

South Ayrshire Council

**Report by Assistant Director – Place
to Leadership Panel
of 15 September 2020**

Subject: South Ayrshire Women’s Aid Refuge, Ayr

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Leadership Panel approval for an additional financial contribution from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), as building owners, to be made to South Ayrshire Women’s Aid who are commissioning work to reconfigure and upgrade the Woman’s Aid Refuge (‘refuge’).

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **It is recommended that the Panel approves an additional commitment of up to £0.050m to South Ayrshire Women’s Aid, providing an overall financial contribution of £0.150m, towards the planned reconfiguration and upgrading work to the refuge, to be funded from the uncommitted reserves within the Housing Revenue Account.**

3. Background

- 3.1 Leadership Panel of 12 June 2018, considered and approved a report on the proposed lease extension for the Women’s Aid Refuge. At this time, Panel agreed to commit a maximum contribution of £0.100m towards the proposed reconfiguration and upgrading work to the refuge from the uncommitted reserves within the Housing Revenue Account. This was subject to Women’s Aid raising the remainder of the funds required to meet the cost of the project.
- 3.2 South Ayrshire Women’s Aid have undertaken a tender process and tender costs received were much higher than expected. The Board in conjunction with their Design Team considered the options available and agreed to undertake a Value Engineering Exercise and conduct negotiations with the lowest tenderer. This process achieved savings in the region of £0.150m. Taking account of the funds raised to date by South Ayrshire Women’s Aid, the use of their reserves, along with the previous commitment of £0.100m from the Council, a shortfall of £0.050m remains.
- 3.3 South Ayrshire Women’s Aid have confirmed that the offer to accept the negotiated tender price is open from the Contractor until 17 September 2020. Their Design Team has led these negotiations, achieving savings on the original bid. Taking account of market conditions, they have recommended its’ acceptance. To allow South Ayrshire Women’s Aid to proceed with the acceptance of the tender by this date, they have requested that the Council gives a commitment to make an

additional contribution of up to £0.050m to the project, which would allow a proposed start date of 12 October 2020. The overall cost of the project is in excess of £0.600m.

- 3.4 South Ayrshire Women's Aid have advised that they have contacted other funders, most of whom have been unable to increase their contribution to the project. Only two of their existing smaller funders have indicated the possibility of additional funding, but delays affecting them due to Covid-19, mean decisions will not be known until late September 2020. They are also continuing to apply to other funders and are hopeful of success. Once the additional funding South Ayrshire Women's Aid expects to receive from other sources is confirmed, they have indicated that they should be in a position to repay part of that additional funding requested from the Council.
- 3.5 The Covid-19 lockdown restrictions have restricted the use and occupancy of the Refuge due to the communal and shared nature of the facilities. The completion of the proposed reconfiguration and upgrading work, will remove the communal living arrangements within the refuge, providing higher standard self-contained units for households, and it will also offer accommodation that would help mitigate future restrictions.

4. Proposals

- 4.1 Considering that the refuge is a Council owned asset, and the proposed work will result in improvements to that asset and improved standards for occupants, it is proposed that the Council approves a further commitment of a maximum of £0.050m to the project. This would take the Council's overall financial contribution to £0.150m from the Housing Revenue Account, enabling South Ayrshire Women's Aid to deliver a project of improvements in excess of £0.600m.

5. Legal and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 If this report is approved, Legal will issue a grant agreement to South Ayrshire Woman's aid for the overall financial commitment by the Council for the project.
- 5.2 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 A further commitment and financial contribution of up to £0.050m will be earmarked from the uncommitted reserves within the Housing Revenue Account, providing an overall contribution of a maximum of £0.150m.

7. Human Resources Implications

- 7.1 Not applicable.

8. Risk

8.1 *Risk Implications of Adopting the Recommendations*

8.1.1 There are no risks associated with adopting the recommendations.

8.2 *Risk Implications of Rejecting the Recommendations*

8.2.1 South Ayrshire Women's Aid will not be able to proceed and accept the tender by 17 September 2020. This would place the project at risk and would fail to deliver improved accommodation standards within the refuge.

9. Equalities

9.1 The proposals in this report have been assessed through the Equality Impact Assessment Scoping process. There are no significant potential positive or negative equality impacts of agreeing the recommendations and therefore an Equalities Impact Assessment is not required. A copy of the Equalities Scoping Assessment is attached as [Appendix 1](#). On completion of the planned improvement work by South Ayrshire Women's Aid, there will be significant positive impacts for Women and Children using the refuge facilities.

10. Sustainable Development Implications

10.1 ***Considering Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)*** - This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme or strategy or document otherwise described which could be considered to constitute a plan, programme, policy or strategy.

11. Options Appraisal

11.1 An options appraisal has not been carried out in relation to the subject matter of this report.

12. Link to Council Plan

12.1 The matters referred to in this report contribute to the Council strategic objective of 'Health and Care Systems that meet people's needs' and within that to the outcome 'we will enhance collaborative working to maximise support and ensure all residents have the opportunity to be healthy, supported and safe' and also to the Council strategic objective of 'Enhanced environment through social, cultural and economic activities' and within that to the outcome 'we will create a greener, healthier South Ayrshire and enhance it for future generations'.

13. Results of Consultation

13.1 Tenant Representatives were consulted on 7 September 2020. The request from South Ayrshire Women's Aid for a commitment and additional financial contribution of £0.050m from the Housing Revenue Account, along with the background to the request was outlined to tenants. The Tenants unanimously agreed to support the project by Women's Aid and recognised the value of the service and accommodation provided. They agreed to an additional contribution of £0.050m being made from the HRA, providing a maximum contribution of £0.150m. Tenant Representatives were previously consulted on 24 May 2018 on the original

proposals and request for funding from South Ayrshire Women's Aid and they also unanimously supported that request at that time.

- 13.2 Consultation has taken place with Councillor Peter Henderson, Portfolio Holder for Corporate, Councillor Brian McGinley, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance and Councillor Philip Saxton, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Wellbeing, and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

14. Next Steps for Decision Tracking Purposes

- 14.1 If the recommendation above is approved by Members, the Assistant Director – Place and the Head of Legal, HR and Regulatory Services will ensure that all necessary steps are taken to ensure full implementation of the decision within the following timescales, with the completion status reported to the Leadership Panel in the 'Council and Leadership Panel Decision Log' at each of its meetings until such time as the decision is fully implemented:

<i>Implementation</i>	<i>Due date</i>	<i>Managed by</i>
Advise South Ayrshire Women's Aid of the Leadership Panel decision	15 September 2020	Service Lead – Housing Services
If approved, a Grant Agreement to be issued to South Ayrshire Women's Aid	31 October 2020	Head of Legal ,HR and Regulatory Services

Background Papers **Report to Leadership Panel of 12 June 2018 - Proposed Lease Extension – Women's Refuge, Ayr (Members only)**

Person to Contact **Michael Alexander, Service Lead – Housing Services**
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E-mail michael.alexander@south-ayrshire.gov.uk

Date: 10 September 2020

1. Proposal details

Proposal Title - South Ayrshire Women's Aid Refuge, Ayr	Lead Officer - Michael Alexander Service Lead – Housing Services
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2. Which communities, groups of people, employees or thematic groups do you think will be, or potentially could be, impacted upon by the implementation of this proposal? Please indicate whether these would be positive or negative impacts

Community, Groups of People or Themes	Negative Impacts	Positive impacts
The whole community of South Ayrshire	-	-
People from different racial groups, ethnic or national origin.	-	-
Women and/ or men (boys and girls)	-	-
People with disabilities	-	-
People from particular age groups for example Older people, children and young people	-	-
Lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual people	-	-
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process to change sex	-	-
Pregnant women and new mothers	-	-
People who are married or in a civil partnership	-	-
People who share a particular religion or belief	-	-
Thematic Groups: Health, Human Rights, Rurality and Deprivation	-	-

3. Do you have evidence or reason to believe that the proposal will support the Council to:

General Duty and other Equality Themes	Level of Negative and/ or Positive Impact (high, medium or low)
Eliminate discrimination and harassment faced by particular communities or groups	Low impact
Promote equality of opportunity between particular communities or groups	Low impact
Foster good relations between particular communities or groups	Low impact
Promote positive attitudes towards different communities or groups	Low impact
Increase participation of particular communities or groups in public life	Low impact
Improve the health and wellbeing of particular communities or groups	Low impact
Promote the human rights of particular communities or groups	Low impact
Tackle deprivation faced by particular communities or groups	Low impact

4. Summary Assessment

Is a full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) required? (A full EQIA must be carried out on all high and medium impact proposals)		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rationale for decision: The Panel decision on this has no specific equality implications. However, on completion of the planned improvement work by South Ayrshire Women's Aid, there will be significant positive impacts for Women and Children who use the refuge facilities.			
Signed :	Donald Gillies	Director - Place	
Date:	3 September 2020	Copy to equalities@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	