

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL
HOUSING COMMITTEE – 29 JANUARY 2003

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 advise members of the continuing arrangements being made for the implementation of this Scottish Executive initiative.

2. BACKGROUND

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

3. PROGRESS UPDATE

- 3.1 As previously reported the Council remains on target to implement the Supporting People Initiative in April 2003. An updated version of the Action Plan is annexed to this report.
- 3.2 Since the last report to Committee on 6 November 2002, further consultation papers and guidance have been received from the Executive. Joint responses with North and South Ayrshire Councils have been made to the consultation papers. A Draft Supporting People Strategic Plan has been submitted to the Scottish Executive and Communities Scotland. The Plan requires further work to take account of current service developments being funded by Transitional Housing Benefit and further information becoming available on the need for support services. The Plan will be resubmitted to the Scottish Executive and Communities Scotland in March and will be the subject of a separate report to the next meeting of the Committee.
- 3.3 Significant progress is now being made to sign up eligible Council tenants for Housing Support Services to allow Transitional Housing Benefit claims to be made and thus maximise income to the Authority.
- 3.4 A Draft Interim Supporting People contract has been prepared in conjunction with South Ayrshire Council and is being circulated to support service providers. It is anticipated that all necessary contracts and service level agreements to allow Supporting People Grant to be paid from April 2003 will be in place by the end of February.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THE GENERAL FUND

- 4.1 At the time of writing, details of the distribution formula for Supporting People Grant had yet to be published by the Scottish Executive. Current indications are that a General Fund contribution of 5% of the total for Supporting People Grant payments will probably be required to reflect the present position where there is a 5% General Fund contribution to every pound of expenditure on Housing Benefit or Transitional Housing Benefit. It is currently unknown as to whether that contribution will be restricted to the amount originating from Transitional Housing Benefit or will extend to our full Grant allocation.
- 4.2 Projecting from those claims currently in payment or agreed for payment, a total of £3.35M would be paid in Transitional Housing Benefit during the course of a full year. There are at present three known sources of new further claims for Transitional Housing Benefit, as follows. A total of £0.75M will be added by claims for support services to be provided by the Supported Tenancies Team, recruitment of which is under way. A further £0.41M will be added by claims for support services at the Key Housing Association scheme at Montgomery Place in Kilmarnock, de-registration of which is scheduled for the 1st of February. Work is also ongoing to make over 1,000 Transitional Housing Benefit claims for Council tenants whose only support service is the Community Alarm scheme. 1,000 such claims would generate a further £0.7M in Transitional Housing Benefit over a full year.
- 4.3 It can be seen that from the claims already paid or agreed and those claims due to be made, a total of at least £5.21M, would be payable in Transitional Housing Benefit in the course of a full year. Moreover, every effort continues to be made to explore all other opportunities of maximising Transitional Housing Benefit. All Transitional Housing Benefit in payment at the end of the scheme on 31st March 2003 will contribute to the Council's Supporting People Grant allocation.
- 4.4 It could therefore be anticipated that this level of Supporting People Grant originating from Transitional Housing Benefit payments would require a General Fund contribution of some £0.26M. Research undertaken into the effects of Transitional Housing Benefit on the Community Care budget has however shown that of the total claims made so far for Social Work clients, amounting to £2.6M over a full year, £0.48M has replaced existing funding and £2.12M is for new services, mainly for complex packages particularly for those being resettled on discharge from hospital. There is also a projected loss of income of £0.17M from the East Ayrshire non-residential services charging policy due to the impact of Transitional Housing Benefit. If there is a shortfall in the amount of Supporting People Grant received from the Scottish Executive compared with the value of contracts to be funded from that Grant i.e. if a 5% contribution or other is to be met by the Council it will be funded by beneficiary departments from within their existing budget allocations approved for 2003/2004. This situation will continue to be closely monitored as it develops.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THE HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

- 5.1 The Supported Tenancies Team, which has been the subject of previous reports to Committee, will as indicated in paragraph 4.2, be fully funded by Transitional Housing Benefit at an annual cost of £0.75M. This includes those staff previously funded through the Better Neighbourhood Initiative where that funding has now been transferred, with the agreement of the Scottish Executive, to the Community Environmental Improvement Project. Given the benefits that will accrue to the Housing Revenue Account as the result of tenants being supported to sustain their tenancies, it is therefore proposed that the Housing Revenue Account make a proportionate contribution to any General Fund contribution required to be made to Supporting People Grant.
- 5.2 A return has been submitted to the Scottish Executive seeking matching Supporting People Grant for a total of £912,925 actually paid from the 2001/2002 Housing Revenue Account in respect of housing support services. Formal guidance has yet to be received from the Scottish Executive on how the £977,220 of resources freed up from the 2003/2004 Housing Revenue Account Budget by this replacement funding can be spent. It is however clear that some of that money will need to be used to fund the lifetime protection from charges of those tenants who currently receive rent pool funded services but who are unable to claim Housing Benefit. Current estimates are that this could amount to some £261,000 annually.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no new policy implications from the existing Scottish Executive Supporting People guidance other than those previously reported to Committee.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no new legal implications arising from this report. Any legal implications arising from the implementation of the Supported People Initiative will be reported to Committee as they arise in the context of further Supporting People progress reports.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 The Committee is asked to the contents 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

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

Implementation Officer: Chris McAleavey, Head of Homes

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL SUPPORTING PEOPLE PROGRAMME ACTION PLAN – 'FINANCES AND COMMITMENTS'					
Objective		Action Required	Current Situation	Timescale	Responsible Officer
F1	Maximise take up of Transitional Housing Benefit	Review all Social Work client services to identify support services	Temporary staff being employed	September 2002-ongoing to March 2003	Eddie Fraser / Geoff Crow / Trish McLean
F2	Map existing & planned housing support services to identify commitments for 2003/4	Issue questionnaires, log results on database issued by Scottish Executive and keep updating	Reports to Executive as required	March 2002	Geoff Crow
F3	Agree capital programme for 2002/3 and later	Get approval from Communities Scotland on pipeline projects	Done	March 2002	Joe Cassidy/Deborah Brady
F4	Resolve cross-authority issues	Identify clients who are funded by another authority or whose funding is unclear	Done	October 2002	Geoff Crow
F5	Develop framework for cost comparisons between schemes and providers	Establish mechanisms for accurately identifying costs-Proforma to be worked up for consideration by Practitioner's Network	Done	December 2002	Geoff Crow
F6	Maximise Housing Revenue Account to be matched by Executive grant for 2003/4 and beyond	Identify housing support services paid from pooled rent income in 2001/2 Housing Revenue Account	Return sent for 2001/2 actuals (£912,925)	End October 02 for accurate return, Jan 03 audited return	Geoff Crow/David McLellan
F7	Agree 100% Interim Contracts with providers	Draw up service specifications and determine funding amounts	Awaiting distribution formula	February 2003	Geoff Crow

**EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL SUPPORTING PEOPLE PROGRAMME
ACTION PLAN – ‘PLANNING’**

Objective		Action Required	Current Situation	Timescale	Responsible Officer
P1	Devise strategies for disseminating information to all partners and consulting with users and providers	Draft strategies and submit to Core Co-ordination Group for approval	Done	November 2001	Geoff Crow
P2	Identify areas where enhancement is needed to SWIFT system	Map existing levels of functionality & compare with those required for supporting people	Done- SPLS under development	April 2002	Geoff Crow
P3	Identify local service aims for each client group	Develop user involvement approach for approval by Core Co-ordination Group	Ongoing as part of consultation on Strategic Plan	February 2003	Geoff Crow
P4	Conduct full needs survey	Identify information sources and conduct survey	Ongoing as part of consultation on Strategic Plan	March 2003	Geoff Crow
P5	Prepare scheme review strategy	Conduct survey of types of service and develop framework for cost comparisons	Consultation papers issued by Executive	February 2003	Geoff Crow
P6	Devise post-2003 strategy and include in Local Housing Strategy	Gap analysis between supply and need to identify unmet need ongoing	Ongoing to take account of the effects of THB	March 2003	Geoff Crow
P7	Produce final draft of first strategic plan	Prioritise service enhancements and resources for 2003 on based on gap analysis	Final draft submitted by revised deadline of 15 th November 2002- updated version needed for March 2003	March 2003	Geoff Crow

**EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL SUPPORTING PEOPLE PROGRAMME
ACTION PLAN - 'SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES'**

Objective		Action Required	Current Situation	Timescale	Responsible Officer
S1	Discuss and agree with North and South Ayrshire common approaches to issues	Discuss and agree with North and South Ayrshire common approaches to issues	Done	March 2002	Chris McAleavey/Geoff Crow
S2	Develop commissioning and purchasing process for Supporting People	Decide on composition of C & P Sub Group, identify what systems can be copied across and used	Work plan agreed	February 2003	Chris McAleavey /Geoff Crow/ Andy MacDonald
S3	Develop scheme review system	Conduct survey of types of service, establish protocols for prioritizing reviews	To follow on from supply mapping	February 2003	Geoff Crow
S4	Develop I.T system to meet the needs of the Supporting People Programme	Work with Anite and other users to enhance SWIFT where required	Contingency system under development due to delays with SPLS	December 2002	Martin Mason/Geoff Crow
S5	Develop registration, tendering and contract processes for Supporting People.	Identify what systems can be used or copied across to Supporting People. Adapt as necessary.	Commissioning and purchasing framework being adopted	December 2002	Geoff Crow/Andy MacDonald
S6	Develop payments system	Identify what systems can be used or copied across to Supporting People. Adapt as necessary.	Contingency system under development due to delays with SPLS	December 2002	Geoff Crow
S7	Develop audit system	Identify what systems can be used or copied across to Supporting People. Adapt as necessary.	Contingency system under development due to delays with SPLS	December 2002	Geoff Crow