

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

HOUSING COMMITTEE 8 SEPTEMBER 2004

HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY UPDATE

Report by Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise members of the allocation of funding awarded by the Scottish Executive both for the current financial year 2004/2005 and the financial year 2005/2006 to assist in the delivery of the Homelessness Task Force Recommendations and to provides an update on the Furnished Tenancy Grant and the Rough Sleepers Initiative funding.
- 1.2 To advise members of progress toward the implementation of the East Ayrshire Homelessness Strategy 2003 -2006 and seek authority to implement identified actions required to achieve the overall objectives of the Strategy.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Since enactment of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, and the Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003, funding has been available to implement legislative changes and the recommendations made by the Homelessness Task Force in its final report "Helping Homeless People - An Action Plan for Prevention and Effective Response."
- 2.2 East Ayrshire's Homelessness Strategy 2003 – 2006 was submitted to the Scottish Executive in March 2003. Since then, the Department and its partners across statutory agencies and the voluntary sector have worked toward implementation of the actions required to achieve the overall objectives of the Strategy.
- 2.3 East Ayrshire has managed a Rough Sleepers Initiative in partnership with North and South Ayrshire Councils, and funding for such has now been converted to revenue funding, distributed via the Rough Sleepers Grant.

3. HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY DEVELOPMENTS

- 3.1 In order to support the delivery of the Homelessness Task Force Recommendations, the Scottish Executive has confirmed funding to East Ayrshire Council amounting to £486,700 in the current financial year. A further £486,700 has been awarded for 2005/2006.
- 3.2 The Executive has also awarded Rough Sleeping Revenue Funding amounting to £323,835 on a pan-Ayrshire basis for financial year 2004/2005.

A review of the operation of the present Rough Sleeping Initiative is underway and the outcome of this review will be reported to Members in due course.

- 3.3 Each of these funding awards is specifically linked to the delivery of the Homelessness Strategy and the related Local Outcome Agreement for 2004 - 2005 which is appended to this report.
- 3.4 The introduction of the Furnished Tenancy Grant was reported to Housing Committee on 28 January 2004. At that time, an award of £124,700 was made available for 2003/04 to allow the provision of furnished tenancies for those who were homeless or at risk of homelessness. A total of 119 furnished tenancies have been established throughout East Ayrshire as a result. Further funding amounting to £233,000 has been awarded to the Council for the provision of additional furnished tenancies in East Ayrshire during 2004/2005. In order to provide an administration function for the delivery of this service, a Senior Clerical Assistant was employed on a temporary basis, pending confirmation of further funding. It is proposed that this post be extended until March 2005.

4. LOCAL OUTCOME AGREEMENT

- 4.1 The Homelessness Strategy Local Outcome Agreement 2003/2004 stipulated 53 actions that were required to meet the overall objectives of the Strategy. Of these 53 actions, 45 have been achieved, and 6 are rescheduled within the Local Outcome Agreement for 2004/2005 which is appended to this report. The remaining 2 actions include the implementation of the Common Housing Register, which has an identified target of March 2006, and the development of the Homelessness Module within the ArcHouse Management Systems (Orchard), both of which are ongoing projects.
- 4.2 Detail pertaining to the actions delivered during 2003/2004 is available via the Elected Members Information Point. However, the most notable developments include the development of the Tenancy Support Team, the expansion of emergency temporary accommodation to include 31 furnished flats and the provision of services that cater for the health, educational and recreational needs of homeless children. More recent developments include the establishment of the new Housing Options facility at College Wynd, the introduction of a Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme, the extension of housing education sessions within all secondary schools within East Ayrshire, and the introduction of a training programme for staff working toward National Standards for the Provision of Housing Information and Advice.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 All proposals detailed within the Local Outcome Agreement will be funded via Homelessness Task Force Funding.

6. LEGAL AUTHORITY/IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Council requires to comply with the legislative provisions contained within the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and the Homelessness (Scotland) Act 2003 in relation to homelessness
- 6.2 The implementation of the proposals detailed within the Local Outcome Agreement will assist the Council in meeting its statutory obligations.

7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The utilisation of the grant allocation as detailed within the Local Outcome Agreement accords with the objectives of the Council's Homelessness Strategy.

8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 Implementation of the Homelessness Strategy is in progress and the majority of the actions have been achieved within target. The continued award of Grant funding supports implementation of the Strategy throughout its term until March 2006.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 It is recommended that Members:
- (i) Note the Scottish Executive funding awards as outlined in paragraphs 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 above;
 - (ii) Authorise the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services, in conjunction with the Head of Personnel, to submit the staffing proposals for approval by the Corporate Governance Committee;
 - (iii) Approve the Homelessness Strategy Local Outcome Agreement for 2004/2005 as appended to this report.
 - (iv) Otherwise note the content of the report.

William Stafford
Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

WS/CMCA/LA
9 August 2004

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1. East Ayrshire's Homelessness Strategy 2003 - 2006**

- 2. Scottish Executive letter dated 30 March 2004, Awarding Funding For 2004/2005, Homelessness Funding RSI Revenue Funding.**
- 3. Communities Scotland letter dated 23 April 2004 - Homelessness Task Force Recommendations – Funding To Assist Delivery - Offer Of Grant 2004/2005 2005/2006**
- 4. Communities Scotland letter dated 30 July 2004 - Furnished Tenancies - Offer Of Grant 2004/2005.**

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers listed above or requiring further information should telephone 01563 576986 and ask for Nicola Thom.

Implementation Officer – chris.mcaleavey@east-ayrshire.gov.uk

LOCAL OUTCOME AGREEMENT – 2004/2005

Strategic Aim - Improving the response to homelessness in East Ayrshire through the dedicated homelessness service

Actions	Baseline	Resources	Cost	Outcomes	Milestones	Timescale	Evaluation
To review homelessness policy and procedural manuals to take account of legislative changes	Policy has been reviewed and is due for Committee approval prior to implementation	Homeless Strategy Funding	Footnote (1)	Implementation of policy in line with legislative developments	Policy Updated to reflect 2003 Act	Oct-04	Compatibility with Code of Guidance
Work toward ensuring that all Council reception services are delivered in a person centred manner	Info and Advice officer appointed. Analyse of current service provision ongoing	Homeless Strategy Funding	Footnote (1)	Footnote (1)	Analysis of training needs Implementation of training plan	Mar-05	Level of customer satisfaction of service delivery
Strengthen ability for service users to participate in the monitoring and evaluation process	Exit surveys are in place for those leaving temporary accommodation and support services. Residents and service user committees have been established.	Homeless Strategy Funding	£1,500	Service user views influence service delivery	Utilise statistical reporting tool to analyse data and inform strategic developments	Dec-04	Level of customer satisfaction of service delivery
Footnote (1) Staffing Costs	£231,776						

Strategic Aim – Prevention of homeless in East Ayrshire

Actions	Baseline	Resources	Cost	Outcomes	Milestones	Timescale	Evaluation
Expand Housing Education Project beyond Secondary schools to include special needs, community groups and those in care.	Housing education is integral to PSE curriculum within secondary schools. Linkage with other community education projects and development of housing issues education within temporary accommodation.	Homeless Strategy Funding	£5,000	Delivery of Housing Education to a variety of groups within EA	Identify priority groups and agree needs Implement education as required	Dec-04	Level of Customer Satisfaction
Footnote (1) Staffing Costs	£231,776						

Strategic Aim – To ensure the provision of information and advice on homelessness and its prevention is accessible, consistent and co-ordinated

Actions	Baseline	Resources	Cost	Outcomes	Milestones	Timescale	Evaluation
To pilot the provision of information and advice in terms of National Standards within Housing Options @ College Wynd	Self assessment of current service provision complete. Training of relevant staff underway.	Homeless Strategy Funding	£10,000	Accreditation of Housing Options @ College Wynd in terms of National Standards	Implement Training Programme Accreditation	Dec 04 July 05	Compliant with National Standards
Develop robust information sharing across partners	Analyse of current information complete	Homeless Strategy Funding	Footnote (1)	Partners have an improved understanding of service issues, customer needs and service provision	Implement web based homeless information resource	Mar-05	Usage of web based resource
Implement multi agency training programme	Training programme agreed across partners	Homeless Strategy Funding	£5,000	Partners have improved understanding of respective service policies	Delivery of programme	May-04	Post training evaluation of staff knowledge and understanding
Footnote (1) Staffing Costs	£231,776						

Strategic Aim – To improve the crisis response and action to alleviate homelessness and establish positive routes out of homelessness

Actions	Baseline	Resources	Cost	Outcomes	Milestones	Timescale	Evaluation
Increase number of units of accommodation to house homeless people	Current provision of a range of hostel and self contained units of accommodation. Introduction of Short SST	Homeless Strategy Funding	£200,000	A wide range of housing options for homeless people	An increase of 40 units	Mar-05	Target achieved
Establish Rent Deposit Scheme	Proposal for Pilot approved	Homeless Strategy Funding	£20,000	Improved access to Private Rented Sector accommodation	Complete pilot proposal Review scheme and extent across EA	Mar-05	Uptake of Rent Deposit Scheme
Support mapping exercise of voluntary sector services to homeless people	Proposal for study of current provision agreed.	Homeless Strategy Funding	£4,000	Integrate voluntary sector contributions into service delivery framework	Provision of befriending and mentoring services	Dec-04	Uptake of service provision
Footnote (1) Staffing Costs	£231,776						