

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

AGENDA ITEM No. 6

To: HOUSING AND TECHNICAL SERVICES COMMITTEE	Subject: SUPPORTING PEOPLE GRANT AND HOMELESSNESS SUPPORT AND PREVENTION SERVICES.
Joint Report from: DIRECTOR OF HOUSING AND PROPERTY SERVICES & DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK	
Date: 18 th October 2002	Ref: TMCK/JH

1. Introduction and Summary

1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise of new powers and opportunities for the Council arising from the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 in relation to Supporting People, and to seek approval for the expansion of the existing support services function located within the Tenancy Services & Accommodation Section.

1.2 Summary

- The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 introduces a range of new duties for Councils including:
 - Duty to develop Homelessness Strategies including effective Prevention Strategies.
 - Duty to accommodate and assist all homeless people including non-priority cases, ex-offenders and people deemed “intentionally” homeless, e.g. people who have been evicted for non-payment of rent or anti-social behaviour.
 - Duty to provide suitable packages of support for people offered the new Short Scottish Secure Tenancy.
 - Powers to fund Housing Support Services under the Supporting People Framework.
- The Act also introduces a new single system of regulation and monitoring covering all aspects of Housing, Homelessness and related support functions.
- The Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 introduces National Care Standards for Housing Support Services, which will deliver choice for service users.
- The Resettlement Team based in Housing & Property Services has been identified as an effective model of housing support by three independent research reports. This report advocates an extension of that model.
- Other councils are developing similar models, notably Edinburgh City Council, partly as a response to increasing evidence of anti-social behaviour.

2. Background

- 2.1 Section 91 (8) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 gives local authorities the power to fund housing support services that are provided for a person's sole or main residence. Resources to fund such services will be provided by the new funding system called the Supporting People Grant. The Supporting People grant allocated to the Council will be based on the amount of Transitional Housing Benefit (THB) claimed by the Council, or other support providers, by 31 March 2003. It is therefore important that the Council maximises resources available through THB by March 2003.
- 2.2 Much of the work currently undertaken by staff in Tenancy Services and at local Area Housing Offices could be considered to be housing support as defined under the Supporting People framework. At the moment, the largest group of people who receive housing support is older people living in sheltered housing. However, a wide range of people with particular needs can receive housing support services, including people with drug or alcohol problems, people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, ex- offenders and other people who need support.
- 2.3 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places additional responsibilities on local authorities in relation to the new Short Scottish Secure Tenancy (SSST). Landlords must ensure that where the S.S.S.T. is offered to someone because of previous anti-social behaviour or an Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO), a suitable package of support is also offered to allow the tenancy to convert to a Scottish Secure Tenancy.
- 2.4 The Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 places new responsibilities on local authorities including National Care Standards covering Housing Support Services. Whilst raising the profile and quality of Housing Support Services the introduction of national standards implies a need for specialist services, rather than services inherent within a more generic role e.g. that of a Housing Officer.
- 2.5 A report to Committee in May 2002 highlighted the need for an improved focus on the assessment and case management functions relating to our homelessness duties. As a result approval was given to appoint four Assessment & Case Managers within the Tenancy Services & Accommodation Section. It has become clear during the intervening period that a similar focus will be required in delivering support services to our most vulnerable residents. Opinions gathered at two separate option appraisal events, designed to gauge the views of a wide group of stakeholders on homelessness services, highlighted the need for improved support services. This was also confirmed by the research commissioned to consider the current service provision in consultation with staff and service users.

3. Assessment of Need

- 3.1 Whilst the unmet need existing in the community can not, at this stage, be accurately measured, the level of support services required by existing clients of the Resettlement Team has been quantified and this information is attached as **Appendix 1** to this report. This suggests a high level of housing support is required of some 9 hours per week. These assessments relate to the most complex of cases and the level of support may not be so high for other homeless persons.
- 3.2 An analysis of this data, which relates to 99 individuals, indicates that a range of services requires to be put in place. Whilst many of the assessed needs can be catered for by

commissioning existing services such as homecare and from agencies offering specialist services for substance misuse clients or persons with disabilities, there is a significant need for tenancy support services which assist clients deal with tenancy related difficulties such as dealing with neighbours, etc.,

- 3.3 Services such as these can be provided by the Council and claims submitted for Transitional Housing Benefit to provide funding for provision. Post April 2003, such funding would be met from the Supporting People Grant awarded to the Council to enable continuance of housing support services.
- 3.4 A sample survey of the tenancy support needs of mainstream tenants has been carried out to begin to quantify the unmet needs of clients in the community. The results were derived from assessments of 32 tenants and have been categorised by level of need. **See Appendix 2.**
- 3.5 Claims to THB for this unmet need will be made immediately and may generate over £29,700 per week in THB, representing £1.55 million annually. As an interim measure this shortfall in services will be put in place to reconcile with the THB claim. This will be achieved by utilising all existing service capacity that can be galvanised for the purpose across both departments. This will be replaced by a more permanent arrangement when THB income is received and the necessary human resources can be expanded to suit.
- 3.6 Appendix 2 indicates a high level of housing support need which requires further examination. Priority will be given to identifying the most vulnerable and high support packages. If an estimated 80 persons within the community have the support needs indicated by the sample this will generate enough THB/SPG income to pay entirely for the proposals as set out at 5.2.

4. Considerations

- 4.1 An assessment of the potential need for housing support services indicates an increasing need for a range of “floating support” services which can be provided to vulnerable people experiencing difficulties in maintaining their tenancy. The range of possible situations includes;
 - Families facing eviction or subject of complaints to the Anti-Social Task Force
 - People with mental health problems
 - People with alcohol and/or drugs problems
 - Young people with housing support needs
 - Older people with housing support needs
 - People who have been homeless or institutionalised
 - People currently homeless & resident in temporary accommodation.
- 4.2 Furthermore, the Council’s new duty to temporarily accommodate all homeless applicants, regardless of priority need or “intentionality” will place additional duties on the council to accommodate people who are homeless and present new challenges for the existing pool of

support staff who deliver services in the Supported Accommodation Units. Nevertheless, it is equally important that adequate support is also available to assist people in their own tenancies.

- 4.3 Research to date, including the findings of the Anti-Social Task Force and Area Offices throughout North Lanarkshire, indicates a figure of between 700 to 900 individuals currently living in the community who could benefit from housing support services. The figures include individuals who have been the subject of complaints to the Anti-Social Task Force and who have been assessed as requiring support and assistance to modify “challenging” behaviours. **See Appendix 3.** Moreover, the duty to provide a package of support to people being offered the new S.S.S.T. will require co-ordination and regular review.
- 4.4 Discussions with Area Housing staff and colleagues within the Social Work Department have highlighted a number of key areas for consideration when determining how best to meet the emerging demand for housing support services. There appears to be consensus across both departments that a dedicated resource is required in addition to the mixed economy of support services already available in the statutory and voluntary sectors. Support Plans must be designed as action plans which detail how support is to be provided and who will provide it. In practice this will include elements of support from each sector as required and from a range of service providers, and could for example comprise Home Care from Social Work alongside support from Lanarkshire Association for Mental Health.
- 4.5 The development of a dedicated team within the Housing & Property Services Department does not preclude this; it will enhance the co-ordination of service provision by providing “One Door Access “ to both the assessment process and the commissioning of appropriate service provision, taking into account the views of the service user. An in house service offering tenancy support could be more responsive to people resident within the Supported Accommodation and Dispersed Units in periods of crisis. It could provide a named support worker who moves with the client, and it could address the reservations that some clients have about seeking and accepting support from the Social Work Department directly.
- 4.6 It is recognised that over recent years there is evidence of improved inter-departmental and inter-agency joint working within North Lanarkshire. However, despite joint Housing and Social Work Protocols some 194 council tenants were evicted last year as a result of rent arrears, a further 341 tenants abandoned their tenancies following court action by the Council, and as a whole in 2001/2002 – 1,062 newly created tenancies were terminated within 1 year. Without detailed analysis of the reasons for tenancy failure it is impossible to establish a direct correlation with unmet support needs, however anecdotal information suggests that there is a link. The indirect costs associated with void turnover, social exclusion and community instability are immeasurable but should nonetheless be given consideration. Particularly as the council will have direct responsibility to meet those costs.
- 4.7 An example of a current model of support operating in North Lanarkshire is the Resettlement Team, originally funded by the Rough Sleepers Initiative. The team has four officers dealing with an ongoing caseload of 120 individuals and families. Evidence gained from three recently completed pieces of research has pointed towards improved tenancy sustainability when the Resettlement service is deployed, and Housing staff admit that they are more confidently allocating permanent housing to people being provided with resettlement support. Given that each officer is currently managing a caseload of 30 clients each over a period of perhaps 3 months this suggests that a team of 24 to 30 Housing Support Workers is required. The Resettlement Team was appointed temporarily until April 2004 and is currently funded by Transitional Housing Benefit.

5. Proposal for Resources

- 5.1 The present staffing arrangements do not facilitate a suitable line management framework for the co-ordination of an expanded assessment and support service. If the team is to take referrals from Area Housing Offices, the Assessment & Case Managers and the Anti-Social Task Force, considerable skills will be required to manage the flow of information. In order to secure funding for services it will be necessary to put in place effective recording and reporting systems based on assessed need for each individual and a record of the service provided. It is therefore important that there is effective supervision and co-ordination of the assessment and support service.
- 5.2 It is proposed to create a team consisting of 2 Tenancy Support Co-ordinators, 24 Tenancy Support Workers, and 2 Clerical Assistants. To ensure that the support needs of individuals being offered the new S.S.S.T. are appropriately and consistently assessed it is further proposed that two additional Assessment & Case Managers be appointed. They will join the existing team of four Assessment & Case Managers who were appointed to assess the housing and housing support needs of people making homeless applications across North Lanarkshire. Each Tenancy Support Co-ordinator will manage a team consisting of 3 Assessment & Case Managers, 12 Tenancy Support Workers, 1 Senior Clerical Assistant and 1 Clerical Assistant. To ensure maximum flexibility in the future it is proposed that the Tenancy Support Workers should be appointed on a temporary basis, initially for three years. The Tenancy Support Co-ordinators will be line managed by the Supported Accommodation Manager.

	Grade	Costs (incl. 18% employer costs)
Tenancy Support Co-ordinators x 2	APV/P01	£58,769 + £5,876 (E) Mileage
Tenancy Support Workers x 24	AP2/3 + 7.5 irregular hours	£553,512 + £51,199 (E) Mileage
Clerks x 2	GS1/2	£30,250
Assessment & Case Managers x 2	AP4	£48,993 + £4,899 (E) Mileage
Senior Clerical Assistant x 1	GS3	£16,017.80

NB A Senior Clerk was appointed to assist the Assessment & Case Man. Team making a total of 2

- 5.3 As local authorities and other housing organisations have been taking advantage of the Supporting People framework by recruiting similar teams, a number of Support Worker posts have recently been available in the job market locally. In order to offer an attractive employment package to prospective applicants it is proposed that we offer access to appropriate training in the form of sponsorship to gain an HNC in Social Care. The indicative costs are £13,200 if every Housing Support Worker was to require the training. The training costs are also eligible for THB and Supporting People funding.

- 5.4 Additionally, there will be pressure on existing office accommodation and a need to either lease suitable office space or re-designate property being used for another purpose. Since there will be two teams of Housing Support Workers it would seem sensible to locate a team within each of the two housing divisional areas. Some on-costs associated with the service, including administrative costs, may be eligible for THB and SP funding and this will be followed up with colleagues from the Housing Benefit Section and Supporting People Team.
- 5.5 A major programme to prioritise claims to THB will be initiated immediately and funds generated used to improve and expand services.

6. Corporate Considerations

- 6.1 There are no financial implications of the report as the proposals will be financed by Transitional Housing Benefit and, from April 2003, the Council's Supporting People Grant.
- 6.2 The staffing proposals have been discussed with the Head of Personnel, Trades Unions and staff in the Supporting People Team who are located within the Social Work Department.

7. Recommendations

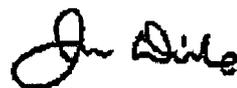
- 7.1 It is recommended that Committee approve the proposals to:
- a) Exercise the new powers and take advantage of the opportunities offered by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and the Supporting People Framework.
 - b) Approve the posts as detailed in 5.2, and
 - c) Remit the report to Policy and Resources (Personnel) Sub Committee

8. Background Information

- 8.1 Available within the Housing and Property Services Department



Thomas McKenzie
Director of Housing and Property Services



Jim Dickie
Director of Social Work

APPENDIX 1.- Resettlement Clients

8.1 Sample Assessment of Weekly Housing Support Needs of Clients currently in Supported Accommodation

Summary of sample* 99 clients referred to the Resettlement Team for housing support services.

General Counselling and support funded through service charges by Housing Benefit	Hours 4 WEEKLY
A: Maintaining security of dwelling (incl ensuring security of tenants home and controlling access)	2
B: Maintaining safety of dwelling (incl arranging servicing and repairs of gas and electrical appliances, instruction on safely using appliances and arranging adaptations to cope with disability).	228
C: Assisting with compliance with tenancy agreement/other agreement (incl dealing with neighbours, assistance with budgeting/money management and claiming benefits, assisting with minor repairs, providing training in life skills including food preparation/storage, organising access to professional help eg medical/dental etc, dealing with Social Work or relatives with an interest in tenants welfare and other resettlement activities)	2996
D: Other Support Services (incl shopping/errand running eg advice on buying appropriate food, clothing etc, chatting with neighbours, other tenants, guests to support integration and prevent isolation and arranging social events eg holidays, outings, leisure activities etc)	616
9. E: Cleaning of rooms and windows (incl cleaning of rooms and exterior windows where tenant is unable to do this for themselves)	83
F: Emergency Alarm Systems assistance re. emergency alarm calls made by the tenant	17
10.	
11. Overall Total	<u>3942</u>

- The * sample is a random sample of homeless clients referred to the resettlement team for assessment for housing support. An assessment of their housing support needs was carried out jointly by the Accommodation Manager, the Outreach Development Officer and 2 Resettlement Workers.
- The individual Assessments are available within the Department.

APPENDIX 2

12. Housing Support Sample Assessment Form (Aggregate)

Medium Level Support (5 – 21 hours)

Housing Officer :	Lynn Moore	Management Area	Ward 17	Overall No. Tenancies	1,000		
No. Tenancies exhibiting problems of:							
Rent Arrears	Anti-social Behaviour	Unkempt Property/Garden		Other (difficulty coping with tenancy)			
5	12	10		13			
No Individuals Receiving or Requiring Housing Support:				32			
No. Individuals Receiving or Requiring Support (by Vulnerable Group):							
Older People	3	Physical Disabilities	1	HIV/AIDS	0	Offenders/ex-Prisoners	0
Learning Disabilities	3	Alcohol Problems	9	12.1 Young People	5	Refugees/Asylum Seekers	0
Mental Health Problems	3	Drug Problems	3	Homeless People	0	12.2 Domestic Violence	0
12.3 Other Vulnerable Adults	5					Total	32
Type Additional Support Required (hours weekly):							
12.4 Help in furnishing accommodation				12.5 Developing budgeting/domestic/life skills			27
12.6 Help in tenancy set-up				Developing social skills/behaviour management			
Help with claiming welfare benefits				12.7 Help finding training/employment			
Safety and security				Help with social/leisure activities			
General counselling/emotional support		18		Advice advocacy and liaison			
Peer support and befriending				Checking/monitoring/supervision			
Help finding other accommodation				Cleaning (windows/communal areas)			
Support in maintaining a tenancy		128		Shopping			
Other (incl specialist support)		140		12.7.1 Total Required			313
Total additional support required by support provider (hours weekly)		Tenancy Support Team			Specialist Provider (incl Social Work)		
		173			140		

Appendix 3 – Anti-Social Behaviour

Working to reduce anti-social behaviour is critical in achieving the corporate aims of promoting Community Safety and Social Inclusion. The Anti-social Task Force have identified a range of housing support needs for both victims and perpetrators of anti-social behaviour. Although attempts have been made to refer such cases to other departments and agencies, effective support has often only been possible where other statutory obligations exist in association with the anti-social behaviour i.e. the most extreme cases of children's behaviour or mental health problems. In many cases, therefore, problems have persisted and further punitive action has been necessary. The task force recognises that enforcement alone will not lead to establishing sustainable, well managed communities

A trawl of Task Force records has been carried out to identify what the demand would be for an in-house housing support service. The results have been broken down to indicate the cause of anti-social behaviour. The figures show that some cases have multiple causes.

Table 1 - Cases of Anti- Social Behaviour requiring Support

Total number of vulnerable anti-social households in receipt of Housing Benefit and eligible for Transitional Housing Benefit)	76	100%
<u>Analysis of causes:</u>		
Family Issues / children's behaviour	45	59%
Alcohol related	25	33%
Drugs misuse related	17	22%
Mental Health related	15	20%
Other Causes e.g. Bereavement, Domestic Abuse	9	12%

The types of support that might be required to address the cases of anti-social behaviour are:

- ◆ Parenting skills e.g. routines/boundary setting.
- ◆ Raise awareness of tenancy/good neighbour agreement issues
- ◆ Working with children – link to early intervention strategies
- ◆ Anger management and acceptable behaviour.
- ◆ Support/Advice re. Violence in the home.
- ◆ Tenant responsibilities and home maintenance.
- ◆ Guidance and emotional support.
- ◆ Appropriate relationships/friendships.
- ◆ Support in dealing with other agencies.
- ◆ Support to look at past difficulties.
- ◆ Assimilation into the community.
- ◆ Co-ordination of other helping agencies.
- ◆ Mediation
- ◆ Harassment/Racial Harassment Support networks

Support offered would primarily aim to help individuals or families sustain their housing on a day to day basis, without breaking the conditions of their tenancy agreement.