

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

**HOUSING COMMITTEE 3 NOVEMBER 2004**

### **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 ongoing discussions with the Scottish Executive over future Supporting People funding arrangements and to recommend the establishment of a Member/Officer Working Group to review the Council's sheltered housing Warden Service in accordance with the terms of guidance on Service Reviews published by the Scottish Executive.

#### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Previous reports to Elected members have detailed the policy background to the Supporting People Programme together with details of the funding arrangements put in place to deliver the Supporting People Strategy in East Ayrshire.

#### **3. FUTURE FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS**

- 3.1 Following completion of its review of current Supporting People funding arrangements, the Scottish Executive recently announced plans to change the way in which Supporting People grant is distributed to local authorities from 2005/2006 onwards. Instead of a funding approach based on the legacy of transitional housing benefit claims submitted by Councils prior to the introduction of the Supporting People Initiative, the Executive plan to redistribute Supporting People Grant on the basis of a new distribution formula which will recognise certain factors of identified local need for housing support services including:

- The proportion of elderly people in the local population
- The proportion of people in East Ayrshire claiming disability living allowance
- The number of homelessness applications in East Ayrshire (averaged over the last 3 years)
- The degree of local deprivation based on the Scottish index of multiple deprivation 2004

- 3.2 The national budget for Supporting People funding is to be reduced over the next 3 years from its current level of £408M. The likely consequences of these announcements for individual local authorities are currently the subject of ongoing discussions between CoSLA and Ministers, and the outcome of these discussions will be reported to members in due course.

## **4. SERVICE REVIEWS**

- 4.1** All Supporting People funded services require to be reviewed before March 2006 to ensure that they deliver Best Value services that meet those needs which have been identified under the Supporting People Strategic Plan. The East Ayrshire Supporting People Core Co-ordination Group has recommended the adoption of a service review tool based on the model developed through the Supporting People Practitioners Network as adapted for application in East Ayrshire. Officers from this authority were involved in the development of the model, as reported to the Committee in September 2003. Where appropriate, the Supporting People review process will be incorporated into the ongoing programme of Best Value Service Reviews. Scottish Executive guidance on the Supporting People Programme service review process is insistent that the same criteria and methodology should be applied to both external and in-house service providers, to ensure a level playing field for all providers.
- 4.2** Use of the service review tool locally has so far been piloted on one external provider, Blue Triangle Housing Association and one in-house provider, the Housing Services own Tenancy Support Team. These reviews are ongoing but the interim results have validated the review tool and the process used as delivering results that are both evidence based and robust.
- 4.3** One significant in-house service funded through Supporting People is the sheltered housing Warden Service. This service requires to be reviewed by March 2006 in accordance with the terms of the Executive's published guidance to local authorities on Supporting People Service Reviews. However, the review is also appropriate in terms of the Council's programme of Best Value Service Reviews and offers the opportunity to review staffing arrangements in line with the European Working Time Directive.
- 4.4** In view of the nature of the issues involved in this particular exercise, it is proposed that a Member/Officer Working Group be established to manage the review process and report back to future meetings of both Housing and Social Work Committees the outcomes of that review together with any recommendations in due course. It is further proposed that the working group be supported by officers from Housing and Social Work together with other colleagues as appropriate, who would be responsible for carrying out much of the detailed work required to inform the review and the necessary consultation exercises with tenants, carers and staff involved.
- 4.5** It is further proposed that the Member/Officer Working Group comprises of seven Members with the composition and membership being determined at the next meeting of the Council and that its remit be:-
- Review the services provided by the Sheltered Housing Warden Service and ensure that they are fit for purpose;
  - That the service is effective, efficient and provides value for money.
  - That the services are operating in accordance with European legislation particularly the European Working Time Directive;

- That the resources both financial and manpower are commensurate with the service provision.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1** The Supporting People grant allocation to East Ayrshire Council for 2004/2005 remains unchanged from the previous year's figure of £6.16M. As previously reported, the Council has been awarded £186,000 for each of the next two years up to the end of March 2006 for the purpose of administering the Supporting People Programme in East Ayrshire.
- 5.2** In terms of the General Fund, there is a shortfall between the amount of grant provided by the Executive and existing contractual obligations. The contribution needed to bridge the funding gap in the current financial year is presently estimated to be some £180,000 from Social Work budgets and £30,000 from General Fund Housing budgets.
- 5.3** In terms of the Housing Revenue account, a contribution of around £50,000 in the current financial year will be required to meet the current shortfall in grant allocations to those Supporting People services provided by Housing.

## **6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1** There are no other policy implications arising from this report.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1** There are no other legal implications arising from this report.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1** The Committee are recommended to:

- (i) note the current position in terms of future arrangements for funding Supporting People activities as outlined in Paragraph 3. of this report;
- (ii) agree to the establishment of a Member/Officer Working Group to manage the review of the Council's sheltered housing Warden Service in accordance with the requirements of the Supporting People Programme and the Council's Best Value arrangements as outlined in Paragraph 4.4 and remit to Council to make the appropriate appointments;
- (iii) note that the outcomes of the service review and any recommendations arising therefrom, will be reported to a future meeting for members consideration;
- (iv) note that a further report on progress will be submitted in due course; and

(v) otherwise note the contents of the report.

William Stafford  
Executive Director of  
Neighbourhood Services

John Mulgrew  
Executive Director of  
Educational and Social Services

1 November 2004

CMCA/GC/LA

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. Scottish Executive letter of 1st October 2004 on Supporting People funding allocations and reform of programme
2. East Ayrshire Council Supporting People Service Review Tool (Report to Housing Committee September 2003)

For further information please contact Geoff Crow, Senior Supporting People Officer  
telephone: 01563 554832.

Implementation Officer [chris.mcaleavey@east-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:chris.mcaleavey@east-ayrshire.gov.uk)