

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL
SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE – 7 NOVEMBER 2002

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.
- 2.2 Since the last report to committee on 12 September 2002, the introduction by the Council with effect from 30 September 2002 of its Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement in compliance with the provisions of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 has necessitated the replacement of the supplementary tenancy agreement previously agreed by committee with a schedule to the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement detailing the support services to be funded by Transitional Housing Benefit. Work continues to identify and submit all potential Transitional Housing Benefit claims.
- 2.3 Additional staff are also being recruited to supplement the temporary staff already in post to carry out the work of signing up our existing tenants to the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement. The costs of these additional temporary posts in so far as these relate to those tenants receiving housing support services and who are eligible for Transitional Housing Benefit to meet the costs of those services will be met from the 3% administration charge on Transitional Housing Benefit claims paid through the Housing Revenue Account as previously advised to committee. The Scottish Secure Tenancy sign up staff will initially concentrate on the signing up of Transitional Housing Benefit claims. This will ensure that support services are timeously delivered and maximise income to the Authority.

3. PROGRESS

- 3.1 Consultation Papers and Guidance have continued to be issued by the Scottish Executive on a regular basis. An action plan designed to achieve successful implementation has been prepared and the current version is attached as Annex One to this report. The action plan is under continuous review/update and will be an annex to all further Supporting People progress reports. As previously reported the Council remains on target to implement the Supporting People Initiative in April 2003.

- 3.2 However, in order to realise the potential income through Transitional Housing Benefit support services must be in place before 31 March 2003. Work in assessing individuals and quantifying housing support need is ongoing by social work staff. To convert this identified need to services will require additional services to be commissioned (e.g. through Helping Hands or East Ayrshire Advocacy Service) and additional support staff to be employed. All additional support services and staff will be funded through the resources realised by Transitional Housing Benefit applications.
- 3.3 Following consultations with the Head of Personnel, additional staffing resources are now being sought to carry out ongoing case maintenance on all Transitional Housing Benefit claims. This will enable the existing staff processing Transitional Housing Benefit claims to concentrate on their primary aim of maximizing the amount of Transitional Housing Benefit claimed this year. This post will also be funded from the existing 2002/03 implementation budget of £116,000.
- 3.4 A key issue for the successful implementation of the Supporting People Programme by the deadline of April 2003 is the development and integration of a suitable IT solution. Discussion between Social Work, Housing and Corporate IT colleagues have concluded that the best way forward is to seek to negotiate procurement of a Supporting People Local System software package (SPLS) from Anite, who successfully tendered to supply the Council with SWIFT, the Council's new Social Work casework management system. This will be subject to assurances being received that the system will be delivered, tested, and implemented in advance of April 2003 deadline. SPLS is designed to either operate as an integral part of SWIFT on a modular basis or alternatively as a stand-alone system.
- 3.5 Previous reports to committee have covered the questions of the charging policy that Supporting People will operate under as well as the Section 91 Order that is required under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 to enable authorities to make Supporting People Grant payments for support services. It was previously reported that the original draft Section 91 Order issued for consultation was withdrawn after having been the subject of criticism. As yet, no revised draft Section 91 Order has been published. With regard to the charging policy, this is expected to be published by the Executive early in November.
- 3.6 Under Section 91 of the Housing (Scotland) Act payments of Supporting People Grant can only be made in respect of support services that either are the subject of a contract or a service level agreement for in-house services. It has been agreed with North and South Ayrshire Councils that a common contract will be used in this process to minimise the workload imposed on providers. The contract that will be used is based on the model contract issued by the Scottish Executive as part of guidance and subsequently refined by the ADSW Contracts Group.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THE GENERAL FUND

- 4.1 Projecting from those claims currently in payment or agreed a total of £2.78M will be paid in Transitional Housing Benefit during a full year. This will require an additional contribution from the General Fund of £139,000. These figures will continue to increase and will be the subject of future reports to committee.
- 4.2 The Supporting People Grant distribution formula has yet to be published by the Scottish Executive. The initial Supporting People Grant settlement from next April will be based on expenditure figures currently being reported to the Scottish Executive and the Department for Works and Pensions. It is recognized by all concerned that Transitional Housing Benefit expenditure will continue to increase rapidly through to April 2003 as local authorities all over the UK carry out similar exercises to the one being conducted here.
- 4.3 The Scottish Executive have therefore indicated that a final reconciliation will be done in November 2003 to enable adjustments to be made to local authorities 2003/4 Supporting People Grant settlement. Assurances have also been given that local authorities will not have to bear the cost of any shortfall between the initial awards in April 2003 and the adjusted awards in November 2003. Requests have been made to the Scottish Executive for a written explanation of how this particular assurance will be delivered. Once such an explanation is received it will be reported to committee.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THE HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

- 5.1 The approved service charge now being levied on THB claims is projected to generate an additional income equivalent to £20,000 at the end of the current financial year. As further cases are signed up, that amount will increase, although the additional income generated from new cases will reduce as year-end approaches.
- 5.2 As indicated in paragraph 2.3 of this report, additional staffing resources are already being deployed to ensure that the maximum possible advantage accrues to East Ayrshire Council from our implementation of the Supporting People Programme.
- 5.3 The approximate cost of purchasing and installing SPLS is estimated circa £80,000 which, if members approve the proposal, will be met from the 2003/4 Supporting People implementation budget.

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 additional legal implications arising from this report beyond those identified in paragraph 2.2. Any subsequent legal implications arising from the implementation of the Supported People Initiative will be reported to committee as they arise in the context of further Supported People progress reports.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 The Committee is asked for its interests to:

- (i) note the progress achieved to date;
- (ii) approve the proposals to establish new support arrangements as detailed in para 3 subject to further consultation with the Head of Personnel; and
- (iii) to approve the procurement, by formal negotiation, of the Supporting People Local System software package (SPLS) from Anite.

James Lavery
Director of Homes & Technical Services

John Mulgrew
Director of Education & Social Work

16 October 2002
Enc (1)

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

For further information please contact Eddie Fraser, Service Unit Manager Home Care, telephone: 01563 554825 or Geoff Crow, Supporting People Officer telephone: 01563 554832.

Implementation Officer: Chris McAleavey, Head of Homes

APPENDIX 1

East Ayrshire Council Supporting People Programme Action Plan.

This is based on the Scottish Executive publication 'Task-based Action Plan for local authorities'.

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 sent 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	Protocols agreed with Ayrshire authorities	October 2002	Geoff Crow
F5	Develop framework for cost comparisons between schemes and providers	Establish mechanisms for accurately identifying costs	Inter-authority working party established	October 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	Research is ongoing to maximise the claim	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	December 2002	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- Anite are developing their Supporting People system	April 2002	Geoff Crow
P3	Identify local service aims for each client group	Develop user involvement approach for approval by Core Co-ordination Group	Consultation with client groups now under way- publicity campaign has started	September 2002	Geoff Crow
P4	Conduct full needs survey	Identify information sources and conduct survey	Work has started to map out likely future service needs	October 2002	Geoff Crow
P5	Prepare scheme review strategy	Conduct survey of types of service and develop framework for cost comparisons	To follow on from supply mapping	October 2002	Geoff Crow
P6	Devise post-2003 strategy and include in Local Housing Strategy	Conduct gap analysis between supply and need to identify unmet need	To follow on from supply mapping and needs survey	October 2002	Geoff Crow
P7	Produce final draft of first strategic plan	Prioritise service enhancements and resources for 2003 on based on gap analysis	To follow on from gap analysis	October 2002	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	Agreement reached	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	October 2002	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	October 2002	Geoff Crow
S4	Develop I.T system to meet the needs of the Supporting People Programme	Work with Sheridan and other users to enhance SWIFT where required	Anite SPLS being tested	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.	Anite SPLS interface required to SAP creditors	December 2002	Geoff Crow
S7	Develop audit system	Identify what systems can be used or copied across to Supporting People. Adapt as necessary.	Anite SPLS has full payment history facilities	December 2002	Geoff Crow

AGENDA