

**REPORT TO: CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING – 16th September 2009**

**REPORT BY: ALAN CUFLEY - HEAD OF COMMUNITY HOUSING**

**WRITTEN BY: DOMINIC DEW - SUPPORTING PEOPLE MANAGER**

**SUBJECT: SUPPORTING PEOPLE PROGRAMME UPDATE**

## **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide the Cabinet Member for Housing with an update on progress made on ongoing issues within the Supporting People (SP) programme in Portsmouth.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That the Cabinet Member for Housing notes the changes in levels of funding to the Older People and Learning Disabilities client groups as a result of the recent Strategic Review of services and central government reductions in grant funding.
- 2.2 That the Cabinet Member for Housing notes progress made in implementing a range of improvements to the Supporting People programme.
- 2.3 That the Cabinet Member for Housing notes the ongoing issues currently being resolved.
- 2.4 That the Cabinet Member supports further communication with Communities and Local Government on the potential detrimental effect on services to vulnerable residents as a result of reducing financial support

## **3. SUPPORTING PEOPLE PROGRAMME BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The SP programme was introduced by the Government as a single pot of funding to finance housing-related support services for vulnerable groups of people and to promote independent living.
- 3.2 Until the late 1990s, such support was funded through the Housing Benefit system, and as such, was effectively 'hidden' in rental costs. This position was overturned in a court case, leading the Government to develop alternative arrangements for the financing of supported housing. A Transitional Housing Benefit (THB) scheme was put in place, until this was replaced with Supporting People funding from April 2003.
- 3.3 The strategic oversight of the SP programme rests with the Commissioning Body (CB), chaired by Margaret Geary, Strategic Director and comprises senior officers from Housing, Social Care, Probation, and Portsmouth City Primary Care Trust (PCT).
- 3.4 The SP budget for Portsmouth in 2009/10 is £8.073 million, a reduction from 08/09 of £425k, and from 07/08 of £847k, excluding inflationary pressures. This currently funds 70 services, provided by 26 agencies to around 3,150 vulnerable people in the city at any one time. The Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) has indicated it will reduce the budget further to £7.669m during 2010/11, though this is yet to be confirmed.

- 3.5 Portsmouth City Council Supporting People Team administers the SP grant and the Head of Community Housing is the Accountable Officer.
- 3.6 The Supporting People Team is continually consulting with and receiving feedback from stakeholders on the programme via the Providers' Forum, Service Users' Reference Group (SURG), Core Strategy Group and Commissioning Body.

#### **4. CURRENT STATUS REPORT**

##### **4.1 Supporting People Team**

- 4.1.1 The current SP Team consists of Supporting People Manager, Contracts Officer, Programme Development Officer, Service Development Officer and a Finance & Administration Officer.
- 4.1.2 CLG continues to make a contribution, albeit declining, towards the city council's costs of administering the programme. Last year an administration grant of £171k was provided, but this has reduced to £156k this financial year, and will be £135k in 2010/11.
- 4.1.3 These reductions mean it is inevitable that, with the considerable workload for the existing staffing resources involved in the administration of Programme, there will be an ongoing budget pressure in future years.
- 4.1.4 However, the implementation of a new IT system for the SP Team has been successful and administrative savings are already being realised for data reporting, accessibility and quarterly submissions to the CLG.

##### **4.2 Local Area Agreements and the Local Strategic Partnership**

- 4.2.1 On the 26<sup>th</sup> November 2008 the CLG wrote to all Local Authority Chief Executives announcing that, as part of the Local Government Finance Settlement, the Minister of State for Local Government was to make changes to the Supporting People programme grant. This year the Supporting People programme grant is being paid under section 31 as an un-ringfenced named grant. In 2010/11 it will be paid as part of the Area Based Grant (ABG), but still as a named grant. Then during 2011/12 it will be paid in to the ABG, but not identified as a separately named grant.
- 4.2.2 The removal of the ring fence is intended to provide the opportunity to come up with flexible and innovative ways to support vulnerable people in a range of different situations.
- 4.2.3 In 2010/11, the SP grant will form a significant proportion of the total ABG grant. Therefore the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), in deciding the future funding priorities for the city based on the Local Area Agreement and National Indicator (NI) priority targets, will need considerable support to understand the SP Programme and its outcomes for the vulnerable residents in Portsmouth.
- 4.2.4 A report on the SP programme will be presented to the Local Area Agreement Delivery Board meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> September.

### 4.3 Strategic Reviews

- 4.3.1 As reported previously to the Cabinet Member for Housing, in July 2008, the Commissioning Body agreed in 2007 to undertake a series of Strategic Reviews of all SP funded services in Portsmouth. The purpose of these reviews was to examine the appropriateness of the currently funded provision based on the strategic priorities of the SP partners, and a robust assessment of service user need and demand with a view to making future commissioning decisions based on the analysis.
- 4.3.2 Following on from last years review of Socially Excluded services, a second strategic review of Support with Care (mainly Learning Disabilities and Mental Health) and Older Person's services commenced last autumn. The review again looked at the strategic needs and priorities for this new group of clients.
- 4.3.3 The review was carried out in the knowledge that further substantial savings of around £400k (15% of the review target's budget) were required in order to balance the SP budget for April 2011, even before any re-investment in new priority services could be considered.
- 4.3.4 Two 3-month consultations took place with stakeholders, including service users, about the future and development of these services, with proposals being discussed in detail at all the various groups as detailed in paragraph 3.6. A final report was submitted to the Commissioning Body in June 09.
- 4.3.5 The main changes to the programme are set out briefly in **Appendix 1**.
- 4.3.6 Supporting People will continue to monitor the successful delivery of support services via the current processes which measure demand, need, quality and performance.

### 4.4 Budget update

- 4.4.1 Once the recommendations and actions from this year's Strategic Review have been fully implemented, this will result in the SP budget remaining balanced until April 2011, when the funding will be fully included within the ABG.
- 4.4.2 However, due to currently only having an 'indicative' budget of £7.669m for 2010/11, and a lack of clarity on how much funding will be available beyond this period, there are still uncertainties about funding levels and savings targets for future years.
- 4.4.3 The Strategic Review reductions in grant funding to providers for housing support have taken account of the 2010/11 indicated loss of grant funding.

### 4.5 Individual Budgets

- 4.5.1 As reported in the last update, the Department of Health has now reported back on the Individual Budgets (IB) pilot programme, designed to test new ways of giving people who use social care and support services a greater say in the assessment of their needs.
- 4.5.2 Whilst no announcement has been made how exactly these will proceed within SP, work is currently underway to prepare for any implementation and to consider the numerous varied models of individual budgets that could be put in place, and to which client groups they would be most beneficial.

4.5.3 In addition, much of the remodeling currently being undertaken as a result of the Strategic Review work, is intended to be a half way step toward personalisation, with more flexible services and use of support hours, based on an assessment of actual service user needs.

4.5.4 SP are currently in discussions with Social Care on how they can contribute to Social Care's National Indicator target (NI 130) of increasing the number of people receiving direct payments.

#### 4.6 **National Indicators (NI's)**

4.6.1 The delivery of successful housing support is monitored through two indicators in the national indicator set (NIs 141 and 142) and research has shown that the programme is more than paying for itself through reduced costs in health services, tenancy failure, crime and residential care.

4.6.2 Within the Local Area Agreement, NI 141, (% of vulnerable people achieving independent living) has been included as one of the 35 priority targets for Portsmouth. A stretch target of 60% by 2010/11, from the 07/08 baseline figure of 55.5%, was agreed with GOSE. A local target has been set of maintaining at least 98% for NI142.

4.6.3 Services in Portsmouth are exceeding this target at the present time. The last available confirmed figures for Quarter 4 08/09 reported **NI 141 at 76%** and **NI 142 at 98.07%**.

#### 4.7 **Quality Assessment Framework (QAF) Pilot**

4.7.1 Portsmouth was chosen by the CLG to pilot a new quality assessment process intended to streamline and improve on the existing methodology. This provided the Portsmouth SP Team and its provider partners with an excellent opportunity to help shape the process that will accurately assess the true quality of services in Portsmouth.

4.7.2 The final QAF version was launched by CLG on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2009, and assessments of the first services group is currently underway. The Portsmouth SP Team is continuing to train providers in the new framework, and have adapted some of the documentation in response to consultations with providers on how to make the process more effective and efficient.

### 5.0 **ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

#### *Background List of documents*

#### *Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972*

*The following documents disclose facts and matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report*

Report to Leader of the City Council – August 2006

Portsmouth City's Five-year Supporting People Strategy (2005-2010)

Independence and Opportunity – Our Strategy for Supporting People, Department of Communities and Local Government (June 2007)

**6.0 CITY SOLICITORS COMMENTS / EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

The City Solicitor is satisfied that it is within the Cabinet Member’s powers to approve the recommendations as set out.

As this report is an update on an existing programme an Equalities Impact assessment is not required

**7.0 SIGNING OFF THE REPORT**

7.1 **Signed.....**  
**Alan Cufley, Head of Community Housing**

**Dated.....**

**8.0 APPROVAL TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The recommendations set out above were approved / approved as amended / deferred / rejected by the Cabinet Member for Housing on.....**

**Signed.....**  
**Councillor Steven Wylie**  
**Cabinet Member – Housing**

## **Appendix 1 – Summary of main changes to Supporting People programme as a result of the Strategic Review of 'Support with Care' and Older Person's services.**

- i) All service specifications to be linked more closely to focussing on the outcomes wanted by the individual service user, rather than having a prescriptive list of support tasks to be carried out;*
- ii) Learning disability (LD) services to be re-modelled to receive a fixed funding amount based on the actual assessed needs of the individuals within their services. There will also be increased in-built flexibility to transfer support hours cross-services or to support new individuals;*
- iii) All LD service users to receive sufficient support hours funded by SP to cover their housing related support needs;*
- iii) No reduction in numerical capacity to support individual LD service users;*
- iv) LD Savings total **£290k (19% )** after making available **£135k** to re-invest into new LD service or Physical Disabilities provision where current gaps exist, including providing additional hours to existing contracts;*
- v) Feedback during the consultations with all stakeholders around the needs of older people in sheltered housing indicated that whilst all service users needed accommodation with a basic level of warden/alarm support, not all individuals needed additional support on top of this. Therefore 2 levels of support funding are to be established.*
- vi) All sheltered services will be re-modelled to have a minimal 'core' of support hours of 0.5 hours per week for every eligible person to pay towards the housing support provided by the warden, with an enhanced number of hours (2.5 hours) for the more vulnerable residents in Cat. 2.5 equivalent services;*
- vii) All eligible service users would receive an additional alarm allowance payment of £1.15 per week;*
- viii) **£175k** will be made available from the savings to older people support providers in order to 'top up' and allocate support to their most vulnerable residents (as identified by the provider) to help them maintain their independence, on a totally flexible support basis. This funding will be paid as a fixed sum direct to the provider.*
- ix) Overall funding to support Older People services will reduce by **£151k (13%)** overall.*
- x) Overall hours funded by Supporting People will be reduced in both Support with Care and Older People clusters, but no service will be decommissioned and all services users that currently receive support will continue to have access to support.*
- xi) No changes were proposed to Mental Health services under this review, since significant changes were made to this client group under the last review.*

***The above changes also result in a number of administrative changes (mostly reductions), for providers:***

- a) Number of contracts and separate services to be rationalised where possible to reduce overall administrative requirements (fewer workbooks, assessments and reviews to be completed);*
- b) Frequency of quality assessments to be reduced down from annually, to once every 3 years;*
- c) 'Lite' quality assessment to be introduced to 'low value' services as widely as possible. Parameters for using this assessment to be discussed at next Commissioning Body meeting;*
- d) Service Performance Indicators (SPI's) covering Staffing Levels, Availability, Utilisation, Length of Stay, Throughput levels to be reduced substantially;*
- e) Learning Disability services no longer required to inform of changes in service users, but monitoring of 'excess' hours to be strongly considered;*
- f) Service 'Outcomes Framework' reporting to be made mandatory.*