

COUNCIL CABINET 7 JULY 2009

Present: Councillor Jones (Chair) Councillors Care, Naitta, Skelton and Troup

In attendance Councillors Jennings and Williamson

This record of decisions was published on 9 July 2009. The key decisions set out in this record will come into force and may be implemented on the expiry of five clear days unless a key decision is called in.

20/09 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Allen and Carr.

27/09 Handyperson Scheme

The Council Cabinet considered a report on Handyperson Scheme. Following a review of the Handyperson Service, delivered in partnership with Spirita Home Improvement Agency, the Adult and Health Commission recommended the amendment of the eligibility criteria to remove the necessity of clients to be on a low income. Council Cabinet at a recent meeting asked for further information about the financial implications of the Adult and Health Commission recommendation. Two thirds of the Handyperson Service funding was provided through Supporting People which required people receiving the service to be on a low income. The remaining one third was funded through Private Sector Housing resources, which did not have these restrictions. Therefore a maximum of one third of available capacity could be available to people over 75 irrespective of their income. A great deal of targeted work had been carried out by Spirita Home Improvement Agency to publicise the service throughout 2008 which had tended to result in peaks and troughs in the numbers of enquiries received. It had proved difficult to maintain an adequate level of enquiries to provide the necessary continuity of work for the service to function as efficiently as possible and achieve the performance target of 1200 jobs completed per year.

Currently the service was only available to people on a low income and the service was free at the point of use except for materials, which were provided by the client. The Spirita Home Improvement Agency had confirmed that there was capacity for the service to carry out up to 2000 jobs per year if sufficient demand could be generated. Additional capacity could only be further increased by providing additional financial resources for the service. The cost of each additional Handyperson was approximately £40,000 per annum and no provision had been made for increasing the budget of the service in 2009/10. If demand exceeded capacity it was likely that the performance standards for customer care would not be achieved as it would become necessary to develop a waiting list for new clients wanting to access the service

Decision

1. To adopt the above proposals and widen the eligibility criteria to people over 75 years of age and not on a low income for a pilot period of 12 months with a review after six months.
2. To amend the Housing Renewal Policy to remove the requirement that for the Handyperson service the applicant must be in receipt of a means tested benefit or a low income as determined by the “Test of Resources” in the case of people of 75 years or more.
3. To approve the other three recommendations set out in the Adult Services and Health Commission report appended to the report.