
Report to Council

Date of Meeting: 29 September 2011

Subject: Proposals for Care and Repair Service

Report by: Head of Community & Regulatory Services

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to update Council on the review and reconfiguration of the Care and Repair service in Clackmannanshire and provide details of the proposed tendering arrangements.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1. That Council:
- (1) agrees the proposals for the reconfiguration of the Care and Repair service contained in the report; and
 - (2) notes that officers will proceed to advertise the contract opportunity in accordance with this Report, Contract Standing Orders and other legal requirements incumbent on the Council.

3.0 Background

- 3.1. A full review of the Clackmannanshire Care and Repair Service, managed by Ochil View Housing Association and funded by the Council, was carried out in 2009 by an independent consultant. This was previously reported to Council on 28 January 2010 as part of the Private Housing Assistance Scheme report. Council agreed at that meeting to tender the future Care and Repair Service and instructed officers to prepare appropriate tender documentation.
- 3.2. Officers had progressed the tender process for a contract to be in place for 1 April 2011. Council agreed, however, at its special meeting on 10 February 2011 to maintain the current contractual arrangements with Ochil View Housing Association for the delivery of the Care and Repair service for a further 12 months, to enable a full review of the service to be undertaken by Clackmannanshire Council. As a result, Care and Repair have continued to operate on the basis of the level of funding they received in 2010/11 i.e. £180,000, funded from the Private Sector Housing Grant budget.

- 3.3. At that meeting, officers were instructed to submit a report to Council for the 2012/13 budget setting process, outlining proposals for the reconfiguration of the service with revised tendering arrangements. This report is being submitted now so that tender procedures can be followed and prices obtained to allow the newly procured service to operate from 1 April 2012.

3.4. Proposals for New Service

It is essential that any service meets the needs of the local community, at a cost that provides value for money. The Review carried out in 2009 highlighted that there is a substantial variation in costs for Care and Repair services across the country. Considering the Scottish average rate of £6.06 per head of older/disabled population for Care and Repair projects would suggest an annual cost of just over £81,000 for Clackmannanshire. With this in mind, proposals were put forward as part of the budget discussions last year to cap the funding available for the project to £100,000 per annum. This will be made available from the annual Private Sector Housing Grant budget.

- 3.5. At such a level, however, there could be concerns over the viability of a stand alone service if it continues to operate on the current model. It is likely that the charging policy will need to be amended to include a contribution for labour costs, which will allow the project to generate income to offset costs. Service users already pay for the cost of materials used but to date there has been no charge for labour. A number of Care and Repair projects across the country already make a charge to contribute to labour costs. As this is generally a low income client group, the principle remains that any charges to contribute to labour costs would be kept as low as possible and will be identified as part of the tendering process. This will require providers to demonstrate an element of means testing.
- 3.6. A draft contract specification to deliver a service which will meet the needs of the local community, at a cost which provides value for money, has been prepared and consultation carried out on the key elements of the proposed service. This has included both members of the public and people who have recently used the Care and Repair Service, and a workshop session with a range of professional officers working with this client group.
- 3.7. We received a healthy response from service users, with 317 surveys returned. The results confirmed the popularity of the Service and the importance this client group place on receiving assistance with repair/maintenance and adaptation works. There was support for all of the proposed key elements of the Service and particularly the Small Repairs Service. The overwhelming majority (92%) indicated they would be willing to pay for Care and Repair services.
- 3.8. Provision has been made within the Private Sector Housing Grant budget for an anticipated £100,000 per annum for the Project for 3 financial years between 2012/13 and 2014/15. It is proposed that the contract be let for a period of 3 years with an option, based on satisfactory performance, to extend for a further year.

3.9. Key Elements of the Service

The Service will prioritise clients who are over 60, or have a disability or long term illness, allowing them to remain living independently within the community. It will be 'person centred' and tailored to the needs of the client. There are 4 key elements of the proposed Service:-

Element 1 Information and Advice

Provide free advice and referrals to appropriate agencies in relation to issues of property repair and maintenance, home safety and security, money and benefits advice and home energy. This could be through telephone advice, home visits, signpost, referrals or information leaflets.

Element 2 Assist with Property Repair and Maintenance Work

Provide help with property maintenance for homeowners and private tenants to help them to remain living in their own homes and help clients in getting work done.

Help with finding a reliable contractor is identified by service users as an important area for assistance and was a role previously carried out by Care and Repair. To provide an improved service, it should be noted that officers from Housing and Trading Standards have been working jointly with Stirling Council to set up a Trading Standards led 'Trusted Trader' scheme, which is planned to be available to all residents by 1 April 2012. This service is no longer part of the Care and Repair specification.

Element 3 Small Repairs Service

Provide a Small Repairs Service for essential repairs that assist older and/or disabled homeowners stay in their own homes for as long as possible. A full list of necessary repairs to be offered will be agreed with an Advisory Committee and the Council. The Service will agree a charging policy for any works undertaken by the Small Repairs Services with the Council.

The Small Repairs Service should be available to Council/ Housing Association and private tenants to carry out minor repair items which are not the landlord's responsibility.

Element 4 Disabled Adaptations

Provide assistance to clients who, having gone through a Social Services assessment, require an essential adaptation to their home. The Care and Repair Service should provide a Minor Adaptations service to the Council if called upon to do so.

For major adaptations, such as level access showers, this will involve assisting clients to get work done by liaising with Council officers, architects and contractors. In some cases it may require identifying funding to enable works to progress.

4.0 Sustainability Implications

- 4.1. The Care and Repair Service has a positive impact on the local environment, assisting vulnerable people to maintain their homes to a good standard. As well as improving a building aesthetically, this will help to improve the energy efficiency of private sector housing and reduce fuel poverty.

5.0 Resource Implications

5.1. Financial Details

- 5.2. The full financial implications of the recommendations are set out in the report. This includes a reference to full life cycle costs where appropriate. Yes ☒
- 5.3. Finance have been consulted and have agreed the financial implications as set out in the report. Yes ☒
- 5.4. *Staffing* There are no staffing implications for the Council.

6.0 Exempt Reports

- 6.1. Is this report exempt? Yes ☐ (please detail the reasons for exemption below) No ☒

7.0 Declarations

The recommendations contained within this report support or implement our Corporate Priorities and Council Policies.

- (1) **Our Priorities 2008 - 2011** (Please double click on the check box ☒)

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| The area has a positive image and attracts people and businesses | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Our communities are more cohesive and inclusive | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| People are better skilled, trained and ready for learning and employment | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Our communities are safer | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Vulnerable people and families are supported | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Substance misuse and its effects are reduced | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Health is improving and health inequalities are reducing | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| The environment is protected and enhanced for all | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| The Council is effective, efficient and recognised for excellence | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

- (2) **Council Policies** (Please detail)

The Care and Repair Service is an important element of the Council's Private Housing Assistance Scheme (Housing (Scotland) Act 2006), approved on 28 January 2010.

8.0 Equalities Impact

- 8.1 Have you undertaken the required equalities impact assessment to ensure that no groups are adversely affected by the recommendations?
Yes ☒ No ☐

9.0 Legality

- 9.1 It has been confirmed that in adopting the recommendations contained in this report, the Council is acting within its legal powers. Yes ☒

10.0 Appendices

- 10.1 None

11.0 Background Papers

- 11.1 Have you used other documents to compile your report? (All documents must be kept available by the author for public inspection for four years from the date of meeting at which the report is considered)
Yes ☒ (please list the documents below) No ☐

Review of Clackmannanshire Care and Repair, ODS Consulting, 2009

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