

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE – 29 MARCH 2001

THE SUPPORTING PEOPLE PROGRAMME

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

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise members of the arrangements being made for the implementation of this Scottish Executive initiative, from April 2003.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This is a new integrated policy and funding framework for support services for people in supported accommodation or receiving flexible support. The aim is to create a coherent framework to support vulnerable people and maximise their capacity for independent living. It is designed to focus provision on local need and improve the range and quality of local services. It will integrate support with wider local strategies.
- 2.2 The programme will bring together a number of funding streams, including the support element of Housing Benefit, and Income Support or Job Seekers Allowance (Income Based) where that is paid for housing costs. The Special Needs Allowance Package or Resettlement Grant from Scottish Homes will also be brought into the funding framework.
- 2.3 The main aim of the programme is to provide good quality services, focused on the needs of users. One of the important opportunities is to broaden the range of local services so that people requiring support have more choice over where they live and the way in which they receive support.
- 2.4 Support services that can be paid through Transitional Housing Benefit include: ensuring people are safe through contact checks; arranging essential visits for them; accompanying service users to other agencies/ supports; supporting people in developing independent living skills.

3. IMPLEMENTATION

- 3.1 A number of consultation papers have already been issued, giving guidance on the steps that we are required to take to ensure the success of the Supporting People Programme in East Ayrshire. The Directors of Homes and Technical Services and Educational and Social Services have to nominate a lead officer and it was jointly agreed that this should be the Head of Homes.

- 3.2 A common administrative structure for local authorities is also a requirement. Nominations are being sought from the Homes and Technical Services, Educational and Social Services, and Finance departments for appropriate officers to serve on the Supporting People Team, which will do most of the work required for implementation.
- 3.3 Similarly, work is ongoing to identify representatives from key players in the whole process to form the Core Co-ordination Group. Their task will be to make key decisions and oversee the work of the Supporting People Team. They will also make reports and recommendations to elected members for their approval. Should Elected Members wish it a full briefing session on the implications and opportunities available through supporting people can be organised at a later date.
- 3.4 The task of elected members in the implementation of the Programme is expected to be that of focusing on key strategic decisions and the scrutiny of results. Members should approve the structures, policies and strategies of the plan. They should give overall priorities to the different needs being addressed and oversee consultation mechanisms, ensuring the involvement of service users.
- 3.5 The successful implementation of the Programme will require resources to be committed and the resource implications are currently being considered, by officers, and will be reported on in due course

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Scottish Executive has recently announced that implementation funding will be available from 2001/02 onwards. Nationally, £2m is available for next year, with £5m in 2002/03 and £8m in 2003/04. While there has been no announcement so far on how the money will be allocated between authorities, previous experience, based on population, would suggest that East Ayrshire Council should receive some £48,000 to meet the costs of implementation in 2001/02. Such a resource allocation is unlikely to meet the anticipated costs associated with appropriate implementation.

5. POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Although implementation is still at a very early stage and national policy is still under development, it is already clear that the Supporting People Programme will lead to major changes in the way that services are delivered to some of the most vulnerable members of society. Implementation of the Programme will impact on many existing policies and areas of responsibility such as Care in the Community. Further reports will be made to the committees, as the impact on different areas of work becomes clearer.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Elected Members are asked to:

- i) note the contents of this report; and
- ii) note that regular reports will be submitted to keep members informed of developments.

James Lavery
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Director of Educational and Social Services

JL/JM/JD/JK
Enc (0)
19 March 2001

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

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AGENDA