

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE** **16 DECEMBER 2002**
 HOUSING COMMITTEE **16 DECEMBER 2002**

REPORT ON: **FUNDING OF HOUSING SUPPORT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE HOME CARE SERVICE**

REPORT BY: **DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK AND DIRECTOR OF HOUSING**

REPORT NO.: **872-2002**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval for the proposed alteration to the method of funding some housing support services.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Committee approve the proposals in this report

3 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

The Supporting People Policy Framework should improve the health and well-being of people by enhancing the range of accommodation and support services to meet their needs.

4 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

The full implementation of the Supporting People Policy and Framework should improve the choice of accommodation with support available to vulnerable people. It also gives the opportunity to provide flexible housing support irrespective of where the recipient lives.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The funding arrangements under the Transitional Housing Benefit scheme offer the opportunity to maximise the potential Supporting People budget for the financial year 2003/4

6 BACKGROUND

6.1 The Council was advised on 18 June 2001, of the likely implications of the introduction of the Supporting People Framework in 2003.

6.2 Supporting People is being introduced by the Scottish Executive as "a new integrated policy and funding framework for services for people in supported accommodation or in receipt of

Flexible Support”.

- 6.3 It will bring together the following funding streams into one budget, the Supporting People Fund:
- The contribution to support which is currently paid by Transitional Housing Benefit (T.H.B.).
 - Income Support or income based Job Seekers Allowance where this pays for support charges.
 - Special Needs Allowance package.
 - Resettlement Grant from Communities Scotland (formerly Scottish Homes).

- 6.4 Local Authorities will be responsible for the administration of this budget and will have the resources transferred to them, from the sources identified above, to fund support.

The services funded will be based on an assessment of local needs.

Some tenants of Dundee City Council receive services which meet the definitions of housing support, including

- Cleaning of rooms and windows where the tenant is unable to do so themselves.
- Assisting with shopping and errands.
- Prompting and support to undertake daily living tasks

At present, many of these services are provided by the City Council Home Care Service. It is proposed to reclassify these services as housing support services, which can then be funded by Transitional Housing Benefit.

- 6.5 The Committee Report of 18 June 2001 agreed that steps should be taken to ensure opportunities arising from the Transitional Housing Benefit system are optimised. Reclassifying relevant elements of home care as housing support would allow Transitional Housing Benefit to be paid for these services, which would benefit the service user and maximise the funds to be transferred to fund Supporting People from April 2003.
- 6.6 Rent and property related service costs will continue to be paid by Housing Benefit.

7 FUNDING OF HOUSING SUPPORT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE HOME CARE SERVICE

- 7.1 The introduction of the Supporting People regulations mean that from April 2003, anyone receiving any amount of Housing Benefit will receive all assessed Supporting People services free of charge. It is proposed to bring this passporting to free services forward for Dundee City Council tenants who currently receive Housing Benefit. This will be achieved by identifying housing support services currently provided by Home Care, converting those costs to a service charge and claiming Transitional Housing Benefit for these tenants to meet the cost of these services.
- 7.2 Until April 2003, Transitional Housing Benefit can only be paid for housing support services if it is a condition of someone's tenancy that they receive this support; it has to be part of their Tenancy Agreement. Because of this it is only possible to transfer support services to Transitional Housing Benefit before April 2003.

- 7.3 Dundee City Council tenants who are not in receipt of Housing Benefit and who have housing support services provided by the Home Care service will continue to be assessed for their contribution towards the cost of these services through the Social Work Department's non residential care charging policy. This will also apply to service recipients who are not Dundee City Council tenants.

8 IMPACT ON TENANTS

- 8.1 Tenants will not have to pay any more than they do currently for these services.
- 8.2 Tenants in receipt of Housing Benefit who currently contribute to the cost of their support services will now have the cost of eligible services met by in full by Transitional Housing Benefit.
- 8.3 Existing tenants not in receipt of Housing Benefit but who currently receive a free service will continue to do so via the non-residential care charging policy.
- 8.4 All tenants claiming Transitional Housing Benefit, will however, have to sign an addendum to their Tenancy Agreement to agree to accept housing support services in order for Transitional Housing Benefit to be paid before April 2003.
- 8.5 It is proposed that Social Work staff will arrange for the addendum to be signed and an information leaflet will be provided explaining what implications there are for tenants.
- 8.6 New tenants who sign the Scottish Secure Tenancy are agreeing to accept any agreed housing support service which allows Housing Benefit to be paid.

9 CONSULTATION

The Director of Finance has been consulted in the preparation of this report.

10 SIGNATURE

Alan G Baird Director of Social Work
Date 9 December 2002

Elaine Zwirlein Director of Housing
Date 9 December 2002