

To: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE HOUSING & TECHNICAL SERVICES COMMITTEE		Subject: SUPPORTING PEOPLE: PROGRESS REGARDING IMPLEMENTATION AND FUTURE ACTION
From: JIM DICKIE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK THOMAS McKENZIE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING & PROPERTY SERVICES		
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1 PURPOSE OF REPORT / INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 To advise the Social Work and Housing and Property Services Committees of the progress made so far in implementing 'Supporting People' and outlining the actions required to move onto the next stage of the programme.
- 1.2 The Scottish Executive has set out 38 requirements in the 'Supporting People Task Based Action Plan for Local Authorities' and it is against these requirements that progress has been measured and resource implications considered.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A number of reports have been submitted to Committee since 2000, which have dealt with the principles, purpose and practicalities of implementing the Supporting People Programme and the role of the Transitional Housing Benefit Scheme within this.
- 2.2 There have now been nine consultation papers issued by the Scottish Executive, which the Council has provided detailed comment on.
- 2.3 There has been considerable slippage in the Scottish Executive timetable in issuing guidance to Council's particularly around charging and means testing, needs assessment and cross authority working, none of which has been issued to Council as yet.
- 2.4 Scottish Executive Guidance on Commissioning i.e. encompassing all aspects of the contracts and purchasing framework, Service Reviews, User and Carer Involvement and most significantly on the distribution formula of Supporting People Grant to Council's from April 2003 are timetabled for final guidance to be issued by March 2002.

- 2.5 It is difficult to see how this target can be achieved as none of the papers have been issued for consultation. Verbal reports from the Scottish Executive indicate that priority will be given to issuing consultation papers on Commissioning and the Distribution Formula in February 2002. The latter paper is dependent upon U.K. wide discussions already underway with the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) and Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DTLR).
- 2.6 The Scottish Executive set out the actions required by Local Authorities in Guidance Paper 4 "Supporting People Decision Making Process and Working Arrangements". A wall chart that details thirty-eight Scottish Executive requirements and deadlines for completion accompanied this.
- 2.7 The Scottish Executive has recently carried out a First Stage audit of Local Authorities to check if the first seven requirements in respect of setting up an appropriate organisational structure locally to implement Supporting People had been achieved within the set deadlines.
- 2.8 As a result of this questionnaire the Scottish Executive produced a report and graded Councils by giving a RED AMBER GREEN (RAG) rating. North Lanarkshire Council is one of only four authorities in Scotland, which has been rated green because all seven required actions were met, in terms of setting up the necessary organisational structures.
- 2.9 This Scottish Executive report on implementation also commends the inclusive nature of North Lanarkshire Councils approach in terms of the involvement of a broad range of stakeholders including users, carers and provider representatives on key decision making groups.
- 2.10 Elected members also sit on the Supporting People Core Co-ordination Group. Specifically North Lanarkshire Council is one of only two authorities in Scotland who met the entire Scottish Executive's recommendations regarding involving key stakeholders.
- 2.11 The full Scottish Executive report on implementation is available within the Members' Library together with a summary of progress in achieving the Scottish Executive Requirements within North Lanarkshire. A diagram of the current Supporting People organisational structure in North Lanarkshire Council is also included.
- 2.12 A further Stage 2 Questionnaire has been returned to the Scottish executive detailing and providing supporting documentation regarding the Council's position regarding the next set of requirements related to communication consultation, implementation planning and identifying the framework for wider strategic planning objectives.
- 2.13 Three dedicated Supporting People staff are located within Social Work and four within Housing as approved by previous committees.

3 **CURRENT POSITION**

Transitional Housing Benefit Scheme – Claims Process

- 3.1 Committee are asked to note that three Welfare Rights Officers have worked to assist the Supporting People Team. Their remit has been to facilitate claims to THBS in each of the six Social Work Area Teams.
- 3.2 Committee have previously been briefed regarding the crucial importance of THBS claims in ensuring sufficient resources are transferred to Council in April 2003.

- 3.3 A major programme of re-assessing housing support needs for all eligible service users and assisting with claims to THBS has commenced within the Social Work Department, entailing a significant volume of additional work. Beginning with service users of Supported Living Services and Home Care Services, just under half of those identified, some 700 THBS claims so far, have been submitted. The intention is to roll this out for other vulnerable care groups too.
- 3.4 The deployment of these WRO's has contributed to progress being made in maximising THBS claims for vulnerable people in need of housing support services. The WRO's are providing training, advice and support to staff engaged in re-assessing the needs of social work service users for housing support services and assisting claims to THBS where appropriate.
- 3.5 The programme of maximising THBS claims has been underpinned by an extensive central training programme resulting in THBS claims from social work service users representing additional resources of over two million pounds for support services.
- 3.6 In the period running up to the full introduction of the Supporting People Grant in April 2003 it is hoped to help as many vulnerable service users who qualify make a claim for THBS as possible. These steps will go some way to ensuring that maximum resources are transferred to Council as part of the Supporting People Grant in 2003.

Supporting People – Information Technology

- 3.7 It has been agreed that the Social Work Information System (SWIS) will be the host information technology application for Council to implement and deliver Supporting People. SWIS is being developed to facilitate THBS claims, ensure good management information is available to inform commissioning of services and lay the foundation for the Supporting People Information Technology infrastructure.

Strategic Planning

- 3.8 A local Supporting People event took place on the 9 November 2001 to launch the Strategic Planning agenda. This was attended by over 90 delegates from a wide range of interests and was well received. The event centered around Workshops on each of the vulnerable care groups identified in the Supporting People legislation
- 3.9 From this event a Strategic Planning Group has been set up within the Supporting People structure. This group will represent the interests of all care groups, map links to other relevant strategies and build on the existing planning and strategic framework.

Scottish Executive Requirements – Next Steps

- 3.10 The Council has made considerable progress in implementing Supporting People locally within very short timescales. This is illustrated in the full Scottish Executive report on implementation together with the summary of progress.
- 3.11 Although Council achieves fifteen of the thirty-eight requirements, work is ongoing in a number of areas. Work has also started on the further three requirements to be met by March 2002. Most of the remaining, and arguably the most challenging, requirements are to be met by October 2002 with all twenty to be met by December 2002.
- 3.12 The next period of implementation presents major operational, development and strategic issues, each of which have resource implications for Council to deliver the Supporting People workload.

4 PROPOSALS

Communication and Consultation

- 4.1 Approval is requested to set up an 'Inclusiveness Forum' to enhance the range and opportunity to discuss implementation and service development proposals with key stakeholders such as users, carers and providers.
- 4.2 Such Forums are mandatory in England and Wales and evidence suggests that they have proved invaluable in the process of involving key players, particularly service users in the decision making process.

Purchasing and Commissioning

- 4.3 A starter paper has been produced by Council's Supporting People Commissioning and Purchasing Group outlining the issues for Council and proposing a general approach around a number of key themes. This consultation paper is available within the Members' Library and details a number of steps required by October 2002 to ensure the Supporting People arrangements can be smoothly introduced from April 2002 with minimal disruption to providers and service users. Three important developments are proposed in the initial stages.
- 4.4 The first is the introduction of an interim authorisation list and agreeing criteria to passport some existing providers such as Registered Social Landlords (R.S.L's) onto the list by recognising the checks already carried out by such regulatory bodies such as Communities Scotland (formerly Scottish Homes). A small Council wide Supporting People Contracts working group will be established to explore essential criteria and additional checks for acceptance onto the interim authorisation list. A number of Providers have expressed an interest in supporting this work.
- 4.5 The application of set criteria will ensure that providers have the necessary legal, financial and organisational structures in place to deliver standards of service to the satisfaction of Council and general compatibility with the List of Authorised Providers of Social Care (LAP) and Council Contract Standing Orders. Further criteria will also be considered such as obtaining written confirmation of the provider's intention to register with the Commission for the Regulation of Care in April 2003.
- 4.6 The second proposal is adopting a unified model contract for existing external providers and service level agreement for internal services and completing contracts by October 2002. This timescale is reinforced by the various indications that the value of contracts in place at October 2002 will influence the amount of Supporting People Grants to Council.
- 4.7 The Supporting People Contracts working group will look at the guidance issued by the DTLR in respect of these requirements since the indications are that the Scottish Executive Guidance on Purchasing and Commissioning when issued will closely resemble the DTLR approach i.e. an interim list and a unified model contract.

Purchasing and Commissioning – Staffing Requirements

- 4.8 To progress this agenda in collaboration with the Standards and Monitoring Section of the Social Work Department (where contracts is located) it is proposed that a temporary Senior Supporting People Officer (Purchasing and Commissioning) Grade PO 2 be appointed.

- 4.9 This postholder will initially be appointed for a period of fifteen months to oversee implementation work at a cost of £2,500 start up costs and £30,000 salary. The long-term position will be reviewed and recommendations brought back to committee given that there are a number of ongoing Purchasing and Commissioning requirements after April 2003.
- 4.10 To ensure consistency with the overall Supporting People strategy for implementation this temporary officer will be part of the Supporting People Team, line managed by the Supporting People Co-ordinator.

Strategic Planning Group

- 4.11 A substantial piece of work requires to be undertaken to identify need and carry out a full needs analysis of Housing Support for each of the vulnerable care groups. This will be crucial to optimising resources both through maximising claims to THBS and providing evidence to the Scottish Executive of other needs identified which impact on the amount of resource allocation to Council and will be instrumental to the success of Supporting People.
- 4.12 This work around scoping needs and undertaking assessments should be complementary and integral to all other plans and strategies of Council.

Strategic Planning - Staffing Requirements

- 4.13 This is a major piece of work which will require the recruitment of two temporary Senior Supporting People Officers (Needs Mapping and Assessment), Grade PO2, for a period of 15 months. The appointment of these Officers allows the Department to focus on the support needs of vulnerable user groups including young people, women fleeing domestic violence, people with mental health problems, learning difficulties, older people, physical disabilities, ethnic minorities, substance misuse, criminal justice and asylum seekers.
- 4.14 The cost of these posts will be £60,000 annually with initial start up of £5,000.
- 4.15 Additionally a sessional budget of £100,000 is required to support work around needs mapping and assessment. This will entail engaging staff to carry out different aspects of the needs assessment requirements, commissioning pieces of work as required, carrying out individual assessment(s) and undertaking various methods of sampling need to inform the overall size of the Supporting People pot. Remuneration for these posts will vary according to appointment for the tasks to be undertaken. This will range from Social Work Assistant hourly rate equivalent at Grade AP2/3 to Care Manager Grade AP4/5/QSW.
- 4.16 This budget may also be used to commission needs analysis and co-ordinate planning tasks to ensure the identification and assessment of current and future need so that the resources required are properly quantified and costed and transferred to Council in April 2003.
- 4.17 These officers will be part of the Supporting People Team, line managed by the Supporting People Co-ordinator, although much of their work will be outreach based.
- 4.18 It is further proposed that further administrative posts be created to provide required support for this activity. It is proposed that 1 Administrative Assistant post, Grade AP1 is created, in view of the level of co-ordination required, and 2 Clerical Assistant / Typist posts at GS1/2.

5 FINANCIAL / PERSONNEL / LEGAL / POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The total cost for posts and sessional budget in 2002/3 amounts to £299,331, and these will be funded from the revenue generated from Transitional Housing Benefit. The permanent administrative posts, which amount to £41,990 will be funded in subsequent years from the infrastructure monies provided by the Scottish Executive to administer the Supporting People agenda.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

Committee is asked to:

- (i) Note the progress in implementing Supporting People locally;
- (ii) Approve the steps required to ensure that the Commissioning and Purchasing requirements of supporting people are met in relation to an interim authorisation list, introduction of a model contract.
- (iii) Agree the establishment of an inclusive forum to assist the consultation and communication process
- (iv) Approve the creation of a temporary post of Senior Supporting People Officer (Purchasing and Commissioning), Grade PO2, and 2 Senior Supporting People Officers (Needs Mapping and Assessment) Grade PO2
- (v) Approve creation of a sessional budget to support activity in this area of service
- (vi) Approve creation of administrative posts of Administrative Assistant - Grade AP1, and 2 Clerical Assistants - Grade GS1/2 to support this work



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 27 December 2001



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