

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

HOUSING COMMITTEE – 29 JANUARY 2003

FUNDING FOR REFUGE DEVELOPMENT – DOMESTIC ABUSE

Report by the Director of Homes and Technical Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform members on the outcome of the bid submitted by the Council for Scottish Executive funding to develop new refuge provision in Kilmarnock and Cumnock.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In November 2000 the First Minister announced that £18.3 million would be made available to deal with the problem of domestic abuse over the three years 2001/2002 to 2003/2004
- 2.2 In February 2001 the Council was invited, through East Ayrshire Domestic Abuse Forum, to co-ordinate a funding application to improve refuge provision in its area.
- 2.3 The submission was made by the authority on behalf of the core partners who comprised ;

East Ayrshire Council
Kilmarnock Women's Aid
Cumnock and Doon Women's Aid
Cairn Housing Association

Cairn Housing Association were chosen as the preferred development partner because of their previous experience in providing refuge provision for Women's Aid elsewhere in Scotland.

- 2.4 Proposed Refuge Development costs at each of the proposed locations were estimated at

	Kilmarnock	Cumnock
Purchase of suitable site	£30,000	£30,000
Building etc works	£580,000	£580,000
Professional fees and Development Allowances	£104,400	£104,400
Total estimated cost at 2001	£714,400	£714,400

2.5 It was established by the working group that the above costs would be met as follows:

	Kilmarnock	Cumnock
Private Finance (serviced through the rental income)	£237,586	£237,586
Contribution By East Ayrshire by provision of suitable site at nil cost	£30,000	£30,000
Scottish Executive funding	£446,814	£446,814
Total estimated funding at 2001	£714,400	£714,400

2.6 The proposals were for the building of eight self contained, purpose built flats with communal areas in each of the proposed locations at Kilmarnock and Cumnock.

They would;

- Provide increased privacy for the women
- Offer accommodation for counselling and support through the provision of communal spaces.
- Allow residents to feel safe in their environment.
- Be built using the Scottish Women's Aid Design Brief.
- Be accessible for disabled women and children, with one flat suitably adapted for a wheelchair user.
- Meet Housing For Varying Needs Standards, thereby responding to the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

3. CURRENT POSITION

3.1 The Department has been notified that it has been successful in its bid for the Kilmarnock development and that £446,814 has been allocated for the year 2003/2004.

3.2 The bid for a development in Cumnock was not successful.

4. PROPOSALS

4.1 Kilmarnock

The core partners group will now identify an appropriate site for consideration by the Council and work up proposals for the development of a new refuge within Kilmarnock. It is further proposed that the site identified be transferred to Cairn Housing Association as the preferred development partner for a nil consideration as part of the Council's contribution to the wider development.

4.2 Cumnock

While the lack of success in the Cumnock bid is regrettable, the department has been informed that further monies will be made available by the Executive to take forward action on Homelessness to 2004 and currently officers are exploring how part of these additional resources can be used to improve the refuge facilities and service delivery in Cumnock.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** There are no policy implications for the Council as a result of the award of funding. It is however standard Council policy that any land surplus to requirements be advertised for disposal on the open market unless there are reasons to do otherwise. It is considered that the transfer of Council land to Cairn Housing Association as part of the Council's contribution to the wider development to meet an identified housing need is sufficient reason to deviate from the above policy.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** There are no immediate financial implications, as new build costs will be met from the Scottish Executive Refuge Development grant, rental income and private finance. However the transfer of council land for a Kilmarnock development for a nil consideration will mean the Council foregoing a potential capital receipt.
- 6.2** Again, in terms of Cumnock, proposals will be developed to maximize use of Homeless fund resources while mitigating any effect on mainline budgets.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1** The consent of the Scottish Executive will be required in respect of the transfer of any land for a nil consideration in terms of Section 74(2) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 and in the event of the preferred site identified being held on the Housing Revenue Account in terms of section 12 (7) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Committee

- (i) notes the content of this report,
- (ii) note that proposals for the new Kilmarnock refuge development will be submitted in due course,

- (iii) notes that proposals for improvement of the Cumnock refuge will be submitted in due course; and
- (iv) recommends to Council to agree to the principal of disposal of appropriate land at nil cost subject to the consent of the Scottish Executive to allow the Kilmarnock development to proceed.

James Lavery
Director of Homes and Technical Services
JC/
6 January 2003

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Scottish Office press release 29 November 2000
2. Letter from Scottish Executive, February 2001
3. Letter from Scottish Executive, 13 December 2002

Anyone wishing further information or to inspect the background papers should contact Joseph Cassidy, Policy Manager, on 01563 576617.

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