

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

HOUSING COMMITTEE - 18 MAY 2005

THE SUPPORTING PEOPLE PROGRAMME

Joint Report by the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services and the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** To advise members of continuing funding arrangements in respect of the Supporting People Programme and the numbers of service users that benefit from Supporting People funding.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** Previous reports to Committee have detailed the policy background to the Supporting People Programme together with the funding being made available to the Council.

3. 2005/2006 FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS

- 3.1** As previously reported, the Council's Grant allocation will be £6.184M for 2005/2006. As a consequence, it has not been possible this year to provide any inflation increase on the contractual commitments to service providers, for either external or in-house services. While some external providers are entitled to an inflation uplift on hourly rates under the terms of their contracts and will receive those increases, the effect of this will be that fewer hours can be purchased from those providers in 2005/2006, unless additional funding is to be provided from other budgets.
- 3.2** Additional funding has however been allocated to East Ayrshire Women's Aid to enable them to increase their support services when the new refuge currently under construction in Kilmarnock opens in the near future. Although the new refuge was identified to the Scottish Executive at the beginning of 2003 as a pipeline scheme requiring additional funding and accepted by them as being an appropriate scheme for additional funding, no additional Grant funding was provided by the Scottish Executive. This is because the Executive only ever undertook to provide additional funding for approved capital schemes that were originally programmed to open during 2003/4. Also, as previously reported, all such additional pipeline funding ceased at the end of 2004/2005.
- 3.3** Despite no additional funding having been made available to the Council, it was considered that having been fully supportive of Womens Aid throughout the bidding and construction process for the new refuge, the Council should continue in its commitment which had been put in place from the beginning of that process. An additional £40,000 has been accordingly allocated to East Ayrshire Womens Aid to recruit an additional support worker and redeploy an existing member of staff into the support role, effective from the opening of

the new refuge. Full year additional sums of £50,000 have been allocated for 2006/2007 and subsequent years. As a consequence of this additional funding being made available, Support to Communities in Education and Social Services are reviewing their budget contribution to East Ayrshire Womens Aid for 2005/2006 onwards. Any subsequent adjustments in funding will be reported to the appropriate Committee.

- 3.4** For in-house services such as the Tenancy Support Team or the sheltered warden service, the amount of Grant allocated is set at the same amount as for 2004/5 or their actual level of expenditure in 2004/2005 from Supporting People Grant, whichever is less. The only exception is the support service for ex-offenders provided by Criminal Justice where there was a 40% underspend as a result of a vacancy. Their original 2004/5 allocation has been reallocated for 2005/2006. Effectively however, all in-house services will need to meet the April 2005 staff pay increase from existing budgets.
- 3.5** A total of £137,000 was identified as being under spent from original 2004/2005 budget allocations to in-house services at the end of 2004/2005. The main cause of these underspends was vacant posts within agreed establishments. Further underspends occurred on the Supporting People administration budget during 2003/2004 and 2004/2005, again as a result of vacancies within an agreed establishment. As the Scottish Executive has once again permitted local authorities to carry over any underspends from 2004/2005 to 2005/2006, this opportunity was taken and those carry overs, combined with a standstill position on Grant allocations to most providers has now eliminated the previous gap between the amount of Supporting People Grant being provided to the Council and our contractual commitments.

4. SERVICE REVIEW PROGRESS

- 4.1** The review process required both by Scottish Executive guidance and the conditions attaching to payment of Supporting People Grant has been concluded for all support services involved in the homelessness sector. All Supporting People funded services for older people are now being subjected to the same review process under the direction of the Member Officer Working Group established last December. The original timescale given by the Scottish Executive of March 2006 for the completion of all initial reviews of Supporting People funded services is still expected to be achieved.
- 4.2** The service reviews that have so far been concluded have led to the initiation of a tendering process for the procurement of a young persons service targeted at young people with chaotic lifestyles as the result of substance misuse issues. This new service will replace an existing hostel facility in Kilmarnock. The other services reviewed have been tasked to draw up action plans to achieve the agreed recommendations of the service review reports.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THE GENERAL FUND

- 5.1** As indicated in Para 3.5, there is no longer a gap between Supporting People funded contractual commitments and the amount of Supporting People Grant

provided by the Scottish Executive. This contrasts with the situation during 2004/2005 when £157,000 needed to be provided from Social Work existing budgets and £25,000 needed to be provided from General Fund Housing budgets to meet the gap between contractual commitments and the amount of Supporting People Grant provided by the Scottish Executive.

- 5.2** This will not however substantially help to address the issue of the continuing increase in the need for additional support services. As previously reported, it is expected that some £1.3 M more has been spent on the provision of housing support services in 2004/2005 than the amount of Supporting People Grant available to fund those services. This additional expenditure was on the cost of services delivered as part of integrated packages of care and support. That shortfall was met from the community care budget.
- 5.3** That shortfall will continue into 2005/2006 and will continue to increase. This is not only the result of general increases in levels of need but also as the result of substantial new services having to be put in place to meet the needs of people being discharged from long stay hospital care under the hospital retraction programme. The additional full year costs of the housing support element of the care packages needed for the 19 people being discharged this year could be as much as £600,000. This additional expenditure would meet all the eligibility criteria for payment of Supporting People Grant but the only way to fund the new services from Supporting People Grant would be to stop funding other existing services. This additional shortfall would again need to be met from the community care budget.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THE HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

- 6.1** As indicated in Para 3.5, there is no longer a gap between Supporting People funded contractual commitments and the amount of Supporting People Grant provided by the Scottish Executive. There is still however the ongoing requirement to fund the sheltered warden service for protected tenants, who have preserved rights to a free service. Initial estimates are that for them, the cost to the Housing Revenue Account for 2005/2006 will be in the order of £130,000.
- 6.2** As protected tenants move out of the service however, the Housing Revenue Account funding for their free service necessarily ends. If they are replaced in the service by new tenants who get Housing Benefit and who cannot therefore be charged for their service under the current charging policy, this may force a return to the deficit funding from other existing budgets. This situation will be closely monitored and will be the subject of further reports to Committee if required.

7. NUMBERS OF SERVICE USERS BENEFITING FROM THE PROGRAMME

- 7.1** At a previous meeting of the Committee, members requested information on the actual numbers of East Ayrshire residents who are assisted to live independently as a result of Supporting People funding. The numbers of

people living in East Ayrshire who received Supporting People funded services during 2004/2005 are detailed in the following table.

Numbers of people who received a housing support service between April 2004 and March 2005	
Client group	Number of users
Older People	2858
People with dementia	57
People having mental health problems	310
People with learning disabilities	348
Physical disability / illness	231
Vulnerable due to young age	437
People at risk of offending / re offending	116
People who use alcohol	81
People who use drugs	113
People with HIV / AIDS	1
People with poor social skills	16
People who are or were homeless	908
Women at risk of domestic violence	200
Total number of service users	5676

8. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no policy implications arising from this report.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 The Committee are recommended to:-

- (i) note the continuation of all 2004/2005 contractual values into 2005/2006 with the specific additional commitment to East Ayrshire Women's Aid;
- (ii) otherwise note the contents of the report.

William Stafford
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Neighbourhood Services

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14 April 2005

CMCA/GC/LA

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Supporting People Commissioning and Purchasing Group reports and minutes of 14th January 2005
2. Supporting People Commissioning and Purchasing Group reports and minutes of 28th February 2005
3. Supporting People Grant budget reconciliations for 2004/5 and 2005/6

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