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| To: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE | | Subject: TOUGH OPTIONS |
| From: JIM DICKIE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK | | |
| Date: 28 February 2002 | Ref: JS/JM | |

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT / INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to advise committee of the North Lanarkshire Criminal Justice Social Work Services progress in relation to the Grouping with South Lanarkshire Criminal Justice Services which occurred as a result of the Scottish Executive document "Tough Options".

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. Following the publication of the Scottish Executive document "Tough Options", the overwhelming recommendation of Local Authorities was for the retention of Criminal Justice Services within Social Work Departments. This recommendation was accepted by the Justice Minister, with the caveat that Councils would be required to plan and deliver services through groupings of Authorities. The announcement also included expectations that groupings were to deliver services more cost-effectively, provide staff across Local Authority boundaries and harmonise information systems. The outcome of the document resulted in many Local Authorities throughout Scotland being grouped together with one or more neighbouring Local Authorities to co-ordinate and deliver Criminal Justice Services. North and South Lanarkshire were grouped together to work in partnership.

3. PROPOSALS / CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1. The two Authorities, who have a history of joint initiatives and resource sharing, shared a vision of core services of assessment and case management being retained at local level, and being integrated within other Social Work Services.
- 3.2. Since the process of alignment began between the two Authorities, significant progress has been made in implementing the "Tough Options" agenda.
- 3.2.1 Community Service and Supervised Attendance Services:**
Agreement has been reached between the two Authorities that will result in the aligning of service standards, operational processes and the sharing of placement and core programme places for individuals across the two Authorities. A review process will be initiated to consider future joint services.
- 3.2.2 Throughcare Services:**
A joint review of existing Throughcare services has been initiated with the likelihood of an agreement being reached which will result in a joint Throughcare service. This proposed service is likely to include a limited-scale joint team, responsible for co-ordinating arrangements and resources for the release of high risk/ high needs offenders.

3.2.3 Joint Strategic Plan:

The two Authorities have, over a period of several months prepared the first Lanarkshire Joint Criminal Justice Social Work Plan. The plan aims to meet the objectives of the Scottish Executive's "Tough Options" agenda, and also reflects the history of co-operation with both Authorities in developing a joint agenda. A draft copy of the plan was sent to the Scottish Executive, and Executive members met with both Directors of Social Work and Criminal Justice Officers from both Authorities to discuss the plan, at the end of last year.

The plan is currently being printed and will be formally launched in mid March. A separate Committee report detailing the content of the plan will be prepared.

3.2.4 Joint Planning Forum:

A Joint Planning Forum was set up to oversee the preparation of the plan and consists of:

- The Conveners of Social Work
- Directors of Social Work
- Operational Managers responsible for Criminal Justice Services
- Sheriff Principle, South Strathclyde, Dumfries and Galloway
- A Procurator Fiscal representative
- A Sheriff Clerk representative
- A Strathclyde Police representative

3.2.5 Best Value Review:

A Best Value Review was carried out on a joint basis by both Authorities into Probation and Court Services. The outcome of the review was reported to the Social Work Committee in January 2001, and as a result that review and the consequent grouping with South Lanarkshire, issues raised in the review are now progressed jointly with both Authorities.

As a result of the Best Value Review the grouping has agreed on a model of assessment and case management which will be jointly progressed through the training plan. Most of the staff have been trained recently in risk assessment tools and a further training course is presently underway to train the others.

3.2.6 Court Services Review:

The Court Services Review proposed that the most effective use of resources would be to develop one Court Team covering both Authorities. This is currently being explored in discussions with Trade Unions and Personnel and will reported back to Committee for consideration.

3.2.7 Training:

The training plan within the Joint Strategic Plan deals with both Authorities commitment to provide and maintain training in respect to the "What works" and "Effective Practice" agendas. This was launched in December 2001 with a joint training day involving all Criminal Justice staff from both Authorities. The areas explored on the day were assessment and case management, report writing, working tools and included extensive input from the Director of the Criminal Justice Development Centre for Scotland.

All Criminal Justice first line managers are attending the First Line Managers training which has been initiated by the Scottish Executive and North Lanarkshire has been involved in hosting these training sessions.

3.3 Over and above the aforementioned initiatives which may require rationalisation of services, or the development of new working arrangements, a number of other joint service developments have been undertaken.

3.4 In relation to the harmonisation of information systems, the two Authorities have been represented on the Scottish Executive Criminal Justice I.T Group and have been successful in securing Information Technology funding from the Scottish Executive to ensure that all workers have necessary hardware to allow them to fully take advantage of our recently developed, electronic information system.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The Grouping is seen by both North and South Lanarkshire as an extension of the evolving joint agenda which has developed over recent years.

Although both Councils having adopted different structures there is a history of joint working in Lanarkshire which can be developed. The common boundaries with some external agencies have proved useful. In the preparation of the Joint Strategic Plan for Criminal Justice, staff from both Authorities were jointly involved, and the joint development groups will continue. Both Authorities have already jointly commissioned services from other agencies and the joint Best Value reviews were undertaken before the Groupings were officially established.

Despite the differing funding levels, service structures, service conditions and varying resources, both Council's feel positive about the work to date and joint developmental plans for the future.

The work of the Grouping allows resources to be shared in tackling these agendas and will allow a consistency of approach across the Grouping, acknowledging differences in the structure of delivering of services.

Staff appear to share the two organisations positive views in relation to the Groupings, and this has been reflected in their involvement in joint planning and development process. It should also be recognised that the formal Grouping is still in its very early stages with significant progress already achieved.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1. Committee is asked to:

- (i) note the progress made by North Lanarkshire Criminal Justice Social Work Services in taking forward the "Tough Options" agenda.



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6 February 2002

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