

Meeting of the Executive Members for Housing and Adult Social Services and Advisory Panel

16 July 2007

Supporting People Programme

Summary

1. This report advises Members of the progress made within the Supporting People (SP) Programme in York. It identifies the key priorities for the programme and the implications of these for the Council. The report invites the Executive Members to refer this information to the Executive for their information.

Background

2. The Supporting People Programme was launched by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) in 2003, and enables the provision of housing related support to help vulnerable people maintain or improve their ability to live independently. The programme is expected to contribute to a range of strategies, including reducing re-offending, tackling disadvantage and social inclusion, reducing and preventing homelessness, reducing health inequalities, reducing substance misuse, and increasing choice for older people, people with disabilities and with mental health conditions
3. The programme is delivered locally through a partnership between City of York Council, North Yorkshire and York Primary Care Trust and North Yorkshire Probation Service, with the Council also taking the role of Administering Authority. The partnership operates through the Commissioning Body, with non – executive and executive representatives from all three partners, and operates according to a Memorandum of Understanding.
4. City of York representatives on the Commissioning Body are the Director of Housing and Adult Social Services and two members nominated by Council.
5. The Programme in York is delivered through 125 contracts with 39 supported housing providers. These include charitable organisations, Registered Social Landlords, the Primary Care Trust and the Council. These contracts are reviewed on an annual basis, with service reviews for each customer group

undertaken on a 3 yearly cycle, to ensure that quality, cost effectiveness and strategic relevance are delivered.

6. The customer groups supported by the programme are:
 - Older people
 - People with mental health problems
 - Ex offenders
 - People with drug problems
 - People with alcohol problems
 - Homeless families, single homeless and rough sleepers
 - Travellers
 - People with HIV/AIDS
 - Young People at risk, care leavers, teenage parents
 - People with learning disabilities
 - People with physical and/or sensory disabilities
 - People fleeing domestic violence
 - 'Generic' vulnerability
7. Housing and Adult Social Services works with many of the vulnerable customer groups but the services provided through Supporting People are 'preventive' and not statutory services. Unlike the statutory services the Directorate is responsible for, it is the services that are eligible for Supporting People subsidy and not the individual using the service.
8. The programme impacts on some customer groups and strategies which do not fall within the remit of the Department, or where other Directorates will also have an interest. In particular, Young People, Offenders, and Drugs and Alcohol. Corporate links and links to the Local Strategic Partnership and Local Area Agreement are therefore essential to the success of the Programme.
9. The Programme was inspected by the Audit Commission in August 2004 and the report was published on 11th November 2004.
10. The inspection report rated the service in two ways :
 - a) How good is the Service ?
The inspectors gave the service a Fair or One Star rating
 - b) What are the prospects for improvement ?

The inspectors found the prospects to be uncertain.

11. The Commissioning Body agreed an Action Plan in November 2004. This action plan was reported to the Executive in *January 2005*. By November 2005, all actions bar one were either achieved or partly achieved. Any outstanding actions were included within the Five Year Supporting People Strategy agreed in 2005. Annex A summarises the delivery of the Inspection Action Plan.
12. The Five Year Strategy is currently being refreshed to ensure that new strategic drivers are captured. This provides an opportunity to ensure that the Supporting People Programme is more closely aligned with LAA outcomes, and contributes to the prevention and well being agenda within the city.
13. Updated information on housing support needs within the City, as well as the impact of new services that have been developed within the Programme since 2005, will also be reflected in the strategy refresh. Annex B outlines the key actions within the original strategy, and the progress to date with these.
14. The Programme in York was originally allocated a grant of £9.4m. This was based on the value of 'legacy services' as defined by the grant conditions i.e. eligible services that were already in place. York was very successful in maximising the amount of funding that could be attracted under the transitional arrangements, however the City was identified as a 'high spending' Authority from the outset. Since 2003 York's grant has decreased each year, and for 2007/8 will be £8.2m. Significant work has been required to address the reducing funding within the programme, with a large retraction plan in place for some services.
15. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (now Communities and Local Government - CLG) consulted on the future funding arrangements for the Programme in 2005. There remains a high risk that the grant will continue to reduce over the coming years, with any move towards a Distribution Formula likely to disadvantage York. It is now expected that any announcement on the future funding for the programme will be made as part of the Government's Spending Review.

Consultation

16. The Programme has a number of mechanisms for consultation, with customers, providers and other stakeholders.
17. These include a Provider Forum, and a newly formed User Group (York Support). It also includes the Core Strategy Group, which oversees the work of the programme and includes representatives from all partner organisations, and representatives from the Provider Forum. There are plans to increase the membership to include strategic leads for key customer groups, and representatives from the York Support Group.
18. Three yearly reviews of all services are undertaken by the Supporting People team, by customer group. Part of the review process includes consultation

with service users, and with stakeholders to identify any gaps, or issues with the quality of services, and to help develop plans for service development.

19. Both the Strategy, and the Strategy Refresh have been considered by stakeholders through these consultation routes.
20. Consultation over the best forum for regular reports on the programme to Members has been undertaken with the head of Legal Services, and with the Directors responsible for the two key customer groups that do not fall within HASS remit. No views have been expressed over a preferred option.

Options

21. Members are invited to note the progress achieved on both the post Inspection Action Plan and the delivery of the Five Year Strategy. Members are invited to note the new priorities proposed within the Strategy Refresh, and consider referring this report to the Executive for their consideration and information.
22. Members could indicate whether they would wish to receive regular updates on the Programme.
23. An alternative would be to provide copies of Commissioning Body Minutes to be circulated with Council Agendas, allowing members to raise any questions they may have of the nominated representatives to the Commissioning Body.

Analysis

Service reviews, eligibility and the retraction plan

24. The Supporting People Team were successful in meeting the Government's target of reviewing all legacy services by March 2006. As a result of the Service Reviews a number of services agreed to make changes to address value for money issues, improve quality and improve strategic relevance.
25. A small number of services were identified as being not eligible for SP funding, under the local eligibility criteria introduced following the Audit Commission's inspection. A larger number were identified as not being fully eligible for the level of funding they were receiving. This was because the Government had made it clear, once the overall cost of the national programme was known, that the programme was intended to provide 'low level' housing related support. It was expected that the original criteria for identifying legacy services needed to be reviewed at a local level to ensure local priorities could be delivered, and to make sure that care and housing management costs were not being funded through the SP grant.
26. Whilst the general efficiencies and quality improvements identified through the service reviews in York affected all services, the ineligible funding was found mainly in services that were either managed by the Council (for example a contribution to the costs of estate management in Housing

Services), or joint funded between SP and the Council or the Primary Care Trust (PCT) (for care costs). In particular services for people with learning disabilities and people with physical and sensory disabilities have been affected by the loss of SP funding, because many of these schemes provide support with daily living tasks, which were eligible under the legacy arrangements, but, in line with Government guidance, not under the local criteria.

27. Where customers were also in receipt of care services following a care assessment, and where it is clear that their eligible care needs can best, and most cost effectively, be met by the continuation of a service, the reduction in SP funding will in future be part of the care management costs.
28. The Commissioning Body's retraction plan has allowed funding to be withdrawn over time, up to a four year period, where there would otherwise be a risk that essential support for vulnerable people would be affected. This was agreed to allow alternative funding to be secured. However this does still mean the significant cost pressure for the Council will be a phased pressure until the final retraction for 2009/10.

Financial position and development of new services

29. At the time of the Audit Commission inspection the Commissioning Body and the Council were criticised for allowing balances to accrue without any plans for investing them in new services. The balances had accrued as a result of some services not being fully operational at the time the programme, together with a caution about making commitments when there was significant uncertainty about the future funding that the Partnership would receive.
30. Following the inspection the Commissioning Body invited the current SP providers to put forward proposals for new services, that they could evidence a need for. These services were funded for an initial period of 18 months, with a review to be undertaken during that time to decide if continued funding would be agreed, taking account of both the performance of the services and the financial position of the programme.
31. Six new services were established, including an outreach service for women escaping domestic violence, a teenage parents support scheme, support for people with mental health needs, and a skills development programme for rough sleepers. All of these services have been awarded further contracts at the end of the pilot period, following successful reviews, and a more stable financial position projected for the programme.
32. A second phase of commissioning new services commenced last year. The retraction plan, to remove ineligible funding from services, has freed up sufficient money to cover the reduction in grant and to leave some funding available for new services. Because of the staging of some of the funding reductions over three & four years, additional money will also become available next year.

33. New services are being commissioned to meet gaps in service for the priority customer groups, identified in the Five Year Strategy. These priority groups are: people with drug problems; people with complex needs (needs relating to three or more of the vulnerable customer groups); people with mental health needs; and young people.
34. To date new services have only been commissioned from our current providers, however we will be inviting other providers to apply to join our accredited provider list this summer, and will then be able to extend future bids for services to a wider market.

New priorities

35. Since 2005 new strategic drivers have continued to emerge. The information from the Long Term Commissioning Strategy for Older People highlights the demographic pressures of an aging population, and the changing aspirations of older people. Mid Year population estimates also indicate that the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) populations are growing faster in York than elsewhere.
36. The Government White Paper 'Strong and Prosperous Communities' sets out the importance of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and Local Area Agreement (LAA) to help shape communities, and local priorities and to deliver joint working. The LAA in York sets out objectives for the local community, and has provided the Supporting People programme with a new set of local outcomes to contribute to .
37. Council Priorities, and Government initiatives are also drivers for the programme. The Respect Agenda, the drive to reduce the number of homeless 16-17 year olds placed in bed and breakfast, and the development of individualised budgets for social care customers are three key areas which have implications for the future priorities for the Supporting People programme in York.
38. Through the refresh of the Five Year strategy it is clear that the development of new services has begun to address some of the gaps that existed at the outset of the programme.
39. Looking again at the current gaps, and the strategic requirements, the revised priority customer groups for any additional investment will be: people with drug problems; young people, vulnerable older people and older people with dementia. There is still a need to understand the housing support needs of BME populations and so it will be a priority to commission research on this during the coming year.
40. Discussions are already underway to explore the possibility of SP funding being used to help commission a new hostel for 16- 17 year olds, as proposed within the Homelessness Strategy, which would help reduce the use of bed and breakfast and provide the appropriate help and support to young people who are very vulnerable if they cannot live with their families.

41. It is anticipated that recommendations for new services for people with drug problems will result from the current service review for this customer group.
42. Older peoples' SP services will be reviewed between September and December 2007, and so it is expected that recommendations for any new or changed services will come from this review. Any changes proposed should help to deliver the Long Term Commissioning Strategy for Older People, and in particular the prevention agenda.

Corporate Priorities

43. By helping vulnerable people to develop the skills and networks to maintain their housing and by working in partnership with a regular review programme of the services commissioned, the Supporting People programme helps the delivery of the following Corporate Priorities:
- Improve the life chances of the most disadvantaged and disaffected children, young people and families in the city
 - Improve the health and lifestyles of the people who live in York, in particular among groups whose level of health are the poorest
 - Reduce the actual and perceived impact of violent, aggressive and nuisance behaviour on people in York
 - Increase people's skills and knowledge to improve future employment prospects
 - Improve the way the council and its partners work together to deliver better services for the people who live in York
 - Improve efficiency and reduce waste to free up more resources

Implications

Financial

44. There are no specific financial implications to this report. Financial pressures brought about as a result of the reduction in SP funding to essential services have been, and will be, raised through the usual budget monitoring procedures.
45. The future long term funding of the SP programme remains uncertain and no information is yet available on the level of grant that will be received in future years. Any reduction in grant would need to be matched by a reduction in the amount spent on the programme.

Human Resources (HR)

46. Funding of staffing provision to administer the Supporting People Pot is ring-fenced and provided by the CLG. The move towards Market Testing will require new skills and resources within the Supporting People team which may have an impact on the budget or staff structure. A three year waiver is currently in place which will allow time to consider the impact of Market Testing on the team.

Equalities

47. The Supporting People Programme provides support to many disadvantaged customer groups, and has a key role in addressing disadvantage, by providing help to ensure that basic needs such as maintaining a home, accessing services and participating in community life, are achievable.
48. There are outstanding issues to address within the programme to ensure that the needs of the BME communities within the city, regarding housing related support, are understood and met. Plans are now in place to address this during the coming months.

Legal

49. There are no legal implications to this report

Crime and Disorder

50. Supporting People Programme funds housing related support for ex offenders, with a view to reducing the risk of reoffending.
51. The Respect Agenda is one of the new strategic drivers recognised within the strategy refresh for the local programme, and there is a commitment from the Commissioning Body to support family programmes in the city to ensure that housing related support is part of the overall response to anti social behaviour issues.

Information Technology (IT)

52. A new database, Framwork I, will be introduced over the next year which will replace the existing database Supporting People use to administer the programme. This is likely to cause short term disruption but long term administrative improvements.

Property

53. There are no property implications to this report.

Risk Management

54. The programme uses the Council's Risk Management approach, and reports regularly to the partnership on any high level risks.

55. The need to retract funding from services continues to bring a financial risk to the Council, but this risk will be managed through the ongoing review of accommodation and support needs, and through the usual budget management processes.

Recommendations

56. That the Advisory Panel advise the Executive Members to note the information provided within this report, and refer the report on to the Executive for information.

Reason: This will allow a wider strategic understanding of the programme, which extends beyond the usual remit of Housing and Adult Social Services.

57. That the Advisory Panel advise the Executive Members that in future a report should be provided to the Executive Members and Advisory Panel, on an annual basis, for referral on to the Executive.

Reason: To allow a wider understanding of the progress and issues of the programme, and its links to local strategic priorities.

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Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All

Annexes

Annex A – Inspection Action Plan and outcomes

Annex B – Five Year Strategy Action Plan and progress