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## Report of the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods

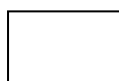
### Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods)

Date: 8<sup>th</sup> December 2008

Subject: Update on the Supporting People Programme

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#### Electoral Wards Affected: All



Ward Members consulted  
(referred to in report)

#### Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity ☐

Community Cohesion ☐

Narrowing the Gap ☐

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Supporting People is the national programme for commissioning housing related support services for vulnerable adults. The Leeds Supporting People programme is managed through a partnership of the Council, NHS Leeds and the West Yorkshire Probation Service, and is administered on a day-to-day basis by the Environment and Neighbourhoods Directorate.

The Leeds Supporting People programme was subject to an Audit Commission inspection in January 2007, and received a fair (one-star) rating with promising prospects for improvement. The Council has proactively sought to address the improvement recommendations made by the Audit Commission, and to deliver wider improvements to the delivery of the programme.

Supporting People funding can currently only be used to commission housing related support services. The government has proposed that the ring-fence may be removed in 2009/10, if the Supporting People programme grant is integrated into the Area Based Grant Route. No final decision has been made by government on this proposal and the implications for the Supporting People programme cannot currently be confirmed.

The Housing Strategy and Commissioning section, which manages the Supporting People programme on a day-to-day basis, updated its contract management policies, following the Audit Commission inspection. This revised approach to commissioning services has generated significant efficiency savings, improved service quality and performance

## **1. Purpose of This Report**

- 1.1. To update Scrutiny Board members on progress relating to the Supporting People programme, since the last Scrutiny Board report in September 2008.

## **2. Background Information**

- 2.1. Supporting People is the national programme for commissioning housing related support services for vulnerable adults. The programme commissions a range of services, such as sheltered warden services for older people, projects for people with learning disabilities and hostels for homeless people. The purpose of housing related support services is to enable vulnerable people to achieve and/or maintain an independent living outcome. The programme can only commission services that are defined as being housing related support. Other complementary services, such as social care or housing management, need to be financed through other funding streams.
- 2.2. The Leeds Supporting People programme is managed through a Commissioning Body, which comprises representatives from the Council, NHS Leeds and the West Yorkshire Probation Service. The programme is administered on a day-to-day basis by the Housing Strategy and Commissioning section, which sits within the Environment and Neighbourhoods Directorate.
- 2.3. All proposals made by the administering authority, relating to the commissioning of services, need to be unanimously approved by the Commissioning Body. The three partner agencies have an equal decision making capacity.
- 2.4. The Leeds Supporting People programme received a grant settlement of £32.987 million for 2008/09, which is being used to commission 377 services. The programme grant is held by the Council as the administering authority. The grant settlement in 2003/04, the first year of the programme, was £35.934 million. Contract management work carried out by the Council has focused on maximising value for money in use of grant whilst at the same time endeavouring to generate improvement in service quality.
- 2.5. The Leeds Supporting People programme was subject to an Audit Commission inspection in January 2007, which concluded that the Council was delivering a fair (one-star) service with promising prospects for improvement. The Council, and partners, has strived to address the improvement recommendations identified by the Audit Commission and to deliver further improvements in service delivery.
- 2.6. The government has proposed that Supporting People programme grant funding will be released to local authorities through the Area Based Grant route from 2009/10. This proposal is being tested in 15 pilot authorities in 2008/09. The findings of the pilot authorities are likely to be made available to all stakeholders in December 2008, and these findings may well influence the government's ultimate decision whether to implement the proposal. It is assumed that the ring-fence that is currently attached to Supporting People funding, so that programme grant can only be used to commission housing related support services, will be removed as part of the integration into Area Based Grant. Many supported housing providers have expressed concern regarding this proposal, fearing that it may well lead to cuts in services.

### 3. Main Issues

- 3.1. Supporting People programme grant funding can currently only be used to fund housing related support services and authorities are obliged to make arrangements to retract funding that is used to cover ineligible activity, such as social care. The Audit Commission recommended that the Council modify its existing Retraction Plan, so that ineligible funding was wholly withdrawn by the end of 2009/10. The updated Retraction Plan identified that £3.8 million would need to be withdrawn over the two-year period, with £2.1 million being retracted in 2008/09 and £1.7 million in 2009/10. The arrangements for 2008/09 have been implemented with the funding withdrawal occurring over the term of the year. There may well be implications for the implementation of the second year of the Retraction Plan stemming from the Area Based Grant proposal. Theoretically, the removal of the Supporting People programme grant ring-fence would mean that the Council could use the funding to meet its wider identified priorities, and therefore the retraction arrangements would not need to be completed. However, the government may well attach conditions to the use of Supporting People programme grant from 2009/10 onwards, and the completion of retraction arrangements may be one such condition. Scrutiny Board members can be informed of the Area Based Grant changes, and the implications for the Supporting People programme, once these are finalised by government.
- 3.2. The Partnership has been able to commission a range of additional services in the last year. Services have been commissioned on both long- and short term contracts, the purpose of the latter is to release Council funding that can be used for other priorities, to address short-term need and to use Supporting People funding as 'pump priming' funding, which will generate additional benefits/efficiency savings for the Council. The short-term funding has been sourced from non-recurring income, generated through under-spend against existing contracts. The tables below set out the additional services commissioned through the programme.

#### Longer-term Commissioning

Service	Provider	Value	Notes
Offender Management Services	DISC, CRI, Leeds Housing Concern	£615k	Assist priority and prolific offenders to secure more settled living arrangements to address offending behaviour.
POPPs	Community Links, Age Concern	£415k	Assist vulnerable older people with mental health problems to achieve and maintain independent living arrangements.
Minor Adaptations & Housing Options Service for older people	Leeds Care and Repair	134k	Assist older people to live independently. Reduce falls and admissions to hospital.
Telecare Mobile Response Service	Leeds City Council	154k	Promoting capacity for older people to live independently through provision of response

			service for service users without 'named' contacts.
Carr Beck 'Wet' Hostel	Leeds Housing Concern	80k	Jointly funded with Adult Social Care. Increase in proportion of funding covered by Supporting People programme.
Robinia Support Solutions	Robinia Support Solutions	171k	Jointly funded with Adult Social Care. Increase in proportion of funding covered by Supporting People programme.
NRASS	NRASS	20k	Service for people with sensory impairment. Without additional funding service would have closed.
Case Resolution	Leeds Housing Concern, Leeds Federated Housing Association, Connect Housing	240k	Services designed to help refugees subject to Case Resolution programme to be resettled into wider Leeds community.

### Short term commissioning

Service	Provider	Value	Notes
Neighbourhood Network Services	Leeds City Council	665k	Half year funding of part of service. Services designed to assist older people to live independently.
Family Intervention Project	Leeds City Council	460k	Part funding of service for 2008/09. Services designed to assist problematic families to achieve and maintain settled living arrangements.
Leaving Care Supported Lodgings Scheme	Leeds City Council/GIPSIL	220k	Service designed to help care leavers secure more suitable housing options.
Private Sector Lettings Scheme	Leeds City Council	197k	Service offering housing support to people taking up the offer of a privately rented tenancy. May encourage landlords to let properties via Council.
Hospital Discharge Scheme	Leeds City Council	20k	Service will ensure that homeless people leaving hospital will secure housing in a planned way.
Young Offenders Housing Support Service	Leeds City Council/Leeds Housing Concern	73k	Housing support service for young people known to YOS. Linked to wider offender management

			services.
Anneli Project	Led by St. Anne's Community Services	30k	Service for women who have trafficked into the UK to work in the sex industry. Project requires set up funding.

3.3. The above cover the gaps in services identified by the Audit Commission, such as services for older people, disabled people, refugees and people with drug and alcohol dependencies. The Leeds Supporting People programme has also commissioned other services, such as Offender Management Services, which reflect more recent Council priorities set out within the Leeds Strategic Plan.

3.4. Current contractual liability matches the grant settlement of £32,987,000. The grant settlement for 2003/04 was £35.934 million and the Commissioning Body has made three annual inflationary uplifts of 2.5/2.4%. If the Council had not made any efficiency savings then contractual liability would currently stand at £38.534 million. The Council has therefore made efficiency savings of £5.547 million to balance the budget. In addition, the new longer-term commissioning of £1.829 million, means that total efficiency savings of £7.376 million have been generated since the start of the programme in 2003/04. This equates to 20% of the original budget settlement. The efficiency savings have been generated through a variety of sources:

3.4.1. Decommissioning of non-strategically relevant services

3.4.2. Tendering of poorly performing strategically relevant services

3.4.3. Retraction arrangements

3.4.4. Service review which identified value for money savings

3.4.5. Contract variation for under utilised services

3.5. The Leeds Supporting People programme has succeeded in delivering improvements in service quality at the same time as generating efficiency savings. All commissioned services are assessed against the Quality Assessment Framework, which gives an A-D rating against six key criteria. Needs and Risk Assessment, Support Planning, Health and Safety, Protection from Abuse, Fair Access, Diversity and Inclusion and Complaints. There has been a 50% improvement in service ratings in the last year. No service is now scored at a Level D. The Supporting People Commissioning Body has set a target that a minimum of 70% of services will attain a Level B rating by the end of 2008/09. The improvement in service delivery has been led by the intensive approach to contract management adopted by the Housing Strategy and Commissioning section.

3.6. The Leeds Local Area Agreement includes NI 141: number of people helped to achieve independent living through housing-related support. A target of 66% was set for 2008/09 based upon performance of 60% in 2007/08. Actual performance for the first two quarters of 2008/09 has been 72.5%. Once again, the dramatic

improvement in performance can be attributed to the intensive contract management approach adopted by the Housing Strategy and Commissioning section.

- 3.7. The Housing Strategy and Commissioning section has updated and improved a directory of services covering the 377 commissioned services. This directory is available on the internet. Service users continue to be crucial to the development of the directory and information provided by the commissioned services as they play a vital role as the programme's 'critical friends'.

#### **4. Implications for Council Policy and Governance**

- 4.1. The Housing Strategy and Commissioning section have prepared the statement of grant usage for 2007/08 that was submitted to the CLG. The statement was ratified by the Council's Internal Audit section and the Supporting People Commissioning Body prior to submission. The statement specified the value of ineligible spend in 2007/08 and gave updated details of retraction arrangements. No feedback, indicating any concerns, has been received from the CLG.
- 4.2. The Council has received no communication from the Audit Commission since the inspection. However, it is assumed that the Audit Commission will require a progress update at some point.
- 4.3. The Supporting People Commissioning Body has agreed that decisions relating to service commissioning will be made within the context of the Leeds Strategic Plan and the Leeds Local Area Agreement.

#### **5. Legal and Resource Implications**

- 5.1. The proposal to integrate the Supporting People programme grant into the Leeds Area Based Grant may well have implications for the retraction arrangements. However, these cannot be confirmed until a final decision is made by Government on the arrangements for grant from 2009/10 onwards.

#### **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1. The council has made significant progress in relation to meeting the recommendations of the Audit Commission and to improve the quality and efficiency of the administration of the Leeds Supporting People programme.
- 6.2. The Leeds Supporting People has been successful at delivering efficiency savings of £7.3 million, improved service quality by 50% and improved performance by over 10% in the last year. These achievements can be largely attributed to the contract management policies that have been adopted by the Housing Strategy and Commissioning section since the Audit Commission inspection.

## **7. Recommendation**

- 7.1. A further update report is submitted to Scrutiny Board in March 2009 when clarification on the future of the programme in relation to Area Based Grant will be established.
- 7.2. Consider the feasibility of other Council led commissioning services adopting the contract management policies used by the Housing Strategy and Commissioning section.