

**NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL
REPORT**

To: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE		Subject: 21 st CENTURY REVIEW OF SOCIAL WORK- EMERGING RECOMMENDATIONS
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK		
Date: 27 OCTOBER 2005	Ref: DM/AB	

1. Purpose of Report/Introduction

The purpose of this report is to advise Committee of emerging recommendations from the 21st Century Review of Social Work, commissioned by the Scottish Executive.

2. Background

- 2.1. On 1 July 2004 Peter Peacock, Minister for Education and Young People, announced that the Executive intended taking a "fundamental look at Social Work" in the wake of two high profile cases. He commissioned a team chaired by William Roe to undertake a review. Committee was advised of the remit of the Review in October 2004.
- 2.2. North Lanarkshire was one of six local authorities to be the subject of an "in-depth" review, receiving very positive feedback in the process.

3. Emerging Recommendations

- 3.1. There were strong initial concerns that the process excluded Social Work from participation, and that there was an agenda to undermine the role of local authorities in the provision of certain Social Work functions. These anxieties have been allayed to some extent as the process has become more engaging with bodies representing Councils and Social Work.
- 3.2. The Review has shared its emerging recommendations with Chief Social Work Officers and Conveners. Whilst not specific they are grouped into three areas:
 - Delivering User-centred Services (Social Work as part of whole system; prevention and earlier intervention; personal, accessible services, outcome driven).
 - Developing Skilled, Empowered Practice (Social services workforce; Teamwork; Governance; Learning culture; accountability and autonomy).
 - Achieving Sustainable Change (Delivering; Leadership; Legislation; Service Redesign).

- 3.3. The Review Team has indicated that they do not think it sensible to replicate all Social Work functions across 32 local authorities as they consider that this results in widely varying standards. However that they are not likely to recommend structural change but more likely to recommend strengthened strategic planning.
- 3.4. In many respects the Review has focused on some, but by no means all, aspects of Social Work, in particular the role of the Social Worker. It is also conducting a review of Social Work at a time when the joint planning and delivery of services with a wide range of partners makes it difficult to look at Social Work in isolation.
- 3.5. The Review Team is scheduled to submit a draft report to Ministers in October 2005 when specific recommendations will become known.

4. **Financial/Personnel/Legal/Policy Implications**

- 4.1. The C21st Century Review recognises the increasing gap between assessed need and available resources, in a context of demographic change, improved health care and rising public expectations. Councils across Scotland are increasingly adopting eligibility criteria to ration access to scarce resources. The COSLA Task Group has called for a review of the funding of Social Work. A separate report to Committee considers these issues in more detail for North Lanarkshire.
- 4.2. At the time of writing it appears possible that the Review team will propose legislation to reform the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968. COSLA are not convinced about the need to do so and this is currently the subject of further discussion.

5. **Recommendation**

- 5.1. Committee is asked to:
 - (i) Request the Director of Social Work to bring forward a report to a future Committee once the report of the Review is issued; and
 - (ii) Otherwise note the content of this report.



Jim Dickie
Director of Social Work
7 October, 2005

For further information on this report please contact D Mackay, Head of Social Work Development, telephone 01698 332024