
Cabinet Report – 30th June 2010

Supporting People Strategy 2010-15

Purpose of Report

1. The last Supporting People Strategy was produced in 2005. This new draft strategy provides information on the current and predicted demand for low level housing related support and makes recommendations that will shape investment decisions for the 2010 -15 period.

Background

2. Supporting People (low level housing related support) is intended to prevent vulnerable people from becoming homeless or being admitted into institutional care (for example, residential care, hospitals or prisons). The support is intended to support vulnerable people who often would fall below the service thresholds of other (statutory) services. The strategy covers needs in relation to:

Alcohol	Domestic abuse
Gypsies and travellers	HIV
Homelessness	Learning Disabilities
Mental Health	Offenders
Older People	Physical/Sensory
Refugees	Substance misuse (drugs)
Teenage parents	Young People

Every £1 spent on providing housing support to vulnerable people can save nearly £2 in reduced costs of health services, tenancy failure, crime and residential care (Building Better lives - Audit Commission 2009)

There is extensive data to demonstrate that investment in this low level housing related support reduces and prevents expenditure occurring for other agencies. This information is contained in 'Research into the financial benefits of the Supporting People Programme produced by Tom Ashton and Claire Hempenstall, Capgemini in July 2009 published by the Department for Communities and Local Government.'

3. The draft strategy has been widely circulated to stakeholders and partner agencies and has been made available via the Community Engagement database. Specific consultation has taken place with the Mental Health Board, Youth Offending Service Management Board, Learning Disabilities Housing Strategy Sub-group, the Homelessness Review Group and Dudley Housing Partnership.

This strategy contributes to meeting a range of Local Area Agreement objectives and Community Strategy priorities, particularly in supporting vulnerable people to

live within sustainable communities, reducing crime, reducing alcohol misuse and supporting older people to live independently.

There are some key recommendations within the strategy that will contribute to meeting corporate objectives. These include:

- Personalisation of services – increasing the range of floating support services that support the person, wherever they live, rather than being tied to specific accommodation. This will dovetail with transforming social care objectives and help us to support a wider range of older people to prevent residential care admissions and contribute to reducing delayed hospital discharges. The way people access services will also be changed. This will provide people with a wider range of information about the choices that are available to them.
- Delivering better value for money – a commissioning strategy is being formulated to deliver the strategic objectives outlined in the strategy. A key element of this is to tender for services on a client group basis over the coming years to ensure that the best value for money is obtained.
- Over time, service providers in Dudley have developed a diverse range of supported housing accommodation that helps to meet the housing needs of vulnerable people. This ranges from specialist housing for young parents to homeless hostel accommodation. The standard of accommodation varies from modern purpose built units to accommodation that was built a number of years ago that no longer meets modern expectations (self contained facilities, Disability Discrimination Act compliant etc) and requires redevelopment or upgrading. The strategy also provides the opportunity to align revenue funding in order support and attract Homes and Communities Agency investment for our supported housing priorities including the re-provision of the single homeless hostel service at Gibbs Road House (Midland Heart) in order to provide a more ‘foyer style’ service that will help to tackle worklessness issues and the development of a new domestic abuse refuge (CHADD) that will enable us to better meet the needs of large households, people with cultural or mobility needs and males who have experienced abuse.
- Since the last strategy was produced in 2005 the overall number of people supported has increased from 5,437 to 8,200. The largest part of this increase, however, is because we have included services that receive some Supporting People contribution but are also primarily funded through other sources, for example, older people receiving an alarm service from Dudley MBC (Housing Revenue Account).
- In order to meet the needs of the wider range of people identified within this strategy there is a need to review the ‘eligibility criteria’ for housing related support. Currently, there is a concentration of services for people within social rented housing. There is a clear need to balance equality of access to services across all housing tenures. This is particularly important if we are working towards meeting the needs of our increasing population of elderly householders who are equity rich but income poor and often struggle to access support to maintain their independent living arrangements.

- We have identified a range of unmet support needs throughout this strategy. We will use innovation and best practice to try to meet as many of these needs as we can, given the reduction of resources that are likely to be available. We have prioritised the needs into a number of categories. These priorities will be used to form our Commissioning Strategy that will help to deliver the objectives of this strategy. Priorities include services for older people and households experiencing domestic abuse.

Finance

4. Dudley has received an allocation of Supporting People Grant since 2003. From 2009/10 the funding is paid as part of the Area Based Grant.

Budget savings of just under 10% must be achieved over the next three financial years as follows:

2010/11	£250,000	
2011/12	£444,000	(£194k in year)
2012/13	£550,000	(£106k in year)

In addition to this a number of new funding commitments will come on line, including at least two of the Borough's new Extra Care housing schemes. In order to ensure that expenditure remains within budget, services will be tendered, by client group, over the next three financial years to achieve the necessary savings.

Law

- 5 Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 enables the Council to do anything calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the discharge of its functions

Section 2 of the Local Government Act, 2000, enables the Council to do anything which it considers is likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well being of the borough

The powers and duties of housing authorities in relation to the allocation and management of Council housing are set out in the Housing Acts 1985 and 1996 and the Homelessness Act 2002

Equality Impact

- 6 A Level One Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed, in consultation with key stakeholders. There are a range of equalities issues that will be addressed by the implementation of this strategy. These include:
 - Increased opportunities for Black and Minority Ethnic elders to receive community based floating support
 - Increased hostel/foyer style services for women (currently the majority of hostel spaces can only be accessed by males)
 - Currently, few people with disabilities have accessed the single homeless hostel or the domestic abuse refuges. This is largely because the accommodation used is not DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) compliant so we have afforded a high priority to securing funding from the Homes and Communities Agency in order to provide more appropriate accommodation.

- Currently there are few male service users within the domestic abuse refuge services despite the fact that 14% of the incidents reported to the police in Dudley involve male victims, as mentioned above, this strategy prioritises securing funding to deliver more suitable accommodation.

Recommendation

7. It is recommended that:-

- *Cabinet notes and approves the content of this strategy.*



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List of Background Papers
Supporting People Strategy 2010-15
Equalities Impact Assessment – Level 1