

## **SUPPORTING PEOPLE PROGRAMME UPDATE**

**Report By: Head of Strategic Housing Services**

### **Wards Affected**

County-wide

### **Purpose**

1. To provide an update on the Supporting People Grant programme in Herefordshire

### **Financial Implications**

2. Specific risks exist in relation to the following issues associated with the Supporting People programme:
3. ODPM efficiency savings targets – the budget announcement in respect of the 2005/06 Supporting People Programme nationally is imminent. For 2004/2005 the ODPM imposed a top-sliced 2.5% efficiency saving and allowed no inflationary uplift. For 2005/2006 it is likely that further savings will be imposed and officers anticipate such savings could be in the region of 5% - 7.5% with no inflationary uplift. This would have the effect of imposing a reduction, in real terms, of 10% nationally. Due to the robust approach taken to implementation of Supporting People programme and review process in Herefordshire, we would hope to avoid the implementation of across-the-board cuts to SP funded services within the County as a result of these savings. However, we also await ODPM guidance on the approach to rolling-forward savings achieved through the local review programme which we have planned to invest in delivering priority services identified within the Supporting People Shadow Strategy.
4. National SP Grant Allocation Formula – A new approach to calculating Supporting People Grant Allocations to administering authorities has been subject to consultation recently. The new process is due to be implemented in 06/07. For Herefordshire, the outcome of this is unclear at present, but there is a risk that shire/rural counties could be disadvantaged by a formula used for grant allocation.

### **Background**

5. The Supporting People Programme was launched on April 1st 2003 with the aim of establishing a joined-up policy and funding framework for the purpose of funding housing-related support for vulnerable people. The Supporting People Programme unified a number of national funding streams that previously provided housing-related support provision.

6. Herefordshire's Shadow Supporting People Strategy, effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003, set out how the programme would be used to support local needs and priorities.
7. The Supporting People Programme is administered by the Council through a working partnership between the Council's Social Care and Strategic Housing Directorate, the West Mercia Probation Service and Herefordshire Primary Care Trust. Nominated representatives from these partner organisations form the Supporting People Commissioning Body, the body which makes decisions surrounding the allocation of Supporting People funding. The Commissioning Body is now supported in its decision making by non-voting shadow representatives comprising non-executive board members from the PCT and Probation together with the Cabinet Member (Social Care and Strategic Housing) and the Chairman of this Committee, as discussed by this Committee in April 2004.
8. Herefordshire was allocated Supporting People grant for 2003/2004 totalling £7.5 million reflecting the success of the Supporting People local implementation programme in identifying and meeting unmet need for housing-related support services in the County. This funding provides a wide range of supported housing services to vulnerable/disabled people including people who experience mental health problems, people with a learning disability, women fleeing domestic violence and the homeless. In total there are 20 different client groups identified as eligible under national guidelines.
9. Scrutiny Committee received a report on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2004 informing Committee of the outcome of the Audit Commission inspection of the Supporting People Programme in Herefordshire. The inspection report determined that the Supporting People Programme in Herefordshire was providing a 'good' two star service with 'uncertain prospects' for improvement to an excellent rating at that time. A further report was considered by Committee on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2004 which set out a series of consolidated priorities for services to be developed under the Supporting People programme.
10. This report seeks to further update Members on progress within the Supporting People Programme in Herefordshire including noting specific challenges identified as requiring consideration.

### **Considerations**

11. The Supporting People Grant allocation for 2004/2005 was £7.3 million following the imposition of the ODPM's efficiency savings, representing a reduction in the region of £200k on the budget for 03/04. Although a reduction in real terms, the Council was able to absorb savings within existing budgets having followed a robust approach to programme implementation. At that stage, prudence determined that no inflationary uplift would be applied to existing contracts within Herefordshire.
12. The programme funds housing-related support services to 2477 people through 38 providers. There are currently 98 Supporting People contracts in existence associated with the provision of the range of services and client groups funded by the grant in Herefordshire.

13. An analysis of current provision, by primary client group, is shown in Appendix A:-

### **Monitoring and Review**

14. The ODPM requires that Supporting People Teams undertake a review of all Supporting People Funded services by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006. The monitoring and review programme is the process by which schemes are evaluated against considerations surrounding strategic relevance, quality and cost effectiveness. Reports arising from the review process make recommendations for consideration by the Commissioning Body.
15. The review timetable was formulated in line with ODPM guidance which instructed SP teams to identify 'at risk schemes' for early review. The Supporting People Review team have initiated 42 reviews to date of which 35 have been considered by the Commissioning Body.
16. The table set out in Appendix B provides a summary of Commissioning Body decisions made up to September 2004.
17. The review timetable was devised to comply with the ODPM's deadline date of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006 for completion of all reviews. Current staffing pressures within the Supporting People Team have required a reconfiguration of the review timetable and measures are being considered with a view to ensuring completion of the review within the mandatory timescale. This has included the making of a bid to the ODPM for additional short-term funding to resource additional review team members.
18. The team has undertaken a re-configuration of the timetable in consultation with providers, an exercise which is also designed to enable the completion of a review of process and the completion of the 5 year Supporting People Strategy, due for submission to the ODPM in March 2005.

### **Supporting People Strategy**

19. It is a mandatory requirement that a 5-year Supporting People Strategy is delivered to the ODPM by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2005.
20. The Shadow Supporting People Strategy provided a solid base from which the Supporting People Programme in Herefordshire has been developed and delivered to date. In light of staffing pressures, consultancy support has been sought to assist the Supporting People Team and ensure completion within the timescale.

### **Learning from Reviews**

21. The Audit Commission inspection of the Supporting People Programme in Herefordshire commented that, '*a robust, consistent service review process has been developed and is in operation, with a clear role for service users.*' This reflected Herefordshire's commitment to ensuring the development and delivery of high quality, cost-effective, Housing-related support services within the County.
22. The monitoring and review process has therefore presented challenges to some providers and stakeholders, not least by virtue of the fact that, in accordance with

ODPM guidelines, early reviews were directed towards services deemed to be high cost and high risk.

23. The review process has also provided opportunities for learning which complement feedback received through dialogue with providers through e.g. the Supporting People Provider Forum. Such opportunities should therefore lead to improved engagement with and understanding of the Supporting People Programme objectives, improved engagement with the review process itself and improved outcomes for the overall programme.

### **Learning about Stakeholder Engagement**

24. The Supporting People monitoring and review process includes service user and stakeholder consultation at key stages to feed the overall assessment. Stakeholder consultation enables the review team to ascertain important information regarding how relevant the service is in meeting the operational and strategic priorities of those who refer to the service/provider.
25. In some cases, it has not always been evident that stakeholders have been engaging with the review process to an extent that could give confidence that Commissioning Body decisions were fully owned throughout stakeholder organisations. As a result, on occasion, decisions relating to the de-commissioning or re-modelling of services, informed by stakeholder views, have had challenging implications for the management of change and relationships.
26. As result of this, the Supporting People Team are giving consideration to how the review process can help ensure that stakeholders and providers commit to engagement and ownership at each stage of the review process.

### **Supporting People Services provided 'In-House'**

27. As administering Authority for Supporting People, the Council is fully committed to ensuring that in-house Supporting People funded services are treated the same as all other providers under the review programme.
28. There are currently 3 services provided in-house which are funded through the provision of Supporting People Grant.

**Home Care** – providing floating support services to vulnerable and/or disabled adults, principally delivered to older people.

**Adult Placement/Supported Lodgings** – providing accommodation-based support services to a range of vulnerable and disabled people

**Traveller Liaison** – Floating support services to travellers on designated sites

29. The review of Adult Placement/Supported Lodgings has been completed and is due for consideration at a forthcoming Commissioning Body. The review of the Traveller Liaison Service is due for initiation during the summer of 2005.
30. The review of Home Care was considered by the Commissioning Body on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2004. The review recommendation, supported by the Commissioning Body, was to de-commission the existing service and commission an alternative

housing-related support service for older people to complement the Council's reablement strategy.

31. In the course of undertaking service user consultation as part of the review, concerns were noted in relation to the level at which the Home Care service was undertaking tasks which were ineligible for Supporting People grant. The review recommended that an audit should be undertaken of the service and that any Supporting People grant, used to fund non-eligible tasks, should be re-paid in full.
32. In accordance with the recommendations, the Director of Social Care and Strategic Housing has requested Audit Services to undertake an audit of the Home Care housing-related support service in relation to the report recommendations and provide guidance. Furthermore, expert opinion has been sought from a leading Supporting People consultant to determine the position on repayment of grant. The Consultant has given preliminary advice that the transitional contract arrangements for Supporting People Grant preclude providers from liability to repay during the transitional period by virtue of the protection afforded to individual transitional housing benefit claimants until the date of first Supporting People Service Review. This would, therefore, preclude Home Care from repaying Supporting People grant awarded under transitional arrangements.
33. In the meantime, Adult Services have put in place measures to enable the commencement of an evaluation of service provision and an exploration of options, in consultation with the Supporting People Team, around securing an alternative support service to complement the Council's reablement strategy.

## RECOMMENDATION

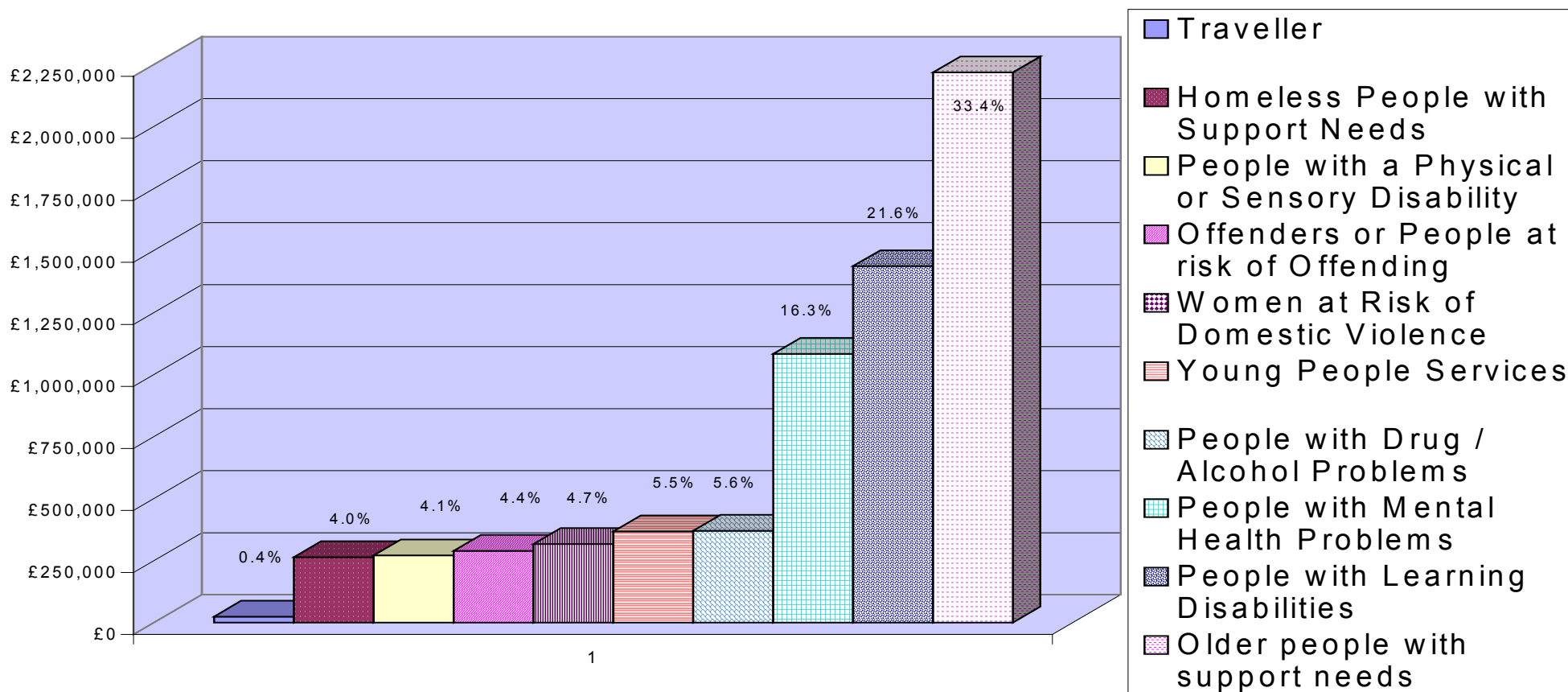
- THAT (a) the latest position in relation to the Supporting People Programme be noted;**
- (b) the governance arrangements surrounding the Commissioning Body be noted;**
- and**
- (c) learning from the monitoring and review process is developed and further considered within the Mental Health Scrutiny Scoping exercise.**

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None

Appendix A

Projected Spend per Client Group 2004/2005



(The key corresponds from the top down with the order of columns in the chart reading from left to right – ie Traveller = 0.4%, Older people with support needs = 33.4%)

\*Client groups have amalgamated within the table, therefore, the total for older people will include e.g. all sheltered housing services and floating support services

**MONITORING AND REVIEW OF SUPPORTING PEOPLE SERVICES****SUMMARY OF COMMISSIONING BODY DECISIONS  
UP TO SEPTEMBER 2004**

<b>RECOMMISSION</b>	<b>REMODEL</b>	<b>TRANSFER</b>	<b>DECOMMISSION</b>
<p>Services recommissioned with revised Contract and Improvement Plan to fully achieve Level C of the Quality Assessment Framework</p> <p>(8)</p>	<p>Services retained by Provider</p> <p>(3)</p>	<p>Voluntary transfer of services at Providers request</p> <p>(16)</p> <p>Transfer of services by incorporation into Providers current Contract</p> <p>(2)</p>	<p>Services with no strategic relevance</p> <p>(4)</p> <p>Services to be re-provided by competitive tender</p> <p>(2)</p>
8	3	18	6