

**CORPORATE PRIORITY:  
GOOD QUALITY,  
AFFORDABLE HOUSING  
FOR ALL**

**REPORT TO SCARBOROUGH  
AND RYEDALE JOINT HOME  
IMPROVEMENT AGENCY  
COMMITTEE  
TO BE HELD ON  
19 SEPTEMBER 2014**

**REPORT OF: THE WHITE ROSE HOME IMPROVEMENT  
AGENCY MANAGER 14/314**

**WARDS AFFECTED: ALL**

**SUBJECT: ANNUAL REVIEW & BUDGET SETTING FOR  
WHITE ROSE HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY**

### **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

It is recommended that the Committee:

- i. Note the 2013/14 financial year performance.
- ii. Approve an increase in funding from Ryedale District Council of £3,361 for the 2015/16 Financial Year.
- iii. Approve the annual budget for the 2015/16 financial year.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)**

To ensure the budget for the 2015/16 financial year is agreed in accordance with the White Rose Home Improvement Agency Partnership Agreement.

### **HIGHLIGHTED RISKS**

That the terms of agreement between Ryedale District Council and Scarborough Borough Council in the establishment of the White Rose Home Improvement Agency are not adhered to.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This report provides an annual overview of the work undertaken by the Home Improvement Agency during 2013/14.
- 1.2 It also aims to confirm the revenue and capital budgets for 2014/15 and seeks to establish these budgets for 2015/16.

## **2. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES**

- 2.1 The White Rose Home Improvement Agency (the Agency) is a non-profit making joint committee, created through the merger of Scarborough Borough Home Improvement Agency and Ryedale District Council's Home Improvement Agency in April 2012, providing a range of services across both Council areas. The Agency's main aim is to assist older, disabled and vulnerable people to repair, maintain and adapt their homes and live independently.
- 2.2 The Agency delivers a variety of statutory and discretionary services on behalf of both Councils, including the administration of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) and the provision of Home Safety and Well Being checks. The Agency also provides a handyperson service, which up until 2014 was delivered by Age UK and delivers a range of other services for the County Council, including the provision of minor adaptations in the Borough of Scarborough. The Agency is managed by Scarborough Borough Council, in partnership with Ryedale District Council. It does however receive funding from a variety of sources including Supporting People Grant and Reablement Grant from the County Council.
- 2.3 The Agency advisory committee meets quarterly to provide support, advice and guidance with the development of the Agency and its services. The committee is made up of representatives from relevant client groups, both statutory and voluntary, along with the funding partners.
- 2.4 A statistical overview of the work undertaken by the Agency in 2013/14 can be found in the Appendix 1 of this report.

### **Disabled Facility Grants**

- 2.5. A core element of the work undertaken by the HIA is the provision of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) on behalf of both Councils. Councils have a legal obligation to provide DFGs to eligible households in need of such assistance under the requirements of the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996
- 2.6 The majority of work relates to the provision of level floor showers, ramps and lifts. The Agencies role in the provision of DFGs also includes:
- ◆ Liaising with the NYCC Occupational Therapists.
  - ◆ Carrying out technical surveys and preparing schedules
  - ◆ Supporting the completion of application forms.
  - ◆ Supporting the client to choose a contractor to undertake the work needed.
  - ◆ Acting as contract administrator
  - ◆ Monitoring work and carrying out final inspections.

### **Handyperson Services**

- 2.7 Another key element of the HIAs services is the provision of a Handyman Service. In 2013/14 this service was delivered in partnership with Age UK; however this service only operated across the Scarborough Borough.
- 2.8 Scarborough Borough Council received grant funding to pay for the delivery of the HP service from the County Council via the Supporting People Programme. Funding received by the Council was paid to Age UK to provide this service on the Agencies behalf. Age UK employed two Handymen who undertook a variety of small jobs for the Agency, including the fitting of grab rails, key safes, smoke alarms etc.
- 2.9 A separate contract was in place between Broadacres Housing Association and North Yorkshire County Council Supporting People for the delivery of this type of service within the Ryedale area. The Agency was therefore not involved in the administration of the HP service in the Ryedale area in 2013/14.
- 2.10 **Home Safety Service and Well Being Pilot**
- 2.11 The Well Being service was another important element of the Agencies work and included the provision of preventative services aimed at reducing unnecessary cost to the overall public purse. The Agency has been operating home safety type services for a number of years. These were initially funded by NYCC and then expanded further through partnership working between the Agency and the Health Service.
- 2.12 The Well Being Service provides a variety of interventions aimed at preventing unnecessary hospital admissions and enabling a smooth transition when vulnerable households leave hospital. The pilot run in partnership with Health was used to demonstrate to Health commissioners the spend to save value of taking a holistic preventative approach to the delivery of public services. This pilot is now being used to help shape future commissioning arrangements for both Home Improvement Agency Services and Home from Hospital schemes.

### **3. ASSESSMENT**

#### **2013/14 Outturn**

##### **Disabled Facilities Grants**

- 3.1 A key issue for Councils in recent years has been the spiralling cost of DFG work. Demand for DFGs has increased and while Central Government funding has gone in some way to mitigate the impact, there are ever more increasing pressures on Local Authorities to meet the financial demands.
- 3.2 The Agency continues to administer DFGs in accordance with the policies and procedures adopted by Scarborough Borough Council in 2010. These policies and procedures were also adopted by Ryedale District Council to ensure a consistent approach to the delivery of DFG's across both areas.

- 3.3 In 2012 the Agency established a DFG Framework Contracts for all DFG work other than major house extensions. As the framework was originally procured through the joint procurement partnership with Ryedale, the use of this framework has also been rolled out across both Council areas.
- 3.4 Clients are allocated a contractor from the framework on a rota basis. Should they wish to use their own contractors to undertake the work they are able to do so, but would need to pay any increased costs themselves and the Agency would be unable to ensure the service levels adopted by the contractors operating under the framework.
- 3.5 The move to framework contracts has been positive as it has provided savings for the Councils and strengthened the client/contractor relationship with a built in warranty and set service standards.
- 3.6 The introduction of framework contracts has not disadvantaged local builders who had historically undertaken much of the DFG work in the Borough; of the 16 contractors on the framework 9 are local contractors who previously carried out DFG work.
- 3.7 The majority of adaptations now go through the framework process, with only the large scale and complex jobs going through a traditional tender process. The time taken to administer the framework adaptations has reduced by at least 4 weeks, which along with other new efficient ways of working has meant a major reduction in the average overall time taken from referral to completion, which is now less than 25 weeks and in the majority of framework cases less than 16 weeks.
- 3.8 In addition to these time savings, the Councils have both benefited from a reduction in the costs of the works such as wet floor showers and ramps, which we estimate to be in the region of £1,000 per adaptation based on historic comparisons. This results in an estimated net saving in 2013/14 of just over £100,000 for Scarborough Borough Council (based on 105 shower and ramp completions ) and £87,000 for Ryedale District Council (based on 87 completed showers and ramps).
- 3.9 The total number of certified completed cases within the year was 224 across the 2 local authorities, with the Borough of Scarborough accounting for 125 cases and Ryedale District 99 cases. The value of payments to contractors for this work was in excess of £1.1 million.
- 3.10 In 2013/14, this led to Scarborough Borough Council utilising £572,388 of its disabled facilities grant budget and Ryedale District Council utilising £296,125 (these figures are exclusive of the carry forward from 12/13 budgets).
- 3.11 The costs of running the service are incurred by the host Council (Scarborough) who in turn employ all responsible Officers.
- 3.12 The total running costs for the Agency in 13/14 were £243,222. These costs are met via funding from both Councils, with Ryedale District Council paying approximately one third of the running costs (£82,316) and Scarborough Borough Council paying approximately two thirds (£160,906). These

contributions are exclusive of fee income and any other third party funding received by each Council, such as that received from NYCC.

- 3.13 The table below illustrates the high level financials for the 2013/14 financial year.

	2013/14	Scarborough	Ryedale
	£k	£k	£k
Staff costs	180		
Other costs	23		
Support costs	40		
<b>Total Cost of service</b>	<b>243</b>		
Revenue costs		(161)	(82)

### Handyperson Services

- 3.14 Throughout 2013/14 the Handyperson Service undertook a total of 2,539 jobs across the Borough of Scarborough.
- 3.15 Future provision of Handyperson Services is has been included within the new service specification for HIAs that was tendered by Supporting People in 2013. The Agency was successful in its bid to secure funding to deliver Handyperson and Well Being services across both Council areas for the next 3 years.
- 3.16 The Agency is now successfully operating Handyperson services across both Council areas. Utilising existing reserves held by Scarborough Borough Council (pre partnership) the Agency has been able to purchase three new vehicles which have all being sign written and kitted out to meet the Handypersons' requirements. In addition, these reserves have also funded other set up costs including the purchase of the necessary tools, uniforms and safety equipment.
- 3.17 The three existing Handypersons (two from Age UK and one from Broadacres) have successfully transferred across and are now employed by Scarborough Borough Council; this ensured a smooth transition between the contractor providers and minimal effect on service delivery.
- 3.18 The service is now providing minor adaptations such as grab rails, galvanised rails and half steps alongside carrying out small repair jobs such as putting up shelves and tacking down carpets.
- 3.19 The Agency has introduced new ways of working to reduce the administration of the Handyperson service. The service now operates via the Council's Firmstep software. This allows referrals to be made on an electronic web based form, which is then submitted directly to the Handypersons' work queue for them to action.
- 3.20 Agreements to hold stock on behalf of NYCC has also meant a reduction in administration, particularly purchasing and invoicing. Stock control is also managed via the Firmstep system

## **Home Safety Service and Well Being Pilot**

- 3.21 The Well Being service continued to operate in 13/14 via funding from the new partnership and some external funding from NYCC re-ablement monies. The service continued to deliver a wide range of interventions and was rolled out across both Council areas. In Scarborough Borough, 419 Households received the Well Being Service, in Ryedale 92.
- 3.22 The Agency also worked with NYCC again this year to secure funding via 'Warm Homes Healthy People'. These funds were used to provide a range of interventions such as the provision of emergency packs and free boiler services and emergency heating repairs. In addition to this, the Agency took part in Outreach events to try to ensure information was spread across all areas. These interventions were aimed at reducing the incidence of illness and death caused by cold during the winter months.
- 3.23 A 'Home from Hospital' service was commissioned by NYCC and Health in 2013/12, however the scope of this project was somewhat different to the service specification of the Well Being service. The partnership therefor opted not to submit a tender for that new service.
- 3.24 However, Supporting people took note of the value of Well Being Services and included these services in the County wide service specification for Home Improvement Agencies, alongside handyperson services, which was commissioned in 2013/14.
- 3.25 By identifying more efficient ways of working, resulting in a reduction in administration costs for the Handyperson service, the Agency was able to submit a competitive bid including the provision of both Handyperson and Well Being services. The Well Being element of this funding provides 1.4 FTE Well Being officers.
- 3.26 The Agency has a further 1.6 FTE Well Being officers operating across the Borough of Scarborough and Ryedale District, these costs are funded through the partnership.

## **4. OPERATING COST AND BUDGETS**

### **Financial Year ending 31 March 2015**

- 4.1 Each Council has already set its Disabled Facilities Grant budgets for 2014/15, with Scarborough Borough Council's budget set at £637,000 and Ryedale District Council's at £376,000 (this includes a carry forward in addition to the base budget of £325,000).
- 4.2 The external funding available to Agencies in 2014/15 has changed with the introduction of the new Supporting People contracts. Scarborough Borough Council will receive £30,000 towards delivering its disabled facilities grant and Ryedale District Council will receive £12,500.

- 4.3 The anticipated costs of running the service for the current financial year are £265,029. The primary drivers behind this increase are higher staff costs as a result of incremental pay increases and higher travel expenses. In addition lower staff costs were seen within 2013/14 due to employee vacancies which are not anticipated to be repeated within the 2014/15 financial year.
- 4.4 The Agency has also increased its fee rate to 12.5% for 2014/15 which should see a slight increase in revenue.
- 4.5 Upon establishment of the partnership in the 2012/13 financial year it was agreed that Ryedale will pay the host (Scarborough) a revenue fee of £82,316 per annum. This fee remained the same for 2013/14 and has subsequently remained for 2014/15. Full details of the budget with prior year comparatives are detailed within Appendix 2 of this report.
- 4.6 In addition to the costs and management of the DFG provision the Agency will receive funding of £126,889 to cover the costs of operating the Handyperson service throughout the partnership.

### **Financial Year Ending 31 March 2016**

- 4.7 Under the terms of the agreement set out in the establishment of the Partnership each Council shall advise the Partnership of its capital budget for DFGs. The Partnership must not incur expenditure in excess of these amounts without the consent of the relevant Council.
- 4.8 Scarborough Borough Council has established a DFG budget of £685,000 for the 2015/16 financial year. Ryedale District Council is yet to confirm an equivalent budget, however this will be based on the previously set base budget (£325,000) plus any carry forward.
- 4.9 After considering the levels of budgeted activity in 2015/16 Officers from the host Council have drafted a revenue budget. Officers aim to confirm acceptance of these budget proposals as part of the recommendations within this report. Full details of the proposed budget are detailed within Appendix 2 of this report.
- 4.10 The total budgeted cost of running the partnership is £268,390, Ryedale District Council have agreed in principle to increase their contribution for 2015/16 to £85,677 (an increase of £3,361).

#### 2015/16 proposed budget summary

	Scarborough	Ryedale
Revenue costs £	182,427	85,667

## **5. CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 The partnership is now well established, delivering grants within short timescales, within budget and with no waiting list.

- 5.2 Due to the funding the Agency has been able to attract from external sources and the fee income generated, both Council's actual cash contributions remain low, highlighting the success of the partnership and representing extremely good value for money.
- 5.3 Each Council's contribution will need to be reviewed and it is anticipated that Ryedale District Council may need to increase their contribution further post 2015/16 to bring it in line with the funding split detailed in the partnership agreement (Ryedale District Council (33.33%) and Scarborough Borough Council (66.67%).

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**Appendix 1**

**WHITE ROSE HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY  
OUTPUT SUMMARY 13/14**

TOTAL REFERRALS TO WRHIA FOR ASSISTANCE			2732
<b>MAIN TYPES OF ASSISTANCE PROVIDED</b>			
<b>WORK TYPE</b>	<b>SCARBOROUGH</b>	<b>RYEDALE</b>	
MANDATORY WORK (DFG)			
NO. OF DFG'S CERTIFIED COMPLETE	125	99	
VALUE OF PAYMENTS TO CONTRACTORS	£671,532.48	£436,124.90	
<b>DISCRETIONARY WORK</b>			
WELL BEING VISITS	419	92	
TOTAL WELL BEING VISITS CARRIED OUT 511			
THESE CLIENTS RECEIVED (AMONGST MANY OTHER AREAS OF SUPPORT)			
MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE	234		
NYCC BLUE BADGE	44		
BENEFITS ADVICE	70		
LINK WORKERS	25		
FIRE SAFETY CHECKS	138		
COMMUNITY TRANSPORT	56		
LIFELINE	36		
BE-FRIENDING	8		
CARE ADVICE	77		
SOCIAL INCLUSION	17		

NYCC HEALTH & ADULT SERVICES	73
ENERGY EFFICNECY	202
HOME SECUTIRY CHECKS	33
TOTAL SIGNPOSTS FOR ASSISTANCE AS A RESULT OF A WELL BEING VISIT	3075

## Appendix 2 – White Rose Home Improvement Agency – Annual Financial Statement

Actuals for Year Ending 31 March 2014 (Excl Handyperson) £	Cost Description	Budget for Year Ending 31 March 2015 £	Handyperson Budget for Year Ending 31 March 2015 £	Total HIA budget £
(160,906)	Scarborough Borough Council Funding	(182,713)		(182,713)
0	Social Services	0	(126,889)	(126,889)
(82,316)	Ryedale District Council	(82,316)	0	(82,316)
<b>(243,222)</b>	<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>(265,029)</b>	<b>(126,889)</b>	<b>(392,918)</b>
150,100	Salaries Salary	156,795	86,154	242,949
722	Salaries Additional Hours	0	0	0
(106)	Salaries Other	4,666	0	4,666
9,537	Salaries NI	9,753	4,700	14,453
19,438	Salaries Super	22,735	10,855	33,590
670	Training Post Entry Training	1,500	0	1,500
100	Recruitment Advertising	0	0	0
(148)	Employee Absence Accrual	0	0	0
180,313.26		195,448.63	101,708.88	297157.51
5,545	Equipment General	4,869	500	5,369
419	Equipment Direct Supplies	0	0	0
0	Equipment Light Plant and Tools	0	200	200
367	Printing	1,700	0	1,700
0	Advertising/Press etc	0	500	500
2,152	Insurance (Non Premises)	2,130	0	2,130
51	Telephones Call Charges	51	0	51
912	Telephones Internal System	386	0	386
357	Mobile Communications	124	200	324
2,656	iPad contract charges and monthly charges	1,800	1,350	3,150
0	IT Maintenance	0	3,000	3,000
128	Travel and Subsistence	708	0	708
0	Miscellaneous	1,500	1,650	4,150
12,585.92		13,269.27	7,400.15	21669.42

10,715	Car Allowances and Travel	13,391	0	13,391
0	Fuel	0	16,070	16,070
0	Vehicle Licences	0	360	360
0	Vehicle Insurance	0	900	900
0	Vehicle Repairs	0	450	450
10,715.41		13,391.00	17,779.93	31170.93
(233)	Private Contractor General	0	0	0
(233)		0.00	0.00	0
<b>203,381</b>	<b>Direct Costs</b>	<b>222,109</b>	<b>126,889</b>	<b>349,998</b>
5,402	Service Charge	0	0	0
19,481	Support Services	0	0	0
14,957	Support Services Recharges to 3rd Parties	42,920	0	42,920
<b>39,840</b>	<b>Indirect Costs</b>	<b>42,920</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>42,920</b>
<b>243,222</b>	<b>Total Costs of running the Service</b>	<b>265,029</b>	<b>126,889</b>	<b>392,918</b>

### Appendix 3 – Budget proposals for 2015/16

Cost Description	Budget for Year Ending 31 March 2015 £	2015/16 Budget proposal £
<b>Scarborough Borough Council Funding*</b>	<b>(182,713)</b>	<b>(182,713)</b>
<b>Ryedale District Council*</b>	<b>(82,316)</b>	<b>(85,977)</b>
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>(265,029)</b>	<b>(268,390)</b>
Salaries Salary	156,795	158,362
Salaries Other	4,666	4,713
Salaries NI	9,753	9,850
Salaries Super	22,735	22,963
Training Post Entry Training	1,500	1,530
<b>Employee Costs</b>	<b>195,449</b>	<b>197,418</b>
Equipment General	4,870	4,967
Printing	1,700	1,734
Insurance (Non Premises)	2,130	2,173
Telephones Call Charges	51	52
Telephones Internal System	386	394
Mobile Communications	124	127
iPad contract charges and monthly charges	1,800	1,836
Travel and Subsistence	708	722
Miscellaneous	1,500	1,530
<b>General Costs</b>	<b>13,269</b>	<b>13,535</b>
Car Allowances and Travel	13,391	13,659
<b>Travel Expenses</b>	<b>13,391</b>	<b>13,659</b>
<b>Direct Costs</b>	<b>222,109</b>	<b>224,612</b>
Support Services Recharges to 3rd Parties	42,920	43,778
<b>Indirect Costs</b>	<b>42,920</b>	<b>43,778</b>
<b>Total Costs of running the Service</b>	<b>265,029</b>	<b>268,390</b>

Includes proposed £3,361 increase in funding level from Ryedale for the 2015/16 financial year.

DFG Activity for 2015/16	Scarborough	Ryedale
<b>Budgeted value of works carried out</b>	<b>685,000</b>	<b>325,000</b>

**NB:**

Funding contributions of both Scarborough and Ryedale are exclusive of DFG fee income and Other 3rd party funding.