

COMMUNITY SERVICES SPOKESPERSON'S REPORT – SOCIAL AFFAIRS

1. Learning Disability and Older Peoples Project Board

On Thursday 23rd February I chaired the Learning Disability and Older Peoples Project Board meeting to consider the future of these services. I am pleased to report that it was a successful meeting, where a number of key decisions were taken, including;

- **Learning Disability Day Services** - agreed not to proceed further with the tender process at this time with the view that on the conclusion of formal negotiations with Trade Unions the service is retained within direct Council provision;
- **Older Peoples Day Care Services** - agreed to retain Council Day Care Services in house at this time whilst keeping the service under operational review to identify future efficiencies as they arise and re-design the service as required to meet the personalised care and Self Directed Care legislation; and
- **Older Peoples Care at Home** – agreed to issue tender documents in March for older peoples care at home, the outcome of the tender exercise will be known in June.

We will continue to work closely with the unions to negotiate amendments to core conditions of service for staff in Adult Learning Disability Day Services. I am already delighted with the co-operation from staff and the union which is what we need to provide the services our clients need and deserve.

At the heart of the decisions is the need to deliver an improved and more flexible service for our service users. We have listened to what they are telling us and have taken it into careful consideration before reaching agreement. I am confident that this is the right way forward for these services.

2. Mull and Iona Progressive Care Centre

I am pleased to report that work is nearing completion on the new Mull and Iona Progressive Care Centre and Community Hospital in Craignure. Work started at the end of 2010 and the centre should open in August this year. The brand new purpose build centre will include 3 beds for in-patients, a 2 bay community casualty unit and facilities for outpatients. All bedrooms will be for one person only with en-suite toilets and showers.

There will also be 12 individual supported living flats within the news centre which will be managed by West Highland Housing Association. Each flat has a double bedroom and is suitable for couples or single occupancy. Those who need care and support will get it after a community care assessment has been carried out

by our social work department. Residents who need care will have a tailored care package which will meet their needs during the day and night.

The new centre will replace the existing Dunaros Residential Care Centre and Community Hospital in Salen. The residents who live there just now will be amongst the first to take up the new supported living flats.

I am delighted the new centre is nearing completion and I am looking forward to seeing it for myself. This will make a real difference to the people of Mull and Iona, and provide first class supported housing and hospital facilities. It promises to be an enormous improvement on the current outdated provision. It is, I believe, a model that strives to maintain older people in their own accommodation rather than in institutional settings and which will produce better outcomes and quality of life for older persons.

3. Young Carers Group – Helensburgh and Lomond

I am extremely happy to announce that the Helensburgh and Lomond Young Carers group has received £389,727 from the Big Lottery Fund towards a new scheme called Initiatives.

As a supporter of this group, I was kindly invited along to their Helensburgh base to celebrate the great news on Friday 23rd February. We watched a DVD featuring some of the groups young carers at the Young Carers Festival where they got to meet lots of other young carers from across the country. We also took part in a question and answer session where we all got to find out a bit more about the life of a young carer and the support available to them.

I am extremely happy that the Big Lottery have chosen to support this group as it is a very worthy cause, with a number of young people acting as carers within Argyll and Bute, it is important to ensure they have a good support circle, where they can talk to other young people in the same situation and share any worries or concerns with others, not only in the same position but those able to offer advice and support. The project will fund two full time staff dedicated to supporting young carers.

4. Severe Weather

I would like to take this opportunity to thank council officers for all their hard work during the severe weather conditions faced on the 3rd of January. Fallen trees and debris limited both our road network and power / communications lines; however I am glad to say that both our staff and our communities showed remarkable resilience throughout.

Councillor Andrew Nisbet
Spokesperson for Social Affairs
March 2012