

<b>Name of decision maker:</b>	Cllr Margaret Griffiths
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Housing
<b>Date of Portfolio Holder Decision:</b>	16 October 2007

<b>Title of Decision: Hertfordshire Supporting People Strategy – 2007-12</b>
<b>Decision made and reasons:</b>  To support the adoption of the Hertfordshire Supporting People Strategy 2007–12.
<b>Reports considered:</b>  Hertfordshire Supporting People Strategy 2007-12 (this document can be located at ; <a href="http://www.spkweb.org.uk">www.spkweb.org.uk</a> )  May 2007 Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee Report “Hertfordshire Supporting People Strategy 2007- 12”  Audit Commission Report “Supporting People – Hertfordshire County Council”, 9 <sup>th</sup> November 2006 (this can be found at <a href="http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/reports/BVIR.asp?CategoryID=&amp;ProdID=184008E2-CA05-43d4-9C30-9F3E7D1A6A12">www.audit-commission.gov.uk/reports/BVIR.asp?CategoryID=&amp;ProdID=184008E2-CA05-43d4-9C30-9F3E7D1A6A12</a> )  The response to the Audit Commission inspection from the Hertfordshire Supporting People Commissioning Body can also be located at the website above.
<b>Officers/Councillors/Ward Councillors/Stakeholders Consulted:</b>  As well as service users key stakeholders were consulted throughout the development of the strategy. In addition to this the Portfolio Holder for Housing took advice from Cllr Janice Marshall in preparing a response to the consultation document.
<b>Monitoring Officer/Chief Financial Officer Comments:</b>  No comments from either the Monitoring Officer or the Chief Financial Officer
<b>Risk Implications</b>  The new strategy may have an implication on specific service areas that are currently supported by the Supporting People Strategy 2005-10. The implementation of the revised strategy may mean that work programmes will have to be reconfigured or stopped. The five-year life span of the strategy will mean that this can be properly planned.  Failure to adopt the new strategy will mean that current work programmes will be disrupted.  The new Strategy will be reviewed by the Audit Commission in January 2008. Failure

to adopt the strategy may result in a “poor” inspection result.

**Options Considered and reasons for rejection:**

The alternative of not approving the Strategy will delay the implementation of the five year strategy and have a detrimental affect on the support services provided in the County.

**Portfolio Holders Signature:**

**Date:**

**Details of any interests declared and any dispensations given by the Standards Committee:**

**For Member Support Officer use only**

Date Decision Record Sheet received from portfolio holder: 16 October 2007

Date Decision Published: 16 October 2007 Decision No: PH/056/07

Date of Expiry of Call-In Period: 23 October 2007

Date any Call-In received or decision implemented:

**SUMMARY**

The 'Supporting People' programme was initiated by the Government in 2003 to provide a planned approach to the commissioning and quality standards of housing support. The programme ranges from low level support in sheltered housing to the intensive support of people with multiple needs, such as drug users with mental health problems. The aim is to enable vulnerable people to remain independent where this is possible.

Hertfordshire County Council is responsible for the £21 million 'Supporting People' programme. The terms of reference of the Hertfordshire Supporting People Commissioning Body, which oversees the delivery of the strategy programme, requires that all ten Hertfordshire District Councils formally endorse the strategy before it can be adopted.

**DETAILED PROPOSAL**

Following a critical inspection by the Audit Commission at the in November 2006, Hertfordshire County Council was required to rapidly implement a series of improvements. One of these improvement was to produce a much more robust strategy document giving a clear direction to the programme.

The first five year Strategy was basically a collection of miscellaneous facts about existing provision in Hertfordshire and did not make any contribution towards focussing on delivery. The consequence has been that very little changed in terms of delivery/ Very few “redundant” services were identified and closed down and this has prevented the effective re-designation of resources to high priority areas. Furthermore very little work took place to

identify where the future priorities were likely to be and partnership working remained fragmented and undeveloped.

Following extensive consultation and research weaknesses in the original strategy have been addressed. For example the new strategy identifies definite priorities over the next five years:

**Priority workstreams in the first year of the Strategy (2007/2008) are:**

- Older people
- Young people
- People with mental health problems

**In the second and third (2008-10) the Strategy will prioritise the following groups:**

- People with substance misuse problems;
- Homeless people
- People fleeing domestic violence;
- People with a physical disability;
- Offenders, including mentally disordered offenders

**In the fourth and fifth (2010-2012) the following groups are prioritised:**

- People with learning disabilities
- Gypsies and Travellers

An extract of the Strategy that provides greater detail of specific actions and outcomes from the Strategy is appended.

The Strategy states an intention to strengthen partnership, joint commissioning and better procurement. It also asks difficult questions about which services are 'eligible' and which should be funded in the future.

At present, some vulnerable groups are excluded from housing support, particularly older people who rent privately or who are homeowners. At the same time, arguably, many tenants living in sheltered housing do not actually need support. The Strategy for older people is to identify and reduce support to unpopular schemes or to individuals who do not need support, and redirect those resources to others in the community. This could lead to more mobile provision and would be a fundamental shift of perspective for many existing sheltered services. A possible model might be for mobile scheme managers supporting a number of clients within schemes, and then having clients in other tenures in the surrounding neighbourhood.

Hertfordshire currently has much less 'floating support' provision than other areas: this applies across all client groups. 'Floating support' is a flexible means of support that follows the client rather than being based in a particular building. It can be short term to help a person through a crisis, or may be long term to ensure a person can sustain their accommodation and live independently. An example of long-term support could be residents with learning difficulties, or people with mental health needs who need a regular visit to ensure they can cope with such things as budgeting to pay their rent, or avoiding anti-social behaviour. A shift in funding to correct the imbalance of accommodation based services, together with a tighter definition of eligibility for support, could benefit a far greater number of such people.

**Consultation**

Because of the time scale imposed by the Audit Commission, consultation with service users has been limited. Providers were consulted at a recent county-wide conference as well as being invited to respond individually to the draft Strategy. Dacorum Emergency Night Shelter (DENS), consultees in the process, have indicated that they broadly support the strategy particularly to in the areas of floating support proposals.

In assuming a significant shift of funding from accommodation based services to providing services in people's existing homes, the Strategy is very much in line with views expressed by service users in various past consultations. In terms of older people in particular, the massive shift from renting to home ownership means that support mechanisms also need to shift to where people actually live.

Although some client groups do require accommodation based services, and there will always remain this need, it is clear that providers will need both to develop flexible models, and also demonstrate value for money. They cannot assume everything will stay as it is. While this will be a challenge, it makes sense strategically. As with any Strategy, the County hopes that individual partners will set aside personal and local preferences for the greater good.

The Strategy also recognises the value of partnership, and joint commissioning, including the fact that some services might best be commissioned by other related organisations. Some services could lend themselves to aggregation and re-tendering; community alarms could be an example. Following best practice in procurement and pursuing value for money through market testing and benchmarking should ensure a much better use of public funds.

\* \* \* \*

**Priority Supporting People Workstreams and Key Targets – Strategy Extract**

Priority workstreams in the first year of the 2007 – 12 Strategy (2007/2008) are:

- Older people
- Young people
- People with mental health problems

Work is already underway in relation to these three groups as agreed by the Supporting People Commissioning Body last year. The consultation on this strategy indicated broad support for this prioritisation.

A major work programme on accommodation services for older people across the county, led by Hertfordshire County Council's Adult Care Services is now under way and will provide the foundation for our approach to housing related support for older people. Supporting People will contribute to this work and it will inform decisions about the future commissioning and decommissioning of housing related support services for older people. We have already identified that there is too much sheltered housing funded by Supporting People. We have also identified that there is a need for more extra care housing for frail older people.

As the accommodation strategy is implemented, we will commission more extra care services in areas where they are needed. Consequently, we will reduce Supporting People expenditure on sheltered housing by an estimated 10%. Some of this money is likely to be invested in extra care housing and some monies may be invested in services for other client groups.

A multi-agency Accommodation Services for Young People programme has been established in Hertfordshire. This is developing and delivering an integrated model of accommodation services for young people which includes:

- Advice, homeless prevention and mediation services
- Crisis Intervention Provision (Crashpad and Crash link)
- Supported Lodgings placements
- A minimum of one medium level supported accommodation based scheme in each District, with 24 hour staff cover which is able to cater for high need young people
- Floating and /or resettlement support regardless of tenure (tenancy sustainment model)  
The integrated model will be launched by June 2008.

In order to improve the range of housing related support services available to people with mental health problems, a Mental Health Accommodation Strategy is being developed for the county. This will be used to inform the services that receive Supporting People funds in the future. This work will aim to:

- Develop a more equitable spread of housing related support services across the county, with more services developed in the east and north of the county;
- Contribute to the development of more crisis accommodation;
- Develop more, flexible, support services designed to support people in any tenure;
- Explore linking housing related support work to that of staff based in community teams.

In addition to work on these three groups and as previously noted we will begin to commission generic floating support and tenancy sustainment services in order to offer more flexible support particularly to groups that currently find it difficult to access housing related support services.

In the second and third years Supporting People will prioritise the following groups:

- People with substance misuse problems;
- Homeless people
- People fleeing domestic violence;
- People with a physical disability;
- Offenders, including mentally disordered offenders

In the fourth and fifth years we plan to prioritise the following groups:

- People with learning disabilities
- Gypsies and Travellers

In order to address these priorities effectively we will, at the appropriate time:

- conduct further needs analysis if necessary,
- determine the type and location of services most needed to address the needs of these client groups across the diverse communities of Hertfordshire,
- consult with service users and partners about how such services should be developed, and
- allocate available resources according to the findings of the above.

Consultation feedback indicated the need for an overarching action plan to track progress on implementing the strategy. The strategy therefore contains a high level action plan and a

number of clear outcome measures to assess its success. These outcome measures include:

- Reduction in homelessness figures
- Reduction in the use of hostel accommodation across the county (50% reduction by 2010)
- The number of people sleeping rough
- Floating support services commissioned and in place
- Outcomes for service users – the number of service users who have identified needs met by supporting people services
- Amount of resources freed up from value for money and eligibility work for new services
- Percentage of contracted services that are available
- Utilisation levels
- Percentage of service users moving on in a planned way
- Reduction in number of young people aged 16-17 who leave Supporting People services in an unplanned way (LAA stretch target) plus non-stretch sub-target relating to 16/17 year olds
- Number of young people aged 16-25 who sustain their tenancy for over six months. (LAA target)
- Level of satisfaction of young people with their transition into their own tenancy (LAA target)
- Number of carer leavers and number of young people overall who are in education, training or employment
- Number of people with primary/secondary support needs due to drug problems entering Supporting People services.

There are many significant challenges that need to be overcome in order to deliver this strategy. Partnership working will be at the heart of our approach – with partners, providers, service users and carers. Together we can make a real difference to vulnerable people in all of Hertfordshire's communities.