committee and indicated that they looked forward to working together for the vulnerable and needy citizens of Angus.

4. THE ANGUS ADOPTION AGENCY AND FOSTERING PANEL - ANNUAL REPORT 2007/2008

With reference to Article 8 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 19 June 2007, there was submitted [Report No 479/08](#) by the Director of Social Work and Health advising the Committee of the operation of the Angus Adoption Agency and the Fostering Panel during the year 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008.

The Annual Report on the Agency and the Panel provided extensive information on their operation. It also highlighted the current pressures on resources as well as Angus Council's success over several years in providing an effective service for children, foster carers and adoptive parents.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report;
- (ii) to note the contents of the 2007/2008 annual report on the Angus Adoption Agency and the Fostering Panel; and
- (iii) to thank the Panel Chair and Members together with all foster carers in Angus for their excellent work.

5. VOLUNTEERING IN SOCIAL WORK - ANNUAL REPORT 2007/2008

With reference to Article 9 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 19 June 2007, there was submitted [Report No 480/08](#) by the Director of Social Work and Health presenting the Annual Report on Volunteering in Social Work.

The Report highlighted the important and valuable role of volunteers within Social Work and Health in supporting service users and the community. At present, Social Work volunteers were recruited through a service commissioned from the Volunteer Centre Angus and

underwent a process of selection, disclosure checks and pre-volunteering induction to ensure that they were suitable and able to undertake volunteering tasks. The focus of the service over the past year had been to improve communication between volunteers, the service and staff and to improve the matching of volunteers to opportunities which benefited service users. This had been achieved by the recruitment of a Volunteer Co-ordinator. It was proposed to continue to promote the role of volunteers in supporting social work service users in the community in partnership with the Volunteer Centre Angus.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the extent of volunteering with social work service users;
- (ii) to support the continued development of the role of volunteers with social work service users;
- (iii) to instruct the Director of Social Work and Health to bring forward further Annual Reports on volunteering matters; and
- (iv) to welcome the value of the commitment and support of all volunteers.

6. CLIENTS' RIGHTS SERVICE - ANNUAL REPORT 2007/2008

With reference to Article 11 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 19 June 2007, there was submitted [Report No 481/08](#) by the Director of Social Work and Health advising the Committee of the production of the Clients' Rights Service Annual Report 2007/2008, a copy of which was appended to the Report.

The Report provided a detailed breakdown of the nature of the referrals to and the contact with the Clients' Rights Service. In addition to outlining the direct referrals to the service, the Annual Report described the other component parts of the Clients' Rights Service including training, visits made during the period covered by the Report and the Clients' Rights Officers participation in local and national forums.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report;
- (ii) to instruct the Director of Social Work and Health to monitor any trends reported; and
- (iii) to approve the publication of the Clients' Rights Service Annual Report.

7. PUBLIC INFORMATION ANNUAL REPORT 2007/2008

With reference to Article 4 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 16 August 2007, there was submitted [Report No 482/08](#) by the Director of Social Work and Health advising the Committee of the publication of the Public Information Annual Report which gave details of the progress made in the area of public information and made recommendations for the continued improvement of this service. A copy of the Annual Report, which highlighted the Social Work and Health Department's continued commitment to producing clear, accurate and accessible information about its services, was appended to the Report.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report; and
- (ii) to approve the future recommendations in the Public Information Annual Report.

8. TAYSIDE COMMUNITY JUSTICE AUTHORITY - ANNUAL REPORT

With reference to Article 7 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 15 November 2007, there was submitted [Report No 483/08](#) by the Director of Social Work and Health providing information on the work of Tayside Community Justice Authority (CJA) in the period 2007/2008 and the planned work to be undertaken as part of the Tayside Community Justice Authority Area Plan 2008/2011 and Action Plan 2008/2009.

The Report indicated that relevant issues contained in the Action Plan 2008/2011 would be incorporated in the Social Work and Health Service Plan. As could be seen from the contents of Report No 483/08 and from reading the Tayside CJA Area Plan 2008/2011 and Action Plan 2008/2009, Tayside CJA was firmly committed to the aims and objectives of the National Strategy for the Management of Offenders. The first Plan in 2007/2008 had set a challenging agenda and partner agencies had committed time, energy and resources to deliver on that Plan both in terms of the tasks and in the spirit of closer partnership working. The second Area Plan and Action Plan took forward that work and developed new themes and approaches.

Full copies of the draft Area Plan and the Area Action Plan had been made available in the Members' Lounge and it was suggested that these documents should also be made available on the Council website since all Councillors had access to the internet. It was further suggested that such documents for all other Committees also be made available via the Council website.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report regarding the work of Tayside Community Justice Authority;
- (ii) to endorse the work undertaken so far since the inception of the Tayside Community Justice Authority in April 2007; and
- (iii) to note that the Director of Social Work and Health would investigate the possibility of making documents placed in the Members' Lounge, such as the Area Plan and Area Action Plan, available on the Council's website with reference to this being made in the relevant Committee Report, including the website address, for this, and all other Committees of the Council.

9. SOCIAL WORK COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE - ANNUAL REPORT 2007/2008

With reference to Article 10 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 19 June 2007, there was submitted [Report No 484/08](#) by the Director of Social Work and Health informing the Committee of the operation of the complaints procedure and the individual complaints investigated during 2007/2008. The Report referred to Circular SWSG 5/1996 which advised Councils to publish information about complaints received and action taken to assist in assessing the quality and effectiveness of their social work policies and practices.

The Report detailed the number of complaints investigated during the last year, their outcome and any actions taken by the department to improve policy and practice. It also highlighted the number of compliments received by staff or service areas over the last year.

The number of complaints referred to stage two of the process remained low and the reason for this could partly be attributed to the policy of resolving complaints informally and as close to the source of the complaint as possible. Additional complaints training had allowed staff to discuss and debate how, as a department, they might respond to complaints in a different way. The change in the use of terminology, no longer referring to complaints as formal and informal, had given staff a sense of responsibility for action and had also allowed them to see the benefits of local resolution in improving their relationship with their customer. This change in policy had been well received by staff and was working well in practice. Additionally, the Clients' Rights Service assisted in resolving, through mediation and negotiation, matters raised by service users reducing the potential for further investigation of complaints.

The Social Work Complaints Procedure continued to form an important part of the department's performance management and reporting framework. The Complaints Officer represented Angus at the Complaints Sub-Group affiliated to the Association of Directors of Social Work to ensure national discussion and development informed practice in Angus.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report;
- (ii) to make the Report available to the general public for their information through the Council's website and by display at all Social Work and Health offices; and

- (iii) to instruct the Director of Social Work and Health to send a copy of the Report to the Scottish Government for its information.

10. CHOOSE LIFE ANGUS - JOINT MULTI-AGENCY GUIDANCE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

With reference to Article 5 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 26 September 2006, there was submitted [Report No 485/08](#) by the Director of Social Work and Health advising the Committee of the launch of the Choose Life Angus Joint Multi-agency Guidance for Children and Young People at Risk of Self Harm and Suicide in Angus which provided information for workers in Angus regarding suicide, self harm, and signposting to agencies and guidance on best practice.

The Report indicated that the Multi-Agency Guidance aimed to ensure that, in Angus, the Council, in partnership with Tayside Police, NHS Tayside and the voluntary agencies provided a caring and appropriate response to children and young people who had been, or were at risk of self-harm and suicide. It had been designed to improve and increase local capacity to deal with the issue of suicide and self-harm and aimed to empower individuals and agencies to be aware of self-harm and suicide and be able to act appropriately when dealing with children and young people who may be at risk. The guidance was based on a successful model initially implemented in Dundee that had since been rolled out to other areas across Scotland.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report;
- (ii) to note the contents of the Joint Multi-Agency Guidance for Children and Young People at Risk of Self Harm and Suicide in Angus; and
- (ii) to instruct the Director of Social Work and Health to promote the use of the guidance document throughout Social Work and Health Department and partner agencies.

11. EARLY YEARS AND EARLY INTERVENTION (A JOINT SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT AND COSLA POLICY STATEMENT)

There was submitted [Joint Report No 486/08](#) by the Director of Social Work and Health and the Director of Education advising the Committee of the production of a Joint Policy Statement by the Scottish Government and COSLA focussing on Early Years and Early Intervention.

The Report indicated that the Scottish Government and COSLA believed the development of a National Performance Framework assisted them to set out targets that future policies could target in more detail. To help ensure that they were addressing the correct issues, they were consulting on the identified tasks within the framework. The consultation period on this proposed policy had been short and ended on 18 April, having only commenced in early March 2008. A copy of the full response from Angus Council was appended to the Report, and was brought to Committee for homologation.

The Committee, for its interest, agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report; and
- (ii) to homologate the Council's response to the consultation regarding the development of a National Performance Framework, a copy of which was attached to the Report.

12. PRODUCTION OF A DVD ON THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

With reference to Article 9 of the minute of meeting of the Social Work Committee of 28 May 1996, there was submitted [Report No 487/08](#) by the Director of Social Work and Health advising the Committee of the production of an interactive DVD about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which had been created by local children and young people for children and young people.

The Report indicated that during the past 12 years the UNCRC had been made widely known to children and young people throughout Angus. It was estimated that around 4,000 audio tapes of the UNCRC and 1,000 posters had been distributed to children and young people.

However, due to advances in information and communications technology, audio tapes were no longer widely used. The production of the interactive DVD would therefore help Angus Council meet its commitment in supporting more children and young people to become aware of their rights and responsibilities as outlined by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and promote their safety and well being.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report;
- (ii) to note the contents of the DVD on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child; and
- (iii) to approve the distribution of the DVD as widely as possible.

13. PROVISION OF CHILDREN'S CARE, LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT SVQ STANDARDS IN ANGUS

With reference to Article 11 of the minute of meeting of the Education Committee of 24 April 2008, there was submitted [Joint Report No 393/08](#) by the Director of Education and the Director of Social Work and Health seeking approval of a proposal to extend the existing two year contract with Angus College for the delivery of SVQ qualifications in Children's Care, Learning and Development.

The Committee, for its interest, agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report; and
- (ii) to approve the extension of the existing SVQ contract with Angus College for a further period of one year to 1 June 2009.

14. INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL - INTRODUCTION OF NEW POLICY AND PROCEDURES

There was submitted [Report No 488/08](#) by the Director of Social Work and Health advising the Committee that, as a provider of care services to some of the most vulnerable people in society, it was essential that Social Work and Health had effective systems in place to ensure that infections were prevented and controlled both in care establishments and where a service was provided in the community.

The Report indicated that the introduction of National Standards for Adult Care Homes (S.E.2005) placed a requirement on all care homes to have clear policies and procedures for the control, monitoring and reporting of infection control issues. The National Standards established a robust framework for new infection control policy and procedures applicable to all social work and health services.

In order to clarify policy and procedures for staff, three draft documents had been produced, namely a policy outlining the legislative context, inter agency working arrangements and responsibilities for employees and management; procedures which identified specific safe methods to perform tasks and provide information on infection prevention and control principles; and an operational instruction which guided staff to the policy and procedures and clarified their responsibilities to comply with these documents. It was proposed that these policy documents and framework, copies of which were appended to the Report, be adopted for all social work and health services.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report;
- (ii) to approve the introduction of the new policy and procedures which included the introduction of basic infection control training for all new Social Work and Health staff and for existing staff who provided direct care/support services; and
- (iii) to note that Operational Instruction G1.7 had also been revised to reflect the new policy and procedures.

15. SPECIFICATION AND RATE FOR HIGH DEPENDENCY RESIDENTIAL CARE FOR OLDER PEOPLE

With reference to Article 16 of the minute of meeting of the Resources and Central Services Committee of 19 October 2006, there was submitted [Report No 489/08](#) by the Director of Social Work and Health advising the Committee of the need identified for high dependency residential care for older people and proposing a rate to be paid for such care. The Report also proposed that this service be provided at Dorward House, Montrose.

The Report indicated that a need had been identified for high dependency residential care for older people in Angus, the aims of which were outlined in the Report. In recent years, partnership arrangements had been developing with Dorward House in Montrose regarding its future use. Over the past 18 months Dorward House had undergone a comprehensive refurbishment, part of which had been the creation of an eight bed high dependency unit. This unit met the requirements for the proposed specification for high dependency residential care for older people as regards facilities and Dorward House had indicated that they would meet the other requirements of the proposed specification.

It was proposed that a rate of £207 per bed per week would be paid to Dorward House on a spot purchase basis. The Council's Financial Regulations permitted the negotiation of residential care home rates on an annual basis without competition and this was justified in this case due to the background partnering arrangement referred to above. This rate would be reviewed annually along with the regular residential care home rates review undertaken by the Council. There was also an emerging strategic procurement work stream on social care services being led by Scotland Excel. Angus Council (as part of the Tayside Procurement Consortium) would participate in that development work and evaluate its outcomes in terms of suitability to meet the Council's requirements.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report;
- (ii) to note the need identified for high dependency residential care for older people;
- (iii) to approve the rate proposed for this service, as detailed in the Report; and
- (iv) to approve the proposal that this service be provided at Dorward House, Montrose.

16. WIRREN HOUSE, MONTROSE AND THE GABLES, FORFAR - REGISTERED NUMBERS

There was submitted [Report No 490/08](#) by the Director of Social Work and Health advising the Committee on planned changes to the registered numbers at Wirren House, Montrose and The Gables, Forfar, residential units for adults with a learning disability.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report;
- (ii) to approve that the registered numbers at The Gables, Forfar be reduced from 22 to 17; and
- (iii) to approve the registered numbers at Wirren House, Montrose be reduced from 21 to 15.

17. PROVISION OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY EQUIPMENT

There was submitted Report No 491/08 by the Director of Social Work and Health advising the Committee of the need for a contract for the supply of occupational therapy equipment and detailing the response to advertisements seeking expressions of interest from potential suppliers.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report;

- (ii) to approve the issuing of tender documents to the suppliers who had responded, details of which were appended to the Report; and
- (iii) to instruct the Director of Social Work and Health to report back to the Committee on the tenders received.