

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

To: Policy and Resources (Community Development) Sub-Committee	Subject: SOCIAL STRATEGY - HEALTH AND HOMELESSNESS PROJECT
From: Chief Executive	
Date: 17 November 1998	Ref: CE012/002/003A

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this report is to enable the Sub-Committee to approve expenditure to develop the Social Strategy Health and Homelessness project.

2.0 Background

2.1 The Health and Homelessness pilot project was one of three early action projects developed by the Social Strategy Working Group. One of the objectives of the projects was to provide practical benefits to social strategy target groups.

2.2 The pilot project was initiated in November 1997. The project targeted young homeless people accommodated within Old School Court, a supported accommodation unit in Coatbridge. The principal aims of the pilot project were to promote health and fitness amongst participants from the target group and to evaluate the initiative to see if there was benefit in extending the pilot to other groups of homeless people throughout North Lanarkshire.

2.3 The project evaluation produced very positive findings. The pilot was very successful in reaching young people who were severely disadvantaged. The participants found the programme to be beneficial. In addition to increasing awareness about the range of the health related services and support available levels of participation in leisure activities increased as a result of the programme.

3.0 Proposals

3.1 The Social Strategy Working Group have considered the evaluation report on the pilot project and agreed to support the extension of the project to cover all young homeless people in the 6 supported accommodation units throughout North Lanarkshire. A planning group has been established to develop a programme. The group includes representatives from all relevant departments and Lanarkshire Health Board (Health Promotion Dept.).

3.2 A rolling programme which concentrates on 2 or 3 of the accommodation units at the same time is proposed. Activities will be varied and include group work to help build relationships, increase confidence and self-esteem as well as leisure activities and information sessions. An outward bound weekend will be included in the programme.

3.3 The programme requires a commitment from departments to provide the necessary staff time to plan and implement activities. Housing and Social Work staff are already involved in all the supported accommodation units. Inputs are also required from Community Education staff and Leisure Services. The pilot programme was enhanced by the provision of Passports to Leisure and taster sessions provided free of charge to the homeless young people and it is hoped that this arrangement can be extended. The input from the Health Board will include special health visitor or GP visits to the homeless units as well as information sessions. All of these inputs will be achieved by diverting and co-ordinating existing resources.

3.4 To provide outward bound experiences for the programme participants, support transport costs, creche provision and session staff inputs a financial input of £3,000 is required. It is proposed to fund this from the social strategy resources within the Payments to Other Bodies 1998/99 budget held by the Chief Executive's department.

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 It is recommended that the Sub-Committee:

- a) approve expenditure of £3,000 from the 1998/99 Payments to Agencies and Other Bodies Budget held in the Chief Executive's account to support the Health and Homelessness programme in the current financial year; and
- b) otherwise note the contents of this report.


Chief Executive