

To: SOCIAL WORK (OPERATIONS & SERVICES) SUB COMMITTEE	Subject: COMMISSIONING COMMUNITY CARE SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE: A JOINT REPORT FROM THE ACCOUNTS COMMISSION AND AUDITOR GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK	
Date: 10 AUGUST 2004	Ref: JD/JN/LC

## **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT / INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. This report informs Committee of findings and recommendations contained in a recently published joint report from the Accounts Commission and Auditor General for Scotland.
- 1.2. The report from the Accounts Commission and Auditor General focuses on 'Commissioning Community Care Services for Older People' and contains recommendations aimed at Councils, Health Providers and the Scottish Executive.
- 1.3. This report summarises the findings and clarifies for Committee the relevance of recommendations for North Lanarkshire Council.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1. The Accounts Commission is a statutory independent body which, through the audit process, assists Local Authorities in Scotland to achieve the highest standards of financial stewardship and the economic efficient and effective use of their resources. The Auditor General for Scotland is the Parliaments watchdog for ensuring propriety and value for money in the spending of public funds.
- 2.2. Community care services contribute significantly to the quality of older peoples lives. Annual spending on older people's services is about £558 million in Scotland and accounts for almost two thirds of Council's Community Care Expenditure.
- 2.3. The environment for providing community care services to older people is challenging. The older population is predicted to increase significantly over the next 10 to 20 years, placing pressure on services in the future. In addition, there have been a number of new national policy initiatives that Council's have had to respond to, such as implementing free personal and nursing care for older people and developing rapid response services.
- 2.4. It is recognised that Councils and their Health Partners need to plan together to ensure that older people have access to appropriate flexible community care services to allow them to lead as independent a life as possible. In pursuing this goal, reliable and comprehensive management information is required in order to monitor whether Best Value is being achieved across Scotland.

### **3. FINDINGS OF THE ACCOUNTS COMMISSION AND THE AUDITOR GENERAL**

- 3.1. The report produced by the Accounts Commission and the Auditor General for Scotland focused on Councils as they have the lead role in planning community care services for older people.
- 3.2. Recognising the increasing involvement of health bodies through the Joint Future Agenda and community planning, the Report also comments on how well Councils are working with their Local Health Partners in considering future demand, capacity and models of service delivery.
- 3.3. The study collected data from all 32 Councils about how they commission services. The study also used data collected at a national level by the Scottish Executive and the Accounts Commission. The key findings arising from the study are as follows:
  - (i). Councils and their NHS partners need to plan now for the likely increase in demand for community care services for older people and the expected shortage of carers.
  - (ii). There has been some shift in the balance of care for older people from care home provision to more intensive care packages delivered in their own homes although in 8 Councils that shift has been one towards greater care home provision.
  - (iii). The Scottish Executive needs to ensure it collects information about the implementation of policy. This is essential to enable the impact of its policies to be monitored and evaluated.
  - (iv). Almost every Council in Scotland has a waiting list for care home places and two thirds have a waiting list for home care. Monitoring how long older people wait for services to be provided is patchy and inconsistent.
  - (v). Councils and their partners need to use the information they have on older people's needs when planning services. The balance of contracts needs to support strategic planning to ensure value for money and the sustainability of services.

### **4. IMPLICATIONS FOR NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL**

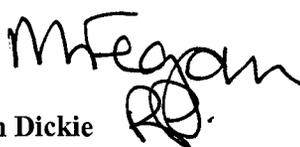
- 4.1 The data contained within the report in respect of how Councils commission services, relates to the 3 year period from 1999/2000 –2001/2002. Exhibit 4 in the document provides a table for each of these three years in respect of the percentage of institutional and non-institutional service provision to older people by each of the 32 Councils.
- 4.2 This information demonstrates that in 1999/2000, 66% of the care services provided by North Lanarkshire Council were institutional in nature decreasing to 54% in 2001/02. Non-institutional service provision increased correspondingly within the Council area from 34% in 1999/2000 to 46% in 2001/02 as a result of the significant input and progress made within North Lanarkshire to shift the balance of care through the provision of more community-based services.
- 4.3 The report goes on to provide information on the national trends in increased flexibility by Councils in providing home care for more than 10 hours per week; in the evenings or overnight; and at weekends. Locally North Lanarkshire Council is able to evidence that it has made considerable progress in this area and is well above the national average with regard to all three of the above categories of home care provision.
- 4.4 The report highlights the predicted population change in Scotland over the next 23 years with the number of older people increasing from 16% in 2002 to 24% in 2027 – the population in North Lanarkshire is projected to follow the same trend.

4.5 It is subsequently recognised in the document that these figures, in conjunction with an anticipated decrease in the proportion of likely carers from 40% to 38% could have a considerable impact on the future success of maintaining the considerable progress that has been made in shifting the balance of care.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Committee is asked to

note the contents of this report



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**29 July 2004**

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