

Our Ref: HC  
Your Ref:

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Municipal Buildings  
Clyde Square  
Greenock  
PA15 1LY  
Tel: 01475 712764  
Fax: 01475 712731  
aubrey.fawcett@inverclyde.gov.uk

Ms Bernadette Monaghan  
National Convener  
Children's Hearings Scotland  
Area 2E South  
Victoria Quay  
Edinburgh  
EH6 6QQ

Dear Ms Monaghan

## **Inverclyde Council – Response to Consultation on Proposals for Establishment of Area Support Teams**

I refer to the above noted consultation paper and would advise that Inverclyde Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the above noted Consultation document.

The Council supports the creation of the National Children's Panel and its goals of ensuring the delivery of improved outcomes for Scotland's most vulnerable children and young people. It also acknowledges the importance of ensuring that such support services are delivered in the most appropriate form and as efficiently as possible.

The Council does however consider that the justification for linking Inverclyde and Argyll & Bute within a single Area Support Team appears to be very limited and that a case for such an arrangement has not been evidenced.

There is little synergy between the two areas and considering the significantly differing demographics it is hard to see what benefits could be secured. It is understood that the geographic issues for Argyll & Bute would not be eased in any way but could be made even more complicated considering the additional link to Inverclyde across the river. It is also noted that further difficulties are indicated due to the different organisational partnerships with for example Police and Health.

It is difficult therefore for Inverclyde Council to identify any real benefit from the alignment. This is presented with no disrespect to our colleagues in Argyll & Bute with whom we have had previous joint developments. If the principle of the structure is to improve the support service to Panel Members and as such to secure positive outcomes for children, this arrangement fails to identify how this would be achieved.

Greater clarity would also be needed by the local authority in terms of staffing, budgets and service level agreements, which will no doubt be explored in greater detail during the next phase of the consultation process.

The Council would also appreciate an indication as to whether the new arrangements are likely to provide any savings, considering the possible increased travel requirements.



The Council supports the view made by Inverclyde CPAC and the Children's Panel that the proposed arrangements could have a detrimental impact on volunteers working in the panel system in Inverclyde and may not be conducive to the recruitment and retention of volunteers over the medium to longer term. We would therefore require assurances in this regard.

The Council also notes the concerns of the Inverclyde CPAC and Panel in relation to the impact on local operations which we understand work very effectively in Inverclyde and would seek further detail as to how the model proposed by the National Convener would improve upon current arrangements.

Furthermore, the proposals detailed in the Consultation do not clearly identify how they will improve outcomes for children

In conclusion Inverclyde Council does acknowledge that there may be a need to redesign the support systems and that this may be achieved through some partnership alignment as presented in the Area Support Team approach. However there is no evidence which suggests that this is a positive step at this time. Therefore the Council is unable to support the proposal to align with the Argyll & Bute Council area.

The Council would also like to endorse the response made by the Inverclyde Children's Panel/Children's Panel Advisory Committee, based on the limited detail provided in the Consultation Please contact me if I can be of any further assistance.

Yours sincerely

**Corporate Director Regeneration and Environment**

Enquiries To:

**Helena Couperwhite**

**Tel: 01475 712111**

**Fax: 01475 712137**

**E-mail: [helena.couperwhite@inverclyde.gov.uk](mailto:helena.couperwhite@inverclyde.gov.uk)**