

AGENDA ITEM No. 20

To: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE		Subject: GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT, SOCIAL WORK SERVICES FOR THE 21 <sup>ST</sup> CENTURY  The Report of the Chief Inspector of Social Work Services for Scotland 2002
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK		
Date: 19 DECEMBER 2002	Ref: MF/MM	

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1. To advise Committee of the findings of the Report prepared by the Chief Inspector of Social Work Services for Scotland in respect of Social Work Services provided by Local Authorities in Scotland and to highlight issues relating to North Lanarkshire.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 This is the second Annual Report from Scotland's Chief Social Work Inspector.
- 2.2 Previous reports to committee of 23 August 2001 reported on the findings of the First Annual Report, with subsequent reports advising of the Annual Report visit on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2002.
- 2.3 The second Annual Report, produced in 2002 includes a national overview of Social Work Services across Scotland and short reviews of services in each of the thirty two Councils.
- 2.4 The Annual Report is based on analysis carried out by a small Inspectorate team, of existing data, plans, reports and reviews. The team also visited all 32 Local Authorities and had full discussions with senior officials. Local Authorities were consulted on the overall approach and the arrangements for all the visits.
- 2.5 Future reports will build on this years findings and add further elements. For example, information from the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care and the Scottish Social Services Council will add to how the Inspectorate analyse the performance of Local Authorities.
- 2.6 The Inspectorate noted that what always matters most are the results for people who use services. From their visits, and from the many examples provided by Local Authorities and their partners in the voluntary sector, they noted that;
- Services generally focus clearly on the needs of people who use their services; and
  - Services are becoming increasingly flexible

**3. KEY FINDINGS FROM THE ANNUAL REPORT 2002**

- 3.1 The report noted that there has been significant growth and many developments for Social Work Services over the last year. It noted that gross expenditure, adjusted to reflect current prices, rose from £881 million in 1991-1992 to £1,632 million in 2000 - 2001.

- 3.2 With this growth there is recognition that new responsibilities were added to Local Authorities, including heightened expectations of service performance and requirements for a more integrated approach with Health, Education and Criminal Justice agencies such as the Police and the Prison Services. It was noted that managing this growth and the new expectations has been a major challenge for Social Work Services over the last decade.
- 3.3 There are two main challenges outlined in the report.
- (i) there is the challenge in adapting the delivery and organisation of services to meet expectations and demand. Both locally and nationally, the principal concern must be with outcomes not structures.
  - (ii) How to engage better with people – staff, carers, volunteers and customers – and how to maximise the people effect of Social Work Services, which means minimising the bureaucracy and using all opportunities from the information and communication technologies that are revolutionising modern services.
- 3.4 The report also recognises the staffing problems facing Local Authorities which is noted to have prompted the Care in Scotland, Recruitment Campaign.
- 3.5 Reports on individual Authorities provide an introductory section and are followed by subsequent sections on:
- Community Care
  - Children and Families
  - Criminal Justice
  - Finance
  - Staffing
  - Modernising Services
  - The Future
- 3.6 All Authorities were consulted on the factual accuracy of the reports and some changes were made as a result.
- 3.7 The Inspectorate notes that their aim, working with Local Authorities, is to build on the reviews in order to:
- Help each Authority manage their performance.
  - Encourage new ideas and development from examples of good practice, and
  - Give a statement on the performance of each Authority, available throughout the year and containing the most up to date information.
- 3.8 Local Authorities are invited to respond to the Annual Report, with particular reference to:
- Acceptance of the central conclusions of the Overview
  - Acceptance of the priorities for future development set out in the local report for each Authority.
- 3.9 The Report recognises that Social Work Services are at a ‘remarkable crossroads’. Challenges are considerable as well as opportunities for modernising services.
- 3.10 Over the last 25 years Social Work Services have grown remarkably, in both extent and quality; with a recognition that expectations have grown even more, and rightly so.
- 3.11 Social Work Services in Scotland are moving successfully, though not without difficulties, from being a secondary service for perhaps only some parts of society, to being a service available to all when needed and relied on at some point by everyone, relied on with confidence and with no loss of self respect.

3.12 The Report notes that Social Work Services are at the centre of the Government's Social Inclusion policies and are vital to the achievement of key elements of the Scottish Executive's Programme for Government.

#### 4. NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL'S CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 In respect of the Annual Report of 2 May 2001, which was subject to a report to Social Work Committee on 23 August 2001, the following was noted in respect of North Lanarkshire.

- The prospective growth in the older population points to the need to review the current mix of services and how they can be developed in a cost effective way to meet future needs. From such a review it will be necessary to draw revised policy and financial priorities for community care across the area as a whole.
- The promising work of the Bridging Team should be evaluated urgently, so that its best features can be applied more widely, and more quickly, to dealing with young offenders throughout the area.

4.2 The second Annual Report highlights the following areas.

- North Lanarkshire is the top performing Authority for the number of disabled people aged 18 – 64 receiving a service, per 1,000 population. In North Lanarkshire the rate is 24.6 with the lowest being Eilean Star at 1.8. In the neighbouring Authority of South Lanarkshire the rate is 13.3.
- The Council is recognised as a leading Local Authority on services for people with learning disabilities and their carers. Positive achievements in this area of activity were noted.
- There is recognition that the Council has undertaken a number of initiatives to address the varying needs of young people who are looked after and accommodated.
- The development of the protocol for managing sex offenders in the community was recognised, including the fact it had been successfully taken through a joint working group of officers and elected members.

4.3 The report states that North Lanarkshire spent significantly less than GAE on children's services in 1999 – 2000 and 2000 – 2001, in direct contrast to other Authorities. Expenditure on community care was considered slightly higher and on other Social Work services has increased, but remains relatively low. The issue about GAE and Children's Services was raised with the Inspectorate when the draft report was received and has not been amended. The Director of Social Work will pursue this again with the Chief Inspector of Social Work Services.

4.4 The Report noted an increase in total staff numbers between 1999 and 2000, commenting that the overall staffing rate is relatively high. This is reflective of a response to service developments. The Report recognises however, that the number of managers, frontline staff and 'other social work services' staff all increased, but the rate of managers and central staff remains lower than in most other Authorities.

4.5 It was recognised that vacancy levels are high in all areas and have increased from 2000 – 2001, with a vacancy rate in 2002 of 16% for qualified workers in Children's and Criminal Justice Teams. The positive actions adopted by the Council to address recruitment and retention issues were acknowledged as was the initiative to commission an external consultant to look at reasons for sickness absence within the Social Work Department.

## 5. MODERNISING SERVICES

5.1 There is recognition of the Department's developing services towards ethnic minorities and the development of electronic communication within the Department and across partner agencies.

## 6. FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

6.1 The Report recommends the following further developments.

- (i) The Council and its health partners should build on the positive progress made on joint working in different aspects of community care.
- (ii) A costed Strategy, based on a shared assessment of need is required to advance change involving all of the care agencies.
- (iii) Further attention is needed on developing services for people with a sensory impairment.
- (iv) To continue the work on plans to implement the recommendations from 'Learning with Care' on the education of looked after children, with particular reference to the alignment of databases.

## 7. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 7.1 The Council welcomes the publication of the Second Annual report of the Chief Inspector of Social Work Services and welcomes the public recognition given to the Council for its achievements in developing its Social Work provision some of which is highlighted for particular commendation.
- 7.2 The Council is already progressing areas highlighted as requiring further action and was addressing these prior to the Inspection visit.
- 7.3 The Council notes the findings of the Second Annual Report, although the Director of Social Work will clarify the position again with the Executive regarding the level of GAE spent on Children's Services.

## 8. CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 There are no corporate financial, personnel, policy or legal considerations arising from the Report.

## 9. Committee is asked to:

- (i) Note the findings of the Second Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Social Work Services for Scotland
- (ii) Request the Director of Social Work to write to the Chief Inspector regarding Council spending on Children's Services.
- (iii) Otherwise note the contents of the report.



**Jim Dickie**  
**Director of Social Work**  
**26 November 2002**

*For further information on this report please contact: Head of Social Work Services on 01698 332001*