

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL
HOUSING COMMITTEE – 29 JANUARY 2003

THE FUTURE OF THE SUPPORTING PEOPLE PROGRAMME

**Joint Report by the Director of Homes and Technical Services and the
Director of Educational and Social Services**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To recommend proposals for long-term staffing and management arrangements for the Supporting People Programme from April 2003.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A separate report to members details the progress achieved to date in implementing the Supporting People programme by the agreed target date of 1 April 2003.
- 2.2 The council's internal arrangements for implementing the programme reflect the guidance issued by the Scottish Executive and are outlined later in this paper. The programme provides an integrated policy and funding framework for housing support services and the Supporting People strategic plan will form part of the Council's local housing strategy. However, there are clear links with other elements of the Councils strategic planning framework including the council plan, and the joint futures agenda.
- 2.3 The recent decision to award funding to local authorities under the comprehensive spending review to deliver the Supporting People programme up to 2006, provides an opportunity to review the councils internal arrangements for planning and delivering the new service in East Ayrshire over that period.

3. CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS

- 3.1 The councils implementation plan is led by the Head of Homes, supported by a structured framework of steering groups and support teams comprising representatives from a range of council departments and external partner organisations.
- 3.2 The core co-ordination group is chaired by an elected member, currently the vice-chair of the Councils housing committee, and leads the strategic direction of the programme in East Ayrshire. The group includes representatives from Homes, Social Work, Ayrshire & Arran Health Board, Scottish Care, Registered Social Landlords, Carers, major service providers and service users group. The role of this group will remain unchanged from April 2003, when the focus of its work will move beyond implementation to operational issues.

- 3.3 The commissioning and purchasing group is led by a senior manager from Social Work and includes representatives from HATS, Ayrshire & Arran Health Board and service users. The commissioning and purchasing framework for community care services, currently being developed by Social Work will be the tool used to commission and purchase new Supporting People grant funded services. The work of this group will continue beyond April 2003, but again, there is likely to be a shift in emphasis from planning to operational issues.
- 3.4 The supporting people team is responsible to the lead officer. The team comprises five members of staff who are employed on temporary contracts meantime and provide operational and administrative support including the significant task of processing claims for transitional housing benefit (THB).
- 3.5 The implementation plan is also supported by a strategic planning team with input from Housing and Social Work, and a systems team which oversees the planning and introduction of the necessary IT support systems.

4. FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS

- 4.1 The Executive has issued guidance to the effect that authorities should ensure that the structures established for implementation of the Supporting People programme should continue beyond April 2003. This would allow the council to continue to benefit from the experience gained during the implementation phase which in turn will benefit existing and future service users.
- 4.2 The transitional housing benefit scheme is due to be wound up at the end of March 2003 to be replaced by the Supporting People grant funding arrangements. In order to ensure that the appropriate resource is available to the Council it is proposed to establish the existing supporting people team on a permanent basis from April 2003. It is also proposed to establish a new post of contracts officer within the team to commission housing support services relative to the councils statutory housing duties and to assist in the overall management of the programme. Responsibility for commissioning support services relative to the statutory Social Work duties will remain with Social Work.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 As previously reported, the Executive has awarded the council £186,000 for the implementation of the Supporting People programme during 2003/2004. The recently published comprehensive spending review continues that level of funding as an operational budget for the Supporting People programme for the three years up to March 2006. The proposals outlined in this report can be met from this budget. Any other financial implications arising from the ongoing implementation of the programme will be reported to members as necessary.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The proposals outlined in the report support the Councils approach to implementing the Supporting People programme and its alignment with other key council strategies including the council plan, community care plan, and the joint futures agenda.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Nil

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 Members are asked to:

- Approve the staffing arrangements detailed in paragraph 4;
- Authorise the Director of Homes and Technical Services, in conjunction with the Head of Personnel, to submit these proposals for approval by the Policy and Resources Committee;
- Note the terms of this report.

James Lavery
Director of Homes & Technical Services
13 January 2003

John Mulgrew
Director of Education & Social Work

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

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