

To: HOUSING AND SOCIAL WORK SERVICES COMMITTEE	Subject: WATCH US GROW
From: HEAD OF SOCIAL WORK DEVELOPMENT	
Date: 25 FEBRUARY 2009	DM/AB

1. Purpose of Report / Introduction

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to provide funds to Watch Us Grow to secure the service for 2009/10.

2. Background

- 2.1 Watch Us Grow is a registered charity based in Cumbernauld. It was established in March 1999 offering a range of experiences to people with additional support needs. The service has a number of different elements, including a recycling scheme, a community gardening project and the main garden project based at Palacerigg Country Park.
- 2.2 The service was not commissioned by the Council and has been partly sustained through external funding, the main source of which has expired. The Social Work service makes a contribution of £20,000 per annum through Section 10 funds and £5,888 from Carers Strategy monies.
- 2.3 Committee was advised in October 2008 of the difficulties being experienced by Watch Us Grow and that a further report would be brought forward, advising of proposed changes to the future shape of the service and supporting financial framework.

3. Proposals / Considerations

- 3.1 The issue has arisen primarily because of the expiry of Lottery funding, creating problems of financial sustainability. Different funding options have been explored with the service at a series of meetings and an independently facilitated development day. Officers encouraged the service to consider replicating, for the garden project, arrangements that apply to their other two services (as outlined at 2.1), both of which operate on a social firm type model. This means that they are essentially self funding and provide employment for people with disabilities.
- 3.2 After due consideration, Watch Us Grow would prefer to offer services to people who could purchase them through direct payments or individual budgets. This will involve individual planning with people with disabilities and their families to assess their needs and financial allocation. From the provider organisation's perspective it makes the assumption that (i) people will want to buy the service offered with their financial allocation and (ii) that the aggregate value of that financial allocation will, when taken together with other funding streams, cover running costs.

- 3.3 As this requires careful planning and implementation, approval is sought to part fund the service for the financial year 2009/10, to give people with disabilities and their families the time they need to be involved in this process. This will ensure that individual budgets are introduced positively with people and change can be well managed. It is intended that the funding arrangements will shadow the new way of working over the year so that, if successful, the new arrangements will apply for 2010/11.

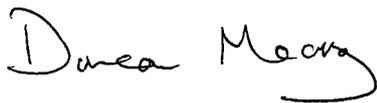
4. Financial / Personnel / Legal / Policy Implications

- 4.1 The recycling scheme and community gardening project, along with a proportionate share of the management and administrative costs, will remain self funding.
- 4.2 The annual cost of the garden project for 2009/10 is £72,704. The income expected through Section 10, Carers Strategy funding and NHS Lanarkshire, as well as sales, is £44,888. The monies sought to secure the service through this period of change is £27,816.
- 4.3 £27,816 will be made available from existing community care monies for 2009/10.

5. Recommendations

It is recommended that Committee:

- (i) Approve the recommendation that £27,816 is paid to Watch Us Grow for 2009/10.



Duncan Mackay
Head of Social Work Development
29 January 2009

For further information about this report please contact Morag Dendy, Service Manager Younger Adults tel:01698 332075