

**EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

**HOUSING COMMITTEE – 26 MARCH 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 and to update them on achievements in maximising income to the Council through Transitional Housing Benefit claims from existing Homecare service users.

**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 Programme from April 2003. The current version of the Implementation Action Plan is annexed to this report.
- 3.2 Since the last report to Committee on 29 January 2003 further guidance has been received from the Scottish Executive on issues such as the future funding and reviews of services, the monitoring of management information, and the quality of service delivery.
- 3.3 As required by the Scottish Executive, further reports are being sent to them detailing the sums being paid from Transitional Housing Benefit and other funding sources which will contribute to the Council's Supporting People Grant. The maximum possible amount of Supporting People Grant due to the Council in 2003/4 is currently estimated at £6M.
- 3.4 During April and again in November there will be reconciliations of the amounts of Transitional Housing Benefit paid during 2002/3. The results of those reconciliations will inform adjustments to the Council's Supporting People Grant payments. Further updates will be given to future Committee meetings on the results of these reconciliations.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THE GENERAL FUND**

- 4.1 The Scottish Executive has now advised that our Revenue Support Grant settlement will be adjusted following the November reconciliation referred to in Paragraph 3.4 to make up the full level of Supporting People funding with the 5% General Fund contribution to Housing Benefit payments that would have been required to be made had the Transitional Housing Benefit scheme continued through 2003/4. Discussions continue between departments to ensure that the adjustments needed to service budgets to reflect their required relative contributions back to the General Fund are made in a fair and equitable manner.
- 4.2 In early summer 2002 a small team was established within Educational and Social Services with a view to maximising income to the Council through Transitional Housing Benefit and the Supporting People Programme, particularly linked to current homecare service users. This "spend to save" initiative looked for a return of £0.73M in recurring revenue from a one off outlay of approximately £0.04M which was jointly funded by Educational & Social Services and Homes & Technical Services. The team, of 4 temporary Transitional Housing Benefit Assistants, have completed 546 claims for East Ayrshire homecare service users resulting in over £1.1M of recurring revenue income. This is over 50% more than was originally anticipated, this provides real opportunities to develop services in East Ayrshire for vulnerable service users and the team are to be commended on their efforts. Close co-operation between Social Work and Housing staff has also so far enabled over 500 service users of the Community Alarm service to make claims for Transitional Housing Benefit realising over £0.3M of additional recurring revenue.

#### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THE HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT**

- 5.1 Following recent guidance from the Scottish Executive a revised estimate of £825,235 for Housing Support Services from rent pooled income has now been submitted. Supporting People Grant funding of £606,708 will be claimed against that expenditure. There will be a continuing cost to the 2003/4 Housing Revenue Account of some £219,000 for these services. This will meet the cost of providing services that were previously rent pooled and thus free of direct charge, to those tenants who do not currently receive Housing Benefit.

#### **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 Supporting People Programme will be reported to Committee as they arise in the context of further Supporting People progress reports.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the contents of this report.

James Lavery  
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## **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**Nil**

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