

## CHILDREN'S HEARINGS (SCOTLAND) ACT 2011

### EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO PROPOSALS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AREA SUPPORT TEAMS

1. East Ayrshire Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the proposals.
2. The Council is pleased to note the National Convener's intimation that the reforms of the Children's Hearing System are focused on improving outcomes for children and young people and that the system continues to promote the fundamental principles of Kilbrandon by putting the interests of the child first.
3. The Council welcomes the National Convener's approach to the establishment of Area Support Teams. The Council considers that it is very much in the spirit of the system that local areas and local working partnerships should influence the way in which Area Support Teams boundaries are determined.
4. Within Ayrshire there is a history of close working partnerships and integration of the provision of services. The Council welcomes the proposals by the National Convener that will provide for more streamlined arrangements throughout Ayrshire to ensure that Panel Members are fully supported to a consistently high standard.
5. The Council's decision is to agree in principle to the establishment of an Ayrshire Area Support Team.

This decision is subject to the outcome of further discussions between the 3 Local Authorities and the National Convener, with regard to the terms of the Service Level Agreement including, staffing, financial and operational issues associated with the establishment of an Ayrshire Area Support Team.

Prior to a final decision the Council would wish clarification on a number of issues:-

- i The exact nature of the duties and role of Area Support Teams.
- ii The allocation split of funding to support the Children's Hearing System within Ayrshire i.e. between local authorities and the National body Children's Hearings Scotland.
- iii The basis on which Clerk and administrative support arrangements are provided.
- iv The scope and level of support expected or anticipated from local authorities.
- v The proposed duties of Children's Hearing Scotland staff and implications for local authorities.
- vi The consultation arrangements to be put in place for obtaining the consent of local authorities in terms of the duties of Area Support Teams.
- vii The scope in increasing membership of the Ayrshire Support Team to provide for effective panel member support arrangements.

**14 October 2011**

