

11 July 2007

The Supporting People Strategy: “Independence and Opportunity”

Decisions:

- 1) Members are asked to consider the summary of the Supporting People Strategy contained within the report and comment on / agree key points in the response at paragraphs 10–15.

Actions required:

- 2) Comments and additional points will be taken forward in continuing work with CLG and others in order to implement the strategy.

Action By:

Contact Officer: Paul Ogden, Business Manager, Community Well-being Board
paul.ogden@lga.gov.uk , 020 7664 3277.

11 July 2007

The Supporting People Strategy: “Independence and Opportunity”

Summary:

“Independence and opportunity” the supporting people strategy was launched by Communities and Local Government on 20th June 2007¹. This paper gives a very brief background to the Supporting People Programme and a summary of the strategy document. Key issues and suggested responses are set out in paragraphs 10–15.

Background:

- 1) Supporting People was launched in 2003 as a programme offering people the opportunity to improve their quality of life by providing a stable home environment which, in turn, enables greater independence. The programme delivers a range of cost effective housing-related services which complement other care services that may be provided. Local programmes are commissioned through partnerships of local government (housing and social services), PCTs and probation and are delivered through a range of providers across all sectors. The programme is supported and implemented through local authorities.
- 2) The programme has delivered a significant range of supports for people. As the strategy points out this includes better and more user focused services for more than 1 million people per year. The success of the programmes was recognised in an Audit Commission report in 2005.
- 3) Emerging findings of work commissioned by CLG to evaluate the financial benefits of the programme suggest significant savings to the public purse in housing, health and criminal justice systems. The programme is funded through the Supporting People Grant paid by CLG to top tier and unitary authorities. The grant was set at £1.8 billion in 2004/05 and was £1.7 billion in 2006/07 and has remained at that level in 2007/08. Reductions in overall grant levels have been delivered by authorities through efficiency and other savings which have been challenging in a

¹The Supporting people strategy can be found at :
<http://www.spkweb.org.uk/Subjects/Supporting+People+Strategy+-+DCLG/Supporting+People+Strategy.htm>

number of areas. Changes to distribution formula have been additionally challenging in some authorities.

- 4) The publication of the strategy meets a commitment made in “Supporting People: Next steps in our Supporting People Strategy” published in July 2006, which set out conclusions of a major consultation on the programme initiated in late 2005.

Key points in the strategy

- 5) In summary, the key areas in the strategy are:
 - a. Keeping users at the heart of the programme and local delivery of service
 - b. Building on successful partnerships with the Third Sector
 - c. Delivering effectively in the new local government landscape.
 - d. Working towards better efficiency and less bureaucracy

- 6) **Keeping users at the heart of the programme and local delivery of service** comprises the following elements:
 - a. Putting the service user in charge, through the Quality Assurance Framework, and personalised support planning using a revised and more “user friendly” Directory of Supporting People services to enable better identification of services appropriate to needs;
 - b. Challenging barriers to joined-up interventions in order to ensure better co-ordinated responses to individual needs;
 - c. Getting more service users involved and empowered. This reflects the theme of strengthened accountability and responsiveness set out in “Strong and Prosperous Communities”, and proposes the development of local service user involvement plans and “Charters for Independent Living” setting out clear and accessible standards that people can expect;
 - d. Developing more integrated assessments, in particular in relation to the cross departmental work being led by the DH on a common assessment framework for adults and with DfES in relation to children’s services;
 - e. Meeting the needs of mobile groups and individuals in order to ensure better access, choice and control with authorities working together in order to ensure appropriate solutions to the cross boundary issues this raises;
 - f. Developing better communication and consultation with service users, in particular work to develop the user involvement plans and charters in order to clarify the roles and responsibilities of commissioners / providers;

- g. Exploring alternative service provision models, in particular “fit” with Individual Budgets, as Supporting People is one of the funding streams in the current pilots;
 - h. Helping service users to make the right choices through, for example brokerage arrangements as demonstrated in the “IN Control” pilots”.
- 7) **Building on Successful Partnerships with the Third Sector** recognises the fact that 66% of providers are from the Third Sector and that further development of the programme will have specific challenges for providers. The strategy identifies support to providers through:
- a. The role of the Third Sector – building on cross departmental work that draws upon and builds expertise in the sector in order to inform how the sector can be involved in shaping public sector service delivery;
 - b. Expectations on providers to work with local authorities to ensure that users are included in service design and performance management;
 - c. Having the right level of reporting, accountability and transparency – that costs arising from administrative requirements are transparent and that resources are freed up for delivery;
 - d. Support and Capacity Building – CLG will continue to support capacity building with other national bodies and by ensuring Third Sector representation on cross government issues, establishment of regional champions, sharing positive practice and providing support to deliver training and advice.
- 8) **Delivering in the new Local Government Landscape** reflects the proposed changes set out in “Strong and Prosperous Communities” with local authorities central to giving strategic lead to better meet the needs of local people, and, in the case of the strategy, the particular needs of people who currently use Supporting People services. The role of authorities in strategic planning for the changing needs of the ageing population is recognised and will be supported through a National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society, to be published at a later date. An issue of concern identified in the consultation and reflected in the “Next steps” document was a proposal to “strengthen” the statutory base of the people programme. Following further discussion with authorities and providers it has been decided not to progress this. Other key elements of this section are:-
- a. By forging new relationships and making the right links authorities will be expected to set out how housing support can assist delivery of the wider sustainable communities strategy, at local and regional level;
 - b. Developing stronger, more effective governance, in particular to build on the “Commissioning Body” approach and ensure “fit” with the wider Local Strategic Partnership;

- c. Integrating Supporting People into Local Area Agreements (LAA). In order to prepare for delivery of the LAA and new performance framework by 2008–09 a number of authorities will be identified to operate with amended grant conditions to assess the impact on delivery of the new arrangements;
 - d. Developing new PSAs and targets – will be identified following the outcome of the CSR, including developing outcomes in consultation with authorities and providers, consistent with the emerging performance framework and placing no additional burdens on authorities
 - e. To reflect the intention to move towards a risk based approach to inspection and the replacement of CPA by the new Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA), during the period of transition the current SP inspection process will be maintained. However, there is a suggestion that there may be a need for “additional inspection” beyond the CAA approach which is being discussed with the Audit Commission;
 - f. Promoting and sharing positive practice will build on the work of Regional lead officer groups, the SP Beacon authorities and CLG positive practice seminars to enhance existing regional networks. ‘Regional champions’ will also be appointed as conduits for sharing knowledge and initiatives between authorities;
 - g. Funding and Investment decisions will be contingent on the outcome of CSR.
- 9) The strategy identifies that £345m efficiencies have been delivered through the programme over a five year period and that, as new services are developed, there will be a continuing need to maintain efficient use of resources through good understanding of costs, unmet needs and priorities. This work will be supported through
- a. The Value Improvement Programme which has been put in place to draw on and extend the learning of 11 original value improvement projects which looked at options in relation to improved commissioning and procurement. The work of this programme will be undertaken with the regional excellence partnerships and provider representatives;
 - b. Reducing bureaucracy which will include a reduction in the monitoring and information requirements on authorities;
 - c. Using new technology and business processes to improve efficiency.

Key Issues and suggested response

- 10) **Direction and approach.** The overall approach to the development of the programme, in particular the emphasis on building upon person centred and user led initiatives is welcome, as is the emphasis upon establishing the programme as

one element of wide reaching housing and support strategies to meet the demands of demographic change. The support to people through the programme is, and will be, key to the development of “prevention” approaches to support and care as well as contribution to the range of options through which people are able to maintain control over decisions that are important to them and support independence.

- 11) Ensuring that the strategy has good fit with the ambitions set out in “Strong and Prosperous Communities” is helpful, both in terms of the programme’s integration into the LAA and ensuring that the performance management of the programme is set within the overall “200 indicator set” for local government.
- 12) In that context (of the new performance framework for local government), the suggestion of continuing discussion with the Audit Commission about the need for “additional inspection” beyond the CAA needs clarification and further discussion
- 13) **Funding** The proposal to end the current ring-fenced grant and its replacement by area based funding from 2009 is welcome and will support further mainstreaming of services delivered through the programme. It is helpful that this will be tested by the proposed pilot authorities.
- 14) Similarly, it is helpful that the Value Improvement Programme will be developed nationally following up on and developing the learning from the existing pilots in particular with regard to commissioning and procurement arrangements. There is a clear expectation that efficiency will be central to the further development of the overall programme, though whether specific targets will be set needs to be clarified. The strategy highlights the level of efficiencies that have been achieved over the period of the programme, and the ability to achieve further reductions in funding without affecting other areas of spend will need to be monitored.
- 15) The overall funding for the programme remains unclear and subject to decisions in relation to the Comprehensive Spending Review. Although better alignment of the funding streams available to areas through the LAA will support more effective delivery this will be undermined if significant areas of funding are reduced.

Implications For Wales

None

Financial / Resource Implications

None at this point

Contact Officer: Paul Ogden, Business Manager, Community Well-being Board
paul.ogden@lga.gov.uk , 020 7664 3277