

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

Report of Councillor Paul Claussen Executive Member for the Housing and Economic Portfolio to the CABINET- 10TH June 2008

NORFOLK SUPPORTING PEOPLE STRATEGY 2008-2013

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To invite Members to consider and agree the Supporting People Strategy and recommend it to Council for approval.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Council:

- 2.1 Adopt the Norfolk Supporting People Strategy 2008-2013

Note: In preparing this report, due regard has been had to equality of opportunity, human rights, prevention of crime and disorder, environmental and risk management considerations as appropriate. Relevant officers have been consulted in relation to any legal, financial or human resources implications and comments received are reflected in the report.

3. Information, Issues and Options

3.1 Background

3.1.1 Launched in April 2003, Supporting People is a national funding programme which provides grants to a range of organisations across Norfolk which provide housing related support to vulnerable people and people with a disability in their own homes and supported housing schemes.

3.1.2 The Administering Authority for the programme is Norfolk County Council. The programme is however a joint project between Norfolk County Council, all seven Local Authorities, Norfolk Primary Care Trust and Norfolk Probation. These organisations collectively form the Commissioning Body which has overall strategic responsibility for the development and implementation of the programme and management of the Supporting People Budget. A Supporting People Team, employed by Norfolk Social Services carries out the day to day work of the programme on behalf of the Commissioning Body.

3.1.3 The Commissioning Body is required by Communities and Local Government (CLG) to produce a five year strategy for the programme. This Strategy covers 2008-2013 and supersedes the previous 2005-10 strategy adopted by the Council in June 2005.

3.1.4 In March/April each year the Programme publishes an annual plan containing the spending plans for the following year. CLG has set a three year budget for the programme from April 2008. Norfolk will receive £16.33 million per annum to 2011 to fund existing services.

3.1.5 Each Norfolk housing authority has a client group lead. Breckland is the lead authority for Physical and Sensory Impairment and BME and Migrant communities and is currently finalising consultation on housing and support strategies for both client groups.

3.2 Issues

- 3.2.1 The strategy sets out the vision of the Commissioning Body and its key priorities over the next five years. The overarching aim of the programme is to deliver services to people in their own homes through the provision of floating support, rather than in purpose built accommodation, unless there is a specific requirement.
- 3.2.2 The strategy also sets out priorities for the commissioning of new services if funding is available, either through an increase in the grant funding received from the CLG (not an issue for 08-11 as 3 year budget set as detailed previously), savings achieved through scheme reviews or the decommissioning of existing schemes which are not considered to be strategically relevant.
- 3.2.3 These priorities have been set as follows:
- a) It is considered that the First Priority for additional services are for people who are at a high risk of harm to themselves or to the community if services are not provided and for whom there are relatively few existing services either in the County as a whole, or in particular areas of the County. The groups for whom these factors exist to the highest extent in Norfolk are: offenders and ex-offenders, people who misuse substances, vulnerable young people and gypsies and travellers.
 - b) The Second Priority for additional services are for people who are at a substantial risk to harm to themselves or to the community if services are not provided and for whom there are a reasonable supply of existing services but there are significant gaps in particular areas of the County or in types of service. In Norfolk these are: people affected by domestic abuse, refugees and migrant workers, people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, people with a physical or sensory disability.
 - c) It is considered that the third highest need for services to be for people who are at a limited risk of harm to themselves or to the community if services are not provided and for whom there is again a reasonable supply of services but recognised gaps in provision to a lesser extent than priority two. In Norfolk these groups are older people, people with learning difficulties and people with a mental illness.
- 3.2.4 The Strategy highlights particular shortages in the following types of housing related support services in the Breckland District, when compared to provision across the County and the regional average:
- a) People affected by domestic abuse. Revenue funding has already been secured for the provision refuge in the south of the district.
 - b) Floating Support for people with a mental illness. An extension of the current contract to be pursued to address this gap. A Sub Regional supported housing scheme for people with mental health difficulties is currently being considered.
 - c) Vulnerable Young People. Funding has recently been secured for 12 units of supported housing in Breckland targeted at young people
 - d) Services for younger and older single homeless people with complex needs. Gaps in this area of service provision are being progressed through the strategic review of hostel accommodation across the sub region.
 - e) Floating Support to Migrant Worker Communities.

3.3 Options

- 3.3.1 To agree to adopt the Norfolk Supporting People Strategy 2008-2013, demonstrating Breckland Council's commitment to its Commissioning Body Role, improving services for vulnerable residents and a commitment to delivering the Norfolk Local Area Agreement.

3.3.2 To not agree to adopt the Norfolk Supporting People Strategy 2008-2013, recognising the inherent risk for Breckland in failing to uphold the memorandum of understanding in existence between the Council and Norfolk County Council. To not agree to adopt the Norfolk Supporting People Strategy would also present difficulties to the Council in demonstrating partnership working against the independent living national indicators proposed under the Norfolk Local Area Agreement.

3.4 Reasons for Recommendation

3.4.1 The Supporting People Programme is the predominant funding stream available to provide new supported housing services to Breckland's most vulnerable residents. Availability of services through the Supporting People Programme is a key driver for improvements to the Council's homelessness and housing advice, housing register and private sector housing services.

3.4.2 Norfolk is a pathfinder for the integration of the Supporting People Programme into the Local Area Agreement (LAA) structure and as a result from April 2008 the Programme Grant (£16.3m per annum) will be managed as if it was part of the new Area Based Grant. The actual merger of funding in April 2009 will depend on the outcome of the Norfolk and other pathfinders. In order to be able to influence the direction of travel and demonstrate our clear commitment to the LAA process, it is recommended that the Council support the priorities for the Supporting People Programme contained in the Strategy.

3.4.3 Of the indicators proposed for the Norfolk Local Area Agreement, NI141 (proposed as one of the 35 National Indicators) and NI142 (proposed as a local indicator) cover the Supporting Independent living agenda. The Norfolk Supporting People Programme will be the main delivery vehicle for delivering outcomes against these measures, with the aim to provide better value and more integrated approaches to meeting service users' needs.

4. Risk and Financial Implications

4.1 Risk

4.1.1 Failure to adopt the Supporting People Strategy would constitute a medium level reputational risk to the Council, in the light of our responsibilities to work in partnership to deliver the Local Area Agreement and 'Norfolk Ambition' – the Norfolk Sustainable Communities Strategy. This course of action would also constitute a lower level financial and operational risk to the Council, in that Breckland would risk the potential loss of future funding for supported housing schemes and inability to meet the needs of vulnerable residents of Breckland.

4.2 Financial

4.2.1 No direct financial implications. The Memorandum of Understanding agreed by Breckland Council in December 2006 in respect of the governance arrangements for the Supporting People Programme does not constitute a financial risk sharing agreement.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 No direct legal implications. The Memorandum Of Understanding adopted by Breckland Council in December 2006 in respect of the governance arrangements for the Supporting People Programme does not constitute a formal legal partnership agreement.

6. Other Implications

a) Equalities: No direct equalities implications for Breckland as a non provider of services. The Norfolk Supporting People Team undertake Equality Impact

Assessments on existing and newly commissioned scheme and the results of reviews are reported to local authority commissioning partners as a matter of course.

- b) Section 17, Crime & Disorder Act 1998: The prioritisation of services to client groups which represent a risk to themselves or to the wider community, such as offenders or ex-offenders, directly supports the Section 17 aims and objectives.
- c) Section 40, Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006: A Sustainability Assessment will be undertaken as part of any planning application process on any new supported housing scheme.
- d) Human Resources: no human resources implications.
- e) Human Rights: A key aim of the Supporting People Programme is to ensure that services are available to all who require them, regardless of race, ethnicity or disability in doing so the programme directly supports the aims of the Human Rights Act article 8.
- f) Other: Children's Act – Adoption of this strategy contributes directly to the aims of the Children's Act, in that the provision of specialised support in the home or in supported accommodation, however temporary in nature, contributes directly to improving the life chances, address health inequalities and improve access to education and opportunities for children.

7. Alignment to Council Priorities

- 7.1 The Supporting People Strategy 2008-2013 ensures services are delivered to vulnerable residents across Breckland in a fair and consistent manner, targeting new investment to those who are considered to pose a risk to themselves and the community and for whom fewer services exist. In doing so the programme supports the Council's delivery aims under 'Building Safer and Stronger Communities' through addressing offender behaviour, fear of crime and building community cohesion. 'Prosperous Communities' by seeking to reduce deprivation and improving access to services to older, disabled or suffer from health problems. 'Your Council, Your Services', ensuring that the quality and consistency of services improves

8. Ward/Community Affected

- 8.1 All wards/parishes affected.

Background Papers

Norfolk Supporting People Commissioning Body – Memorandum of Understanding Adopted Cabinet 12/12/06

Norfolk Supporting People Strategy 2005-2010 – Adopted Full Council 30/06/05

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Key Decision Status (Executive Decisions only):

Key Decision detailed on Forward Plan

Appendices attached to this report:

Norfolk Supporting People Strategy 2008-2013