

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

CARLISLE
CITY COUNCIL



COMMITTEE www.carlisle.gov.uk

Committee Report

Public

Date of Meeting:

2 October 2003

Title: Provision of Home Improvement Agency Services– Carlisle and Eden

Report of: Head of Environmental Protection Services

Report reference: EN 72/03

Summary:

To seek Members comments on proposals to integrate the Home Improvement Agencies of Carlisle and Eden, in line with the Local Strategic Plan and Supporting People proposals.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee make comment on this report in order that these can be integrated into the Executive Committee report, on the continuation or otherwise of the Home Improvement Agency.

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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1 Since the early 1990's, Carlisle residents have had access to the services of

a Home Improvement Agency (HIA), which is a service aimed at assisting those people who are elderly, disabled or on low incomes, to remain and be cared for in their own homes. The current Agency, run by Hanover Housing Association (HA), superseded the previous independent Agency in October 1999, and is funded by Carlisle City Council, Hanover HA, and Supporting People (ODPM).

The Agency provides much needed impartial advice, information and support to vulnerable groups of people, who are either homeowners or private tenants, living in the Carlisle area. The majority of clients are on low incomes, and have no other means of funding repairs or improvements to their properties. The Agency provides an extremely comprehensive service, in guiding customers through the Local Authority grant process, providing advice on Benefit take-up, accesses assistance from other Agencies, and also investigates other sources of funding from the private sector, charitable bodies, and other external funding sources, for housing repairs, maintenance and improvement.

1.2 The major advantage of HIA's is their independence from any statutory body, and their sole and exclusive focus on meeting the needs and aspirations of their clients. However, the ODPM have indicated that they wish to see a more integrated approach by HIA's, which is compatible with Local Strategic Partnerships, and other local Housing, Health and Social care Strategies.

Hence the need for Carlisle and Eden to consider how best to serve the residents of both Districts, in terms of the type of HIA that is considered to best meet the needs of the clients who access this service.

1.3 For the past 4 years, Hanover HA has been running the Carlisle Care and Repair HIA, with the assistance of funding from Carlisle City Council, and the ODPM, however, the available funding has not met in full, the running cost of the Agency. Hanover have been funding the deficit each year, and in the most recent set of annual accounts, this deficit has been in excess of £16,000. Hanover have indicated to the City Council that the current situation is unsustainable, that they cannot continue to finance this deficit in future years, and that an alternative funding regime will require to be put in place to address this problem.

1.4 Should this Council wish to see the continuation of this valuable service, then an alternative set-up will require to be investigated, to ensure that a self-funding Agency, that can still meet the needs of the client base, is put in place.

2. OPTIONS

2.1 The current model is not sustainable, considering the annual deficit that is being highlighted by Hanover in Carlisle, and Anchor in Eden, and as stated previously, they have indicated that they can no longer continue to fund this deficit. The Supporting People (SP) funding regime (who have taken over the funding of HIA's from ODPM) in conjunction with Foundations, the National Co-ordinating body for HIA's, have laid down a number of criteria that need to be met by the HIA's, in terms of Bid Requirements and Conditions. These are as follows, and should :-

- Be submitted by Supporting People Administering Authorities on behalf of SP Commissioning Bodies, who will have agreed it
- Be for expansion and restructuring of HIA services in order to meet local needs more effectively
- Not be for new single district HIA's

- Be for HIA services that as a minimum meet the requirements described in the HIA Service Description for Commissioners drawn up by Foundations
 - Have committed partnership funding in place
 - Not seek a level of ODPM funding that exceeds local partners funding
 - Have a clear strategy for ensuring that the HIA will maintain its independence from any statutory or employing authority, to safeguard its advocacy role for the target client group
- Be compatible with the LSP strategy, and other local housing , health and social care strategies.

2.2 Since April 2003, the HIA within Eden DC has been managed by the Barrow HIA office, again due to the fact that in its most recent form, it was not sustainable. Anchor Staying- put, pulled out of Eden due to the fact that the Agency was not self-financing, and was not viable as a stand alone service, and Anchor HA were not prepared to continue to fund the recurring deficit.

2.3 It was therefore agreed at the SP HIA Strategy and Forum Group that, in order for the SP funding to continue to be allocated to the HIA's, we would require to meet the requirements of the Bid and Conditions criteria, as laid down by Foundations. This meant that at a minimum, the HIA's would require to be structured in such a way as to meet the terms of the LSP,(ie. Carlisle/Eden model) or, alternatively, be framed in a county-wide model, with a centralised management/administration structure.

It was decided that, due to the diversity of each individual Local Authority, the LSP model would be significantly more cost effective, would better reflect the needs of the customers in the local areas, and retain a local presence, that customers would relate to.

2.4 Discussions have taken place between Council officers from Carlisle and Eden, and both Hanover HA and Anchor HA, to ascertain if either or both would be interested in providing the Managing Agent facility for the running of the HIA for the next 3 years. Both have indicated that they would, in principle be willing to consider this role. However, both have also indicated that they see a different staffing regime than that which is in place at present, and have given rough costings on which Carlisle and Eden would need to base their decision. Due to the fact that this is a highly specialised area of work, with few Organisations being able to quote for this work, a recent decision was taken by the Core Strategy Development Group (CSDG) that the HIA services should be exempt from the tendering/bidding process. A partnering approach would be adopted, with Officers of both Councils discussing with both prospective Managing Agents, how an integrated HIA could be set up, how it would be staffed and how funding could be put in place to provide an effective service in each District. This would then be put to the relevant Committees of each Council for consideration. It was considered that to engage in a tendering process would be costly, cause distrust and instability within and between organisations, and it was also felt that local taxpayers would not be happy to see their own Council's extra funding disappear, if a more competitive approach led to the loss of a locally managed, staffed and branded HIA. It was therefore recommended that a partnership approach be applied to service development, with the opportunity to work together with interested parties and towards common service standards and performance indicators.

2.5 As previously stated, discussions have taken place with two interested

parties i.e. Hanover and Anchor, who have indicated their willingness to enter into a partnership with Carlisle and Eden, to take forward the HIA's in our areas. However, both have differing views on how the Agencies would be structured and staffed. Both have provided indicative costs for their own proposals, but it is difficult to quantify the benefits of each scheme in relation to the other, as it is not a case of comparing like with like. In order to maximise the matched funding from SP, it has been suggested that a member of staff be seconded from the City Council to fill a role within the HIA, the funding for this would then qualify as imputed costs, and would be eligible for SP match funding.

2.6 A breakdown of the costs from each provider is contained in Appendix 1 attached to this report, and Members comments are invited on each individual proposal. As can be seen from the costings provided by both Hanover and Anchor, they have come up with a scheme which they consider to be workable, in relation to their experience of running an HIA, and also based on the number of clients they would require to deal with. The logistics of the proposal require to be borne in mind considering the geographical location of Carlisle and Eden, and the extent of the area to be serviced.

2.7 The options available to the City Council are limited, due to the fact that SP funding will no longer be available for single authority HIA's, The Council would therefore require, as a minimum, to link up with Eden DC, through the LSP, to qualify for funding. The other option would be to disband the HIA and lose this valuable service completely, taking all of the Grant work back in-house, with this work being undertaken by the existing Grants Officers. The service provided to the customer would be much reduced, in that all of the additional services that are currently provided by the HIA would disappear.

2.8 It is therefore proposed that Agencies continue to be maintained in Carlisle and Eden, to provide the local connection, but that the staffing arrangements be reconsidered in light of the available funding, and the service provision that it is anticipated that will be required to address clients needs. It is considered that one Technical Officer/Supervisor, and one part-time Case-worker be allocated to each District, with a Full-time Administrative Officer being shared between the two Districts. In light of this proposal, the Anchor model most closely meets the requirements of the two Districts, and it is considered logical to continue dialogue with Anchor to ascertain if a viable HIA can be set up.

1. CONCLUSIONS

There are three main options available for consideration in this instance, the status quo not being one of them.

1. Take the HIA work in-house, to be dealt with by the Councils Grants Officers, leaving vulnerable clients to make their own arrangements to process their Grant, Benefit and other funding applications.
2. Allow the tendering process to be invoked, if agreement cannot be reached by negotiation with the existing Managing Agents, with the possible

implication that have been discussed previously.

3. Negotiate with the existing Managing Agents to formulate the most efficient, cost effective way of re-structuring the HIA in both Carlisle and Eden

4. CONSULTATION

Consultation to date.

Consultation has taken place with all Cumbrian Local Authorities; Social Services; PCT's; Supporting People: Managing Agents.

Consultation proposed.

Further consultation will take place with the preferred partner, when this is known.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is recommended that Members consider the various options available and advise Officers of their preference, in order that further discussions can take place, ensuring that if it is recommended that the Agency continue, Officers can take the process forward. It is recommended that option 3 be pursued, in order to maintain a degree of stability and continuity of service provision.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

1. To ensure that the vulnerable member of the community living in Carlisle and Eden, have a satisfactory level of support in accessing essential services, to enable them to remain and be cared for in their own homes.

7. IMPLICATIONS

- Staffing/Resources – The provision of a seconded member of staff, to ensure maximum Supporting People funding.
- Financial – There are no cash implications, but see above.
- Legal – None
- Corporate – None
- Risk Management – The risks to the City Council are low, in that should the HIA cease to exist, there would be no financial implications for the Authority. Members would be allocating funding and staff, but the Managing Agent would effectively, be providing the service.

- Equality Issues – This service would be assisting vulnerable group of people in the Carlisle District
- Environmental – The provision of financial assistance for the upgrading of housing in the area would have a positive effect on immediate area.
- Crime and Disorder – Grant assistance is available for Security measures, working in partnership with Cumbria Constabulary.

**ANCHOR HOUSING ASSOCIATION COSTINGS FOR CARLISLE
AND EDEN HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCIES**
STAYING PUT PROJECT

APPENDIX 1

	REGION:- Eden	REGION:- Carlisle
BUDGET DESCRIPTION	£	£
CLIENT FEES: GRANT AIDED	-30,000	-25,000
CLIENT FEES: PRIVATE	0	0
GRANTS: LOCAL AUTHORITIES	(20,000)	(12,600)
GRANTS: HEALTH AUTHORITIES	0	0
GRANTS: CENTRAL GOVERNMENT	-20,000	-37,000
GRANTS: Systems & Capacity		0
STAT BODY GRANTS: KIND	0	-25,000
OTHER RECEIPTS		0
CHARITABLE FUNDING		
TOTAL INCOME	-70,000	-99,600
OFFICE SALARIES	40,651	35,240
PERSONNEL EXPENSES	6,000	5,000
RECRUITMENT COSTS	100	1,150
MOBILE OFFICE COSTS	0	0
AGENCY STAFF	0	0
OFFICE RENT & RATES	11,000	3,000
TELEPHONES	1,500	750
CLEANING	300	0
HEAT, LIGHT & POWER	1,200	0
STATIONERY	300	1,000
OFFICE RELOCATION COSTS	0	0
TRAINING	700	1,000
INSURANCES	985	1,032
LEGAL & PROFESSIONAL FEES	100	100
AFFILIATION & MEMBERSHIP	0	0
PC & PRINTER RUNNING COSTS	700	500
PUBLICITY & P R	0	300
EXTERNAL AUDIT FEES	200	200
POSTAGES	700	400
PHOTOCOPYING	600	300
BOOKS & PUBLICATIONS	100	100
MEETINGS / CONFERENCES	500	500
HEALTH & SAFETY	100	100
OFFICE EXPENSES (Misc)	500	350
IMPUTED COSTS	0	25,000
TOTAL DIRECT COSTS	66,236	76,022
COMPUTER HARDWARE		
MATERIALS		
SETTING UP / REPLACE EQUIP - CASH		
SETTING UP / REPLACE EQUIP - KIND		
DEPRECIATION		
OVERHEAD CONTRIBUTION	6,292	7,222
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	72,529	83,244
(SURPLUS) / DEFICIT	2,529	(16,356)

HANOVER HOUSING ASSOCIATION - CARE AND REPAIR **APPEND**
PROPOSED COSTINGS FOR A JOINT CARLISLE AND EDEN HOME IMPROVEMENT AC

Carlisle/Eden

Running Costs	£	
Rent	5,000.00	
Buildings insurance	600.00	
Printing/stationery/postage	3,500.00	
Equipment maintenance	800.00	
Marketing/publicity	1,000.00	
Travel and subsistence	10,000.00	
Meetings	200.00	
Training	1,000.00	
Recruitment	1,500.00	
Telephones (including mobile)	3,000.00	
Furniture /equipment purchase	2,500.00	Purchase of laptop computer/printer included
Heating/lighting/cleaning	1,000.00	for possible homeworker
Miscellaneous	1,000.00	
Total Running Costs	£31,100.00	
Staffing		
Manager/Technical Officer F/T	25,000.00	
Caseworker F/T	18,000.00	
Caseworker 0.5	8,500.00	
Technical Officer F/T	22,000.00	
Technical Officer 0.2 (L.A imputed)	5,000.00	
Administrator F/T	13,000.00	
Total Salaries	£91,500.00	
National Insurance + Superannuation	(imputed) 1100.00	
National Insurance + Superannuation	19,030.00	
Total Staffing Costs	£111,630.00	
HHA Management and Support Costs	17,128.00	
Total Costs	£159,858.00	
Income		
Grants:		
Supporting People	57,300.00	
Carlisle City Council	12500.00	
Eden District Council	17500.00	
Fees	56,458.00	
HHA Contribution	10,000.00	
Carlisle City Council Imputed costs	6100.00	
Total Income	£159,858.00	

IX 2
GENCY