

**To: ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
PANEL
18 OCTOBER 2011**

**SUPPORTING PEOPLE STRATEGY 2011 - 15
Chief Officer: Housing**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider a new strategy for the commissioning of supporting people services during the period 2011 – 15.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **That the Panel comments on the draft Supporting People Strategy and eligibility criteria.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

A new strategy setting out a framework for the commissioning of supporting people services in the future is required.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 The current Supporting People Strategy expired in 2010. Priorities for the commissioning of services need to be reviewed in the light of the current financial climate and the expected level of resources available to fund services over the next 4 years.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 The Supporting People programme funds the provision of housing related support, to help people keep their home and prevent them moving into less independent/costly housing provision. The primary need of all of the clients accessing services is a housing need and the services provided via the supporting people programmes enables the client to access a home, keep their home, and/or maintain their home successfully. A key aim of the Supporting People Strategy 2011-15 is therefore to improve the quality of life for a range of vulnerable people, by preventing homelessness and helping them live as independently as possible.
- 5.2 The need to maximise flexibility within the services that are commissioned has become increasingly important as a significant proportion of people requiring housing related support are living outside the social rented sector. In the case of older people for example, more than 73% of Bracknell Forest residents over 50 years are home owners. At present, the majority of the services for older people funded by the supporting people programme are support services provided in sheltered housing which is owned by Registered Providers (housing associations). There is no housing related support service currently available for older people living in their own home. There will also not be any capacity in the programme to fund new services. Flexibility within the services which are commissioned will therefore be necessary to enable housing related support to contribute to any new initiatives which emerge during the life of the Strategy

RESOURCES

- 5.3 The estimated resource available to fund the Supporting People programme over the next four years is as follows:

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Programme budget	1,097,000	1,076,000	1,076,000	1,076,000

- 5.4 As the ring-fencing for supporting people has been removed, funding which has contributed to services for specialist social care groups such as people with enduring mental health problems and people with learning disabilities has been transferred to the mainstream budgets for these client groups. The Supporting People strategy will therefore continue to commission services for homelessness and older people.

THE WAY FORWARD`

- 5.5 The commissioning strategy for the next four years needs to address the following priorities:
- Flexibility – to support residents across tenure and contribute to new initiatives which may emerge during the life of the strategy
 - Effective targeting – support to meet essential needs (securing a home and preventing homelessness)
 - Opportunities for new commissioning arrangements such a joint commissioning with neighbouring authorities

To deliver these priorities, this strategy will focus on the following actions:

- 5.6 It is proposed that the eligibility criteria for accessing housing related support are reviewed to ensure that priority is given to maintaining essential services which enable people to secure a home, and provide support to enable a person to keep their home. The revised eligibility criteria are attached at Appendix A.
- 5.7 The draft strategy considers models for the commissioning of services in the future:
- two floating support contracts, one for the homeless client groups, and one for older people.
 - hub and spoke, where existing housing schemes in the borough are used as accommodation hubs, and from which services can be delivered to residents in the wider community.
- 5.8 A floating support based service could be based anywhere in the borough, with mobile support workers providing housing related support to residents in their current homes, regardless of the tenure of that home, or by meeting with residents in a local office.
- 5.9 A hybrid model such as hub and spoke is a model whereby an accommodation scheme provides a hub from which services can be provided to both scheme based residents and residents in the wider community. This type of model could be particularly relevant for older persons sheltered housing, offering the opportunity for those living in sheltered schemes and eligible for support (or self funders) to receive the same “needs-led” service as those in their own home. The model could also work for homeless services. There are existing housing schemes in the borough such as Rainforest Walk, Holly House and the women’s refuge which could operate as hubs, and from which services can also be delivered to residents in the wider community.

An advantage of this approach would be that the provider could vary the number of support hours going into each part of the service, in line with client needs at any point in time. A copy of the new draft Strategy is attached at Appendix B.

- 5.10 Officers have started the consultation process by consulting with service providers on both the draft strategy and revised eligibility criteria. Further consultation will be carried out during the next 12 weeks including:
- i. Meetings with Service users
 - ii. Consultation with the voluntary sector via the Older Persons Forum
 - iii. Information on the Council's website

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 The Borough Solicitor makes no comments at this stage with regard to the proposed draft strategy. However, with regard to the proposed revision to the existing eligibility criteria the Council will be required to engage in a consultation process and have due regard to the public sector equality duty pursuant to Equality Act 2010.
- 6.2 The legal requirement to consult on a significant change in policy or the implementation of policy is well established in natural law principle. This principle has been highlighted in the case of *R (Lionel Morris) v Newport City Council* [2009] EWHC 3051 (Admin), where a decision to introduce an age limit on licensed taxis was quashed due to failure to consult.
- 6.3 The settled case law on consultation is set out in *R v Brent London Borough Council ex parte Gunning* [1985] 84 LGR 168 as follows:
- a. Consultation must be at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage
 - b. Sufficient reasons must be given for any proposals to enable intelligent consideration and response
 - c. Adequate time must be given for such consideration and response; and
 - d. The production of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account in finalising any proposals
- 6.4 The Cabinet Office Guidelines on Consultation and the 2008 Codes of Practice specify a framework for the consultation process. The Cabinet Office Guidance states the consultation process should be a minimum of 12 weeks to allow for written consultation at least once during the development of a policy. Consultation should be early in the policy development process; identify proactively the interested parties in order to engage in discussions; informally consult prior to written consultation; arrange stakeholder meetings, public meetings, web forums, public surveys, focus groups, regional events and targeted leaflet campaigns.
- 6.5 The consultation process should be compliant with the Equality Act 2010, Disability Discrimination Act 2005, Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Data Protection Act 1998.

Borough Treasurer

- 6.6 The Programme budget in 6.1 assumes that the Formula Grant remains the same from 12/13 onwards. There is a carry forward against the Supporting People

programme that could be used to purchase services if demand changes and the need arises.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.7 An equalities impact assessment for this strategy has been completed

Strategic Risk Management Issues

Other Officers

7 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

- 7.1 To date, SP service providers have been consulted

Method of Consultation

- 7.2 Provider Forum meetings, circulation of draft strategy, and revised eligibility criteria.

Contact for further information

Simon Hendey, Chief Officer: Housing - 01344 351688
simon.hendey@bracknell-forest.gov.uk