

REPORT TO EXECUTIVE			
PORTFOLIO AREA: HEALTH & WELL-BEING			
Date of Meeting:	17th December 2001		
Public			
Key Decision:	Yes	Recorded in Forward Plan:	Yes
Inside Policy Framework			

Title: **CARLISLE FLOATING SUPPORT SCHEME**

Report of: **Director of Housing**

Report reference: **H118/2001**

Summary:

This report sets out proposals and options for a Floating Support Scheme in Carlisle.

Recommendations:

In consideration of the benefits provided through the provision of the 'floating' support initiative, Members of the Executive are recommended to approve Option C as set out in this paper.

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CARLISLE FLOATING SUPPORT SCHEME

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OPTIONS

1. For some time now, a Floating Support Scheme has been operating in the Carlisle district primarily funded through North Cumbria Health Authority to support and sustain independence for vulnerable people.

This report identifies that the above funding ceased on 30th November 2001 and recommends an alternative and more appropriate source of funding to support some vulnerable people living in Council accommodation.

2. The concept of a floating support scheme has evolved over recent years as one of the most successful support services provided to prevent further/ongoing crisis situation for vulnerable individuals.

A summary of floating support is set out for Members' information in Appendix 1.

3. Carlisle Scheme

As indicated in previous reports H09/01 and H99/01 the 'core' service is provided by an external source to ensure impartiality of provision. The continuation of the service will depend on attracting the necessary funding to meet the staffing requirement to provide such a service.

Three options are set out for consideration.

Option A

The decision of no action is presented as an option, acknowledging that the scheme would in effect be terminated and tenants of the authority would not have access to any support services provision.

Option B

Within the proposed budget provision for 'topping up' finance for hostel provision a proportion of the G.F. budget c£15,000 will be available in 2002/03 as a consequence of the commissioned provider (Impact H A) phasing in support services charges through the Housing Benefit Transitional Scheme (HBTS).

This option would recommend that the £15,000 spare capacity in the above G.F. budget is used to pump prime floating support scheme, which would be supplemented by the weekly charge of £7.00 as agreed in H99/01 Review of Charges.

One drawback from this approach is that as this is a General Fund contribution it could not be considered in a similar way as a HRA 'pooled' initiative. For HRA schemes the Supporting People Grant available from April 2003 would pick up any 'rent pooled' funding. This does NOT apply for G.F. contributions.

Option C

In recognition of the funding guidance set out in Option B above, for the scheme to continue beyond April 2003 with Supporting People Grant, the actual costs associated with the provision of the support service to vulnerable people would need to fund at source ie. directly as a support service charge under the H.B.T.S.

The consequences of this will require the weekly charges (48 week basis) to be made directly to service users. As indicated in a previous report this approach will assist in the Council's move to a cost effective service specific charging policy, as required by DTLR.

Based on current estimates provided, the weekly contribution will be subject to the needs of the individual and subsequential support required ranging from a basic cost of £18.28 to £45.70 (1 hr to 2½ hrs/week). The average coverage is 1.6 hours per week per claimant which is equivalent to £29.25 to be met either by the Service user or by direct subsidy.

In view of the tasks involved, as set out in the appendices, officers are of the opinion that they will be eligible for Housing Benefit under the Transitional Scheme and subsequently be provided in the apportionment of the allocation of resources in the Supporting People Grant for Carlisle for 2003 and beyond.

2. CONSULTATION

1. Consultation has taken place with a range of service providers responsible for the delivery of support services to vulnerable people.

3. STAFFING/RESOURCES COMMENTS

Not Applicable

4. CITY TREASURER'S COMMENTS

The City Treasurer's comments have been incorporated into the body of the report.

5. LEGAL COMMENTS

Not Applicable

6. CORPORATE COMMENTS

Not Applicable

7. RISK MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT

Not Applicable

8. EQUALITY ISSUES

1. Maintaining equality of access to services has been considered in the compilation of this report and the appraisal of options.

1. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

2. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

Not Applicable

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

In consideration of the benefits provided through the provision of the 'floating' support initiative, Members of the Executive are recommended to approve Option C as set out in this paper.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposals set out in this report are part of a process to establish a network of support service provision for those vulnerable people residing in council accommodation to support and sustain independence.

T. Bramley

Director of Housing

Appendix 1

Floating Support Services

1. Introduction

Floating support is: *‘a flexible peripatetic service providing or facilitating a range of low to medium level support to people living in their own homes or tenancies, with the aim of maintaining independence. The service will act as a ‘broker’, assessing an individual’s needs and enabling access to locally available services as appropriate, both initially and in the longer term. The service is provided for as long as it is needed, but with a clear exit strategy. When it is no longer required, the support ‘floats off’ to another person who needs it. If a person needs again, it can return’.*

SITRA, the training and advisory service, makes the distinction between floating support and supported housing.

‘Support is provided to individuals in their own, permanent self-contained accommodation rather than in a unit which is designated as ‘supported housing’...

2. The Service Model in Carlisle

The service model being promoted is peripatetic, providing time-limited support:

- Helping someone maintain their existing tenure
- Helping someone gain and keep accommodation
- Helping with debt management, benefits and budgeting skills
- Dealing with neighbour disputes or harassment
- Offering education and life skills training
- Offering practical support – furniture, removals, household management, cleaning
- Provide intensive housing management.

Floating support can be delivered in a number of ways and can include advice or assistance with financial and practical matters. It may also involve the teaching of life skills or other daily living skills. It can draw on models of casework intervention, including, for example, task-centred casework.

In summary, the service aims and principles are:

- To prevent homelessness through low-level support across tenures
- To promote independence with a full-time support worker for 25 residents
- Support plans based on individual assessment: goals, responsibilities of client and support worker, other agencies involved, timescales
- Flexible support, include task centred casework and an out-of-hours service
- To support and brokerage to increase self-sufficiency
- Setting a time limit and an exit strategy.

1. A needs-led service

Under the *Supporting People* programme and guidance in the White Paper *Modernising Social Services*, key government objectives are to reduce exclusion and promote independence through targeting resources at people who are most in need. Floating support is especially well-placed in the current climate to deliver flexibly and inclusively.

It is suggested that support should be available regardless of housing tenure and not be limited to specific 'client groups', such as people with a mental illness. In effect, it should be a needs-led service, which will allow it to continue to draw broad support. Eligibility criteria being:

- Homeless or at risk of homelessness through poverty, social exclusion, domestic violence, substance or alcohol abuse, relationship breakdown, etc
- Aged 16-plus
- Not receiving a local authority care package
- Living in the area or owed a housing duty.

Referrals will come from a variety of sources, managed via a steering group to oversee and monitor its performance and to ensure priority for those most at risk of first-time or continued homelessness.

L J Brewis

Head of Housing Provision

Carlisle City Council

December 2001