

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date 23rd March 2011

REPORT TITLE: Worcestershire Care & Repair Update

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Brandon Clayton, Portfolio Holder for Housing, Local Environment and Health
Relevant Head of Service	Angie Heighway Head of Community Services

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The report gives an update on the Worcestershire Care & Repair Home Improvement Agency (HIA) provided through Festival Housing Group. The agency processes Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) and Home Repairs Assistance (HRA) applications on behalf of the Council.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that the report be noted.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Redditch Borough Council had been operating the North Worcestershire HIA covering Redditch, Bromsgrove and Wyre Forest since the beginning of 2005. Festival Housing Group had been operating the South Worcestershire HIA covering Wychavon and Worcester since January 2006. The expansion of this service into Malvern Hills to cover the whole of the South Worcestershire geographical area had not been achieved.
- 3.2 Supporting People had been the main driver of this initiative and a report was taken to the Chief Executives Panel outlining the key reasons for uniting the two agencies and reviewing their current roles with a view to delivering a more comprehensive and consistent service across the whole county.
- 3.3 The Council's involvement in the Worcestershire Care & Repair Agency was approved Full Council on the 29th March 2010 and the Agency started on the 1st June 2010. The contract is for a period of 3 years with an open to extend for a further 2 years.

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- 3.4 The Council's pays Festival Housing Group £46,000 per year revenue costs for the service. The Worcestershire Care & Repair agency charges the Council 10% fees of the works total a 2% saving on the North Worcestershire Care & Repair Agency fee.

4 CURRENT SITUATION

- 4.1 The HIA is monitored through a quarterly Performance and Financial Management Board which is attended by the Housing Policy Manager and Cllr Brandon Clayton on behalf of Redditch Borough Council to ensure the quality of the service is maintained
- 4.2 The HIA will be moving out of the Town Hall from the 4th April 2011 and moving to Festival's offices in Droitwich with visiting staff mobile working to reduce the costs of the service.
- 4.3 The Council's DFG budget for 2010/11 is £552,000 and for HRA £150,000. It is expected that there will be a small under spend on these budgets following a reduction in referrals from the OT service which has now picked back up and the introduction of the KickStart Scheme.
- 4.4 The Council has approved 116 DFG applications to date with 74 having been completed. During 2009/10 85 DFG applications were approved and completed.
- 4.5 The average time for a DFG case from HIA receipt of OT referral to works complete is 21.2 weeks for category 1, 2 and 3 applications. The average waiting time for an OT visit is 6-10 weeks in Redditch.
- 4.6 During the period 1st April 2011 to 31st December 2011 the number of service users remaining in their own home was 77, with 21 discharged from hospital as a result of the HIA intervention, 47 prevented from being admitted to hospital as a result of HIA intervention and 9 prevented from having to move into a care home as a result of HIA intervention.
- 4.7 The % of customers satisfied with the HIA staff and contractors work is 100%
- 4.8 The HIA also have a number of other services they provide to service users. A Hospital Discharge pilot has been commenced with Housing

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Discharge Coordinators working with the Hospital Discharge Teams in Redditch and Worcester Hospitals. They work directly with patients who have been admitted to hospital and it has been identified there are housing problems that may prevent safe discharge.

- 4.9 Firststop, a housing advice and information service is also run by the HIA. A Housing Options worker works with service users to proactively find alternative accommodation for those who require help due to their current premises are no longer suitable. The officer works closely with all the Housing Options Teams across the County.
- 4.10 The HIA and Local Authority officers are currently working to bring forward a procurement framework and standard specification for level access showers and stairlifts which account for the majority of the DFG applications received across the County. The aim of this work is to ensure a common practice across the County and achieve value for money in order that the budget is maximised to its full potential.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The revenue cost of running the service has remained equal to the cost of the Council running the North Worcestershire Care & Repair Agency.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Home Improvement Agency report Executive Committee 10 March 2010.

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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