AGENDA ITEM NO 12
REPORT NO 494/11

ANGUS COUNCIL

SOCIAL WORK AND HEALTH COMMITTEE – 11 AUGUST 2011
CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE - 1 SEPTEMBER 2011

INTERIM FUNDING FOR STARTER PACKS ANGUS
REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK AND HEALTH

ABSTRACT

This report advises members of the funding situation of Starter Packs Angus and seeks approval for the provision of up to £25,000 to allow operations to continue for 2011/12.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Social Work and Health Committee:-

i) notes the current situation with Starter Packs Angus and the benefits of this type of work in preventing more costly interventions from public bodies;

ii) instructs the Director of Social Work and Health to report to council on the future funding arrangements for Starter Packs Angus from 2012/13 onwards.

It is recommended that the Corporate Services Committee:-

i) approves funding of up to £25,000 for Starter Packs Angus for 2011/12 to allow operations to continue, noting that this is a one-off arrangement pending a review of future funding arrangements for Starter Packs Angus by the Director of Social Work and Health.

2 INTRODUCTION

Starter Packs Angus (SPA) is a registered Scottish charity, based in Arbroath but with a remit to help people across the whole of Angus. First initiated as a national charity by Scottish Churches Housing Action in 1997, Starter Packs Angus opened its doors in April 2003 with support from Angus Council, local agencies and other organisations including a number of churches. SPA provides vulnerable people in crisis with a starter pack of the essential basic household and personal care items required to establish and maintain a safe and secure place in which to live. The packs are tailored to meet the individual requirements of those who use the service. Many of the items are donated by individuals and groups, including church congregations who, recognising the value of its work, are happy to contribute to the welfare and well-being of others in times of need.

A unique aspect of SPA is that it is able to support anyone who finds himself or herself in need of the service. Young and old, men and women, single people and families are welcome to apply for a pack without feeling the need to categorise themselves with a particular label.
An important element of SPA is the growing number of volunteers, many of whom have used the service in the past, who put together the packs on a daily basis and undertake numerous other tasks to support the smooth running of the project.

SPA is the sole partner in Angus with Scottish and Southern Energy in their Community Interest Scheme, responsible for the distribution of white goods/small electrical appliance bundles. The project is due to re-start in this month and SPA is being invited to re-apply to be their distributing agency.

In November 2010, Angus Council Neighbourhood Services published a tender for the supply of recycled furniture and other essential goods required by homeless and vulnerable people in Angus to comply with Angus Council Financial Regulations and national procurement rules. In order to ensure continuity of appropriate provision and with a view to maximising the possibility of winning the tender, a number of local organisations, including Starter Packs Angus, formed a consortium to put forward a bid.

The tendering process was designed to comply with the current homelessness legislation and to better enable expenditure to be controlled and targeted at the intended client group which the Council’s Housing Service is responsible for. A register of suppliers has been created which provides a greater degree of choice for customers and can be accessed as and when the need for a Community Care Grant has been positively assessed. A number of the suppliers on the list have extended their service to include a small selection, now restricted to a certain number, of household items seen to be essential to people accessing their services in the Forfar and Montrose localities.

The scheme is based on vouchers. (Committee report 819/10 refers). Whilst SPA is part of a consortium providing starter packs for those who are homeless they also support a significant number of other people who are vulnerable in need for a variety of reasons.

The people who benefit from support from SPA are:-

- children living in families who experience hardship leading to an unstable situation with regard to accommodation and are at risk of isolation, loneliness and possible neglect;
- lone parents and families faced with a crisis with accommodation because of a range of factors including physical or mental ill health, substance misuse, domestic violence and/or a breakdown in a formerly well-established relationship;
- people who have been disadvantaged as a result of their, or another’s, problems with alcohol and or drugs and who are now on the road to recovery;
- grandparents and other kin willing to offer a home to younger members of the family in times of crisis;
- young men and women in families, generally in the 16 to 18 age group, who are not welcome to remain at home;
- older people: first-time homelessness or risk of homelessness often occurs in the over 50’s. Costly both in financial and human terms, many triggers for this tend to increase in older age. Factors include bereavement, relationship breakdown, poverty or ill health coming at a time when people may be less capable of coping with them and less likely to seek advice.

SPA provides around 350 starter packs per annum and since its inception has met the needs of more than 3,500 of the most disadvantaged and isolated people in Angus. Around half of those supported are people who are in the above categories and not eligible for the voucher scheme delivered through the aforementioned tender. A significant number are referred from social work and health.
3 PROPOSAL

The changes which have arisen as part of the funding arrangements by Angus Council and the ending of several years charitable funding have contributed to the difficult financial situation being experienced by SPA.

SPA is able to raise funds through a range of activities and also receives annual funding of £5,000 from NHS Tayside. This year NHS Tayside has been able to contribute a further £5,000 to assist with SPA’s financial shortfall.

The annual operating costs are around £50,000 and a contribution of up to £25,000 from Angus Council would enable SPA to continue to provide a much needed service to people in Angus who are vulnerable for a number of reasons. In providing this funding for 2011/12 the Council would be ensuring that a much needed service will continue to be delivered. This is important preventative spending. This early intervention will hopefully divert some people from the need for more intensive support from the Council, in particular social work services in the future. These would be more costly services and a contribution of up to £25,000 is essentially an effective use of resources.

SPA has submitted an application for Lottery funding for 2012 onwards. Once the outcome of this application is known a report will be brought back to elected members to advise them of the financial situation for SPA from 2012 onwards. It is important that a set up for SPA which is financially sustainable is found over the next few months.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial year 2011/12 will be a year of adjustment for SPA based on the new operating model under the voucher scheme and ongoing operations will also be influenced by the outcome of the Scottish and Southern Energy Community Interest Scheme and Lottery Funding applications. SPA will also require to review their costs in light of these developments so that a financially sustainable set up can be found for the future.

Based on current projections and taking into account the additional £5,000 of funding from NHS Tayside it is projected that SPA will have a funding shortfall of up to £25,000 in order to continue operations to the end of the financial year. Officers will be working with SPA to examine options for reducing costs and securing income from other sources but in the absence of certainty on these in the meantime it is necessary for the Council to offer financial support of up to £25,000 to enable SPA to continue to operate. The Council’s support will be provided in tranches during the remainder of the year subject to review of SPA’s financial situation and continued delivery of services to people in need. The full £25,000 funding would only be provided to SPA if required.

No specific budget provision for this one-off support package has been made but the Provision for Additional Burdens in the Other Services revenue budget could accommodate the expenditure of up to £25,000 in 2011/12.

5 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

There are no Human Rights implications arising as a result of the recommendations contained in this report.

6 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

The issues dealt with in this report have been the subject of consideration from an equalities perspective. An [equalities impact assessment](#) is not required.
7 SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT

This report contributes to the following local outcome(s) contained within the Single Outcome Agreement for Angus.

- Communities that are prosperous and fair.
  - Angus is a good place to live in, work in and visit.

- Communities that are caring and healthy.
  - We have improved the health and wellbeing of our people and inequalities are reduced.
  - Individuals are supported in their own communities with good quality services.

- Communities that are sustainable.
  - Our carbon footprint is reduced.

8 CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, the Director of Corporate Services, the Head of Finance, the Head of Law and Administration and the Director of Neighbourhood Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

R PEAT
DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK AND HEALTH

NOTE: No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.

SW&H/RP