

HANDYPERSON & GARDENING SERVICES – THE WAY FORWARD (FORWARD PLAN REF NO: 5/07)

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report updates Members on proposals for expanding the Handyperson and Gardening Services following discussions with Springboard Housing Association.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Handyperson and Gardening Services are provided by Springboard Housing Association to elderly or disabled residents of the district who are on a low income. Springboard employs a full time handyperson whilst their gardener works four days a week.
- 2.2 There is a charge for each service which, for 2007/08, is £5.50 per hour for the handyman and £8.50 per hour for gardening.
- 2.3 A value for money study was carried out on the two services and reported to the former Community Services Committee on 6 March 2007. Members requested a report on the outcome of negotiations with Springboard regarding the additional funding of £27,500 being provided by the Council to cover both services.

3 PROPOSALS

- 3.1 For the Handyperson Service, Springboard has decided to employ an additional handyperson, working two days a week, commencing at the end of June.
- 3.2 In 2006/07 222 people were assisted but the extra handyperson means that the target for 2007/08 will be 410. In addition the range of eligible works will be expanded to include redecoration, cleaning external paintwork etc.
- 3.3 For the Gardening Services, Springboard has decided to outsource additional work to a local husband and wife team. They will charge £25 per hour and Springboard will use the additional funding to pay the additional hourly charges over the £8.50 that residents have to pay.
- 3.4 The number of gardening jobs done in 2006/07 was 448, however, due to the additional resource, the target will now be 700.

4 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Both Handyperson and Gardening Services can contribute to reducing the risk of vulnerable people becoming the victims of crime.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The 2007/8 revenue budget includes £29,100 for each service. For the Handyperson Service additional funding is provided by Essex County Council and South East Essex PCT and for the Gardening Service additional funding is provided by Essex County Council and the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.

6 RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 It is proposed that the Executive Board **RESOLVES**

To note the content of the report with regard to the expansion of the Handyperson and Gardening Services.

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Head of Community Services

Background Papers:-

None

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