

## ANGUS COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the **SOCIAL WORK AND HEALTH COMMITTEE** held in the Town and County Hall, Forfar on Thursday 25 September 2008 at 4.00 pm.

**Present:** Councillors ALISON ANDREWS, RUTH LESLIE MELVILLE MBE, COLIN BROWN, MAIRI EVANS, DAVID FAIRWEATHER, MARK SALMOND, DAVID MAY, BILL MIDDLETON, GLENNIS MIDDLETON, DONALD MORRISON, ROB MURRAY, PETER NIELD, HELEN OSWALD, 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 and Margaret Thomson with Councillors Mark Salmond and Peter Nield 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 14 August 2008](#) was approved as a correct record and signed by the Convener.

### 4. **REPORT ON TAYSIDE COMMUNITY JUSTICE AUTHORITY ANNUAL REPORT 2007 - 2008**

With reference to Article 8 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 22 May 2008, there was submitted [Report No 907/08](#) by the Director of Social Work and Health providing information on the work of Tayside Community Justice Authority (CJA) in the period 2007-2008 as noted in the recently published Tayside Community Justice Authority Annual Report.

The Report indicated that the CJA had, as was outlined in this first annual report, engaged strategically with partner agencies and worked with existing community planning forums to reduce re-offending in Tayside. The annual report reflected the commitment of partner agencies in Tayside to delivering the Tayside Community Justice Authority Action Plan in the period 2007 to 2008 both in terms of the tasks outlined and in the spirit of closer partnership working.

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the Report regarding the work of the Tayside Community Justice Authority in the period since its inception in April 2007 up to March 2008 as detailed in the recently published Annual Report, a copy of which had been placed in the Member's Lounge.

### 5. **HMIE FULL FOLLOW-THROUGH INSPECTION OF SERVICES TO PROTECT CHILDREN IN THE ANGUS AREA**

With reference to Article 15 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 19 June 2007, there was submitted [Joint Report No 909/08](#) by the Director of Social Work and Health, the Director of Education and the Director of Neighbourhood Services advising the Committee of the notification by HMIE of the full follow-through inspection of services to protect children in the Angus area.

The Report indicated that the follow-through inspection would commence on 20 October 2008 with a short briefing by the Chairperson and Development Manager of the Child Protection Committee and the NHS Tayside Nurse Consultant for Child Protection and Vulnerable Families to the Inspection Team. Thereafter the Inspectors would undertake a range of interviews and focus groups with staff to ascertain the progress in respect of the remaining points of action outlined in their Report of February 2007 (Report No 498/07 refers). A verbal

feed-back would be given to Chief Officers on Friday 24 October 2008 and the Report of the findings of the follow-through inspection would be published on 29 January 2009.

The Committee, for its interest, agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report; and
- (ii) to instruct the Director of Social Work and Health to report to the Committee at a future date on the outcome of the full follow-through inspection.

## **6. STRENGTHENING FOR THE FUTURE - A CONSULTATION ON THE REFORM OF THE CHILDREN'S HEARING SYSTEM**

There was submitted [Joint Report No 910/08](#) by the Director of Social Work and Health and the Director of Education advising the Committee of a consultation on the Scottish Government's proposal to modernise and strengthen the Children's Hearing System which included the proposal to establish a new national body, "The Scottish Children's Hearing Agency". The consultation was for twelve weeks and would close on 24 October 2008. A copy of the proposed response from the Director of Social Work and Health and the Director of Education was appended to the Report and a copy of the consultation paper had been placed in the Member's Lounge.

The Report indicated that the proposals within the consultation strongly centralised what was currently a disaggregated system. This, it was suggested, should have the benefit of achieving a consistency of practice nationally across all 32 local authorities but at the inevitable cost of losing some local flexibility and responsiveness. The proposals seemed overly centralised, in particular the powers which were to be granted to the President of the Children's Panel, and the Angus response suggested that at least some of these responsibilities could continue to lie with Authority Reporters and the Chairs of local panels.

Following a full discussion when Members expressed their strong disagreement to the centralisation of the system, the Committee, for its interest, agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report; and
- (ii) to note that Member's comments and concerns would be fed into the response to the consultation made by the Director of Social Work and Health and the Director of Education.

## **7. SCOTLAND'S CHOICE - REPORT OF THE SCOTTISH PRISONS COMMISSION - JULY 2008**

There was submitted [Report No 911/08](#) by the Director of Social Work and Health advising the Committee of the proposals contained in "Scotland's Choice", the Report of the Scottish Prisons Commission which had been convened to examine Scotland's use of imprisonment in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; the potential implications arising from the Report and the actions which could be taken locally to progress the recommendations.

The Report indicated that "Scotland's Choice" published in July 2008 was currently being considered by the Scottish Government. The Report emphasised that public safety and reducing the damaging effect that crime had on victims and communities was paramount but recognised that rapidly growing and overcrowded prisons were making it increasingly difficult to secure public safety and respond effectively to serious crime. The guiding principles contained in the Report were, punishment must be visible, swift and fair; communities should be at the heart of penal reform and action; punishment should work to secure public safety and support victim recovery; prison populations must be controlled to achieve wider strategic objectives and that Scotland could be recognised internationally for just and effective penal practices. The recommendations were broadly based around seven themes which were detailed in the Report.

Scottish Prison Service figures indicated that in March 2008 there were 96 people from Angus in Scotland's prisons, a substantial number of whom would either be on remand or serving sentences of six months or less. Scotland's Choice contained a range of recommendations

which, taken together, offered a response to the challenges of rapidly growing and overcrowded prisons.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report;
- (ii) to note the potential implications for service delivery as detailed in the Report; and
- (iii) to note that further updates would be provided as the recommendations were progressed nationally.

## **8. SUPPLY OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY EQUIPMENT**

With reference to Article 17 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 22 May 2008, there was submitted [Report No 912/08](#) by the Director of Social Work and Health advising the Committee of tenders received and the results of the tender evaluation carried out in respect of the supply of occupational therapy equipment for the period 1 November 2008 to 31 October 2009 with the option of extension if required.

The Report made recommendations regarding the award of contracts for the items which could be procured from this tender exercise and the establishment of an "Approved Supplier List" for items which could not be procured from the exercise. Both the recommendations were made as interim measures until the commencement of a new Scotland Excel Contract for "Aids for Daily Living" which was projected to commence on 1 November 2009.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report;
- (ii) to approve the award of contracts for the supply of occupational therapy equipment as set out in section 4 to the Report; and
- (iii) to approve the establishment of an "Approved Suppliers List" (based on lowest price) for the items which could not be procured from the tender exercise as detailed in Appendix 1 to the Report.

Thereafter, having heard from the Convener, the Committee agreed to defer consideration of Report No 913/08.