

LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

Executive - 14 March 2005

Report from Director of Housing

For action- agreement

Wards affected:
ALL

Report Title: Supporting People Programme Update and Approval of 5 Year Strategy

Forward Plan Ref:

1.0 Summary

1.1 The Supporting People programme provides housing support to vulnerable people. This report provides information about the progress of the programme in Brent. It summarises the proposed priorities for the 5 Year Supporting People Strategy and asks for approval of the Strategy. It also identifies the key priorities of the West London and Cross London Supporting People strategies which provide the regional context.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 To approve the London Borough of Brent 5 Year Supporting People Strategy
- 2.2 To approve the draft 5 Year West London Supporting People strategy
- 2.3 To note financial and legal issues and other progress on the Supporting People programme during 2004/5

3.0 Detail

3.1 Background

3.2 The Supporting People programme has been running since April 2003. The programme provides a housing support service for over 3000 people in Brent. Services are provided by over 50 organisations, under contract to Brent Council.

- 3.3 The Supporting People programme is funded through Supporting People Grant income, received from the ODPM.
- 3.2 The ODPM requires a 5 Year Strategy to be agreed and submitted by 31st March 2005. This strategy provides detail about services currently provided through the Supporting People programme, its costs, benefits and contribution to wider policy agendas. It also identifies areas where change and service improvements are required to ensure that the programme effectively meet local needs. The Strategy is attached as Appendix 1 for approval.
- 3.3 Supporting People covers a wide range of client groups. The initiative therefore links to a number of national, regional and local strategies. It is envisaged that in time, the Supporting People Grant will become integrated within other budgets, and the Strategy will become integrated into the LSP and Communities Plan.
- 3.4 **5 Year Supporting People Strategy**
- 3.5 The final draft of the 5 Year Supporting People Strategy attached as Appendix 1 shows how legacy services, inherited when Supporting People started, will be changed and service standards improved, to address current needs prior to that strategic integration.
- 3.6 The Supporting People 5 Year Strategy includes the following sections:
- Vision for Supporting People
 - How the Strategy has been developed
 - How Supporting People services contribute to strategic priorities
 - Supply of housing support services in Brent
 - Needs Mapping
 - Value for money and charging
 - Priorities for Future Action
 - Annual Plan for 2005/6
- 3.3 The following areas are proposed as priorities for the 5 Year Supporting People strategy, these are all set out in Section 7 of the Strategy:
- i. Top priorities for commissioning of new Supporting People services, to be funded from within the Supporting People budget, including some joint commissioning of new services with health and social services:
- Services for frail elderly people and older people with mental health problems
 - Services which support the community safety agenda, particularly services for people with drug and alcohol needs
 - Offender services (in partnership with West London)
 - Women escaping violence

- ii. Actions are required with regard to the following services in order to improve service standards, ensure good use of resources and generate savings for the above service expansion:
- Services for homeless families
 - Services for single homeless people
 - People with mental health problems
- iii. The actions on services for the following client groups will help deliver wider strategic aims, particularly Health and Social Care targets. However, the full strategy shows that current supply and expenditure on these client groups is probably adequate, and that existing resources can be re-focused to better meet future needs. Actions will be therefore undertaken within current resources; and it is unlikely that additional Supporting People resources will be allocated to these client groups:
- People with Physical Disabilities
 - People with Learning Disabilities
 - Refugees
 - People with HIV and Aids
 - Young People
 - Teenage Parents (although further data is required to confirm this)
 - Generic Services
- iv. A range of other actions related to service improvement and development have also been identified. These include:
- Improving information
 - Widening and clarifying access routes to existing services to ensure local people in most need benefit
 - Improving move-on from accommodation based services to prevent silting up with people who do not need services
 - Addressing issues of quality
 - Ensuring all providers meet diversity standards
 - Addressing cost issues
 - Improving range of performance measures to help evidence the success of the programme
- v. The Action Plan for 2005/6 set out in Section 8 of the Strategy identifies the following actions for the immediate future:
- Issue contracts to services which have been reviewed
 - Implement the outcomes of reviews in partnership with providers
 - Commissioning new services for older people
 - Following the contract review, re-tender a dual diagnosis service for people with mental health and drug problems. This will be done in partnership with Brent PCT
 - Following contract reviews, re-tender a floating support service for people with mental health problems

- Improving access for offenders with low support needs and young people to non-specialist services
 - Re-modelling specialist offender accommodation
- 3.7 The Strategy has been widely consulted on, with stakeholders and users through a range of meetings, service user interviews during contract reviews, focus groups and attendance at forums. Providers of services have had opportunities to comment on the needs mapping information for each client group, and also on the direction of the strategy, and have commented in detail. The needs mapping information and priorities for each client group has been agreed by the joint planning groups within the Brent Health and Social Care Partnership Structures (ie Learning Disability Partnership Board, Mental Health LIT, Older Peoples LIT etc).
- 3.8 The Supporting People Commissioning Body and Core Strategy Group have overseen the development of the strategy and these groups, along with Brent Health and Social Care Partnership Board will endorse the strategy at their meetings in February and March 2005.
- 3.9 **West London Supporting People 5 Year Strategy**
- 3.10 A West London Supporting People strategy, is attached for approval. The West London strategy includes:
- Maximising usage of existing accommodation resources
 - Improving move-on
 - Commissioning new cross authority services- particularly for women escaping violence, offenders and people with complex needs and travellers
 - Ensuring service quality and value for money
 - Developing joint work on Supporting People administration
- 3.11 **Pan London Supporting People 5 Year Strategy**
- 3.12 The ALG is progressing a Pan-London Supporting People Strategy and Brent, as a member of the ALG will be working closely with other boroughs on issues which affect client groups who move across borough boundaries, or where needs are best met in partnership with other boroughs. The cross authority statement is included in the draft Brent 5 Year Supporting People strategy
- 3.13 **Progress on the Supporting People Programme 2004/5**
- 3.14 Supporting People contract reviews allow value for money issues to be scrutinized. These respond to high levels of spending on housing support services in Brent, some historically high cost services in Brent, the need to identify savings to meet cuts in the programme grant, and to re-direct resources to current housing support priorities.
- 3.15 A total of 70 Supporting People contracts have been reviewed in LB Brent during the first 2 years of the programme, with 50 completed by December 2004. New services, those considered to be high risk and

highest cost services were reviewed early, the latter including learning disability and mental health services and the small number of services with unit costs in excess of £400 per week. This means that most of the savings in the programme are likely to be generated in the first 2 years of reviews.

3.16 Supporting People services for all the following client groups have now been reviewed:

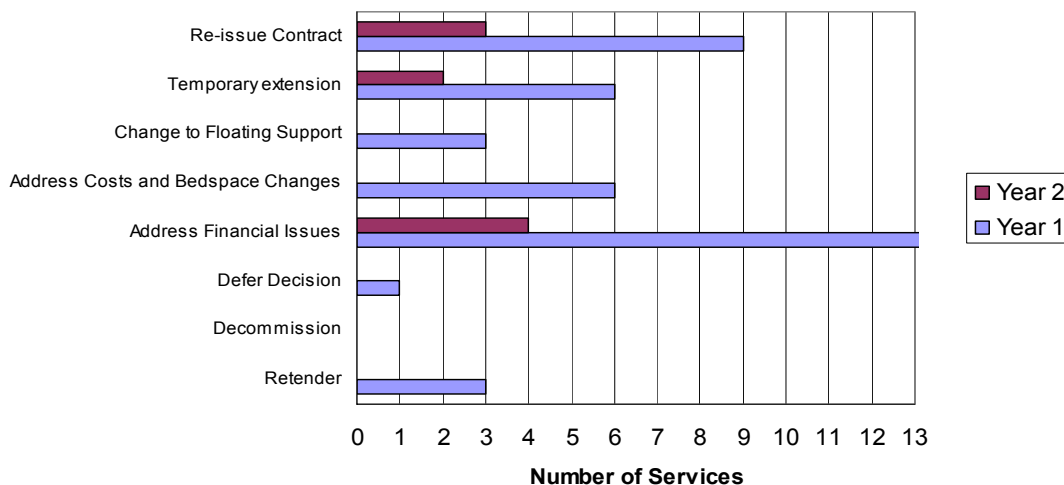
- Learning Disability
- Physical Disability
- Homeless Families
- Mental Health
- People with Drug and Alcohol problems
- Young People
- Single Homeless (due to complete April 2005)

3.17 Single Homeless services are under review at the time of writing. Strategic partners and all stakeholders, and service users were involved in the reviews. The reviews revealed that mental health services were generally poorer quality and higher cost, and that a lot of re-modelling of services is needed to meet service user aspirations. Addressing this is a key part of this strategy.

3.18 The outcomes from all reviews are discussed and agreed by the Commissioning Body for Supporting People, a group of senior managers and directors from Housing, Social Services, Brent PCT and Brent Area of London Probation Service.

3.19 The outcome from the first 2 years reviews is summarised in the chart below:

Outcome of LBB Reviews from April 2003 to December 2004



3.17 The programme is also subject to regular performance monitoring. Service providers collect quarterly Performance indicators reported to the Supporting People team and reported to both the Supporting People Core Strategy Group and Housing SMT.

4.0 **Financial Implications**

- 4.1 The programme grant is ring-fenced for the provision of housing welfare services as described in the Grant Conditionsⁱ. The Independent review of SP fundingⁱⁱ, undertaken on behalf of ODPM in 2004, concluded that the national distribution of SP funding did not represent good 'value for money'. This has led to the ODPM implementing cuts in the value of the programme nationally.
- 4.2 The total funding settlement for England will provide £1.72 billion nationally in 2005/06, followed by around £1.7 billion in each of the years 2006/07 and 2007/08. This is a reduction of 6% in real terms from the £1.8 billion provided nationally at the start of the programme in April 2003
- 4.3 L B Brent Supporting People programme grant income in the first years of the programme has reduced by c5% in real terms each year :

Year	ODPM Grant £000	Bal B/Fwd £000	Total SP Budget £000	Outturn/ Forecast Outturn £000	Under-Spend £000
2003-04	13,685	0	13,685	12,964	-721
2004-05	13,724	721	14,445	13,219	-1,226
2005-06	13,032	1,226	14,258	14,258 **	0
2006-07	12,380*	0	12,380	12,380	0

* assumed reduction ** forecast including 10 new services

- 4.4 The ODPM allowed savings generated during 2003/4 and 2004/5 to be carried forward. This will be used either to invest in new services in line with the strategy attached for approval, or to meet savings targets, and to allow some inflation to be paid.
- 4.5 The ODPM is currently developing a distribution formula, the long term impact of which is still unclear. Income for 2006/7 and beyond is currently unknown but may be based on the formula. No statement has been made by the ODPM about carrying forward any further surpluses.

- 4.6 For the purposes of the developing the 5 year strategy a reduction in budget of 5% in 2006/7 has been assumed, no financial projections or assumptions have been made for the following years. This represents an area of risk which has been dealt with through issuing short term Supporting People contracts only.
- 4.7 Expenditure on the Supporting People programme in Brent has been kept within the reduced income received from ODPM, through non-payment of inflation to providers in 2004/5, and through a rigorous programme of contract reviews which have identified efficiency cost savings, duplication and areas of ineligibility for funding.
- 4.8 In the first 2 years of the Supporting People Programme, savings of approximately £1.2 million have been identified. Savings will be reinvested in developing additional Supporting People services in line with the attached Strategy, or put toward the total savings targets. In some cases these savings may have an impact on other areas within the Council, particularly BMHS and Learning Disability Partnership. These have been budgeted for within their budgets.
- 4.9 As mentioned in para 3.3i and 3.3v. above, the Supporting People 5 Year strategy identifies gaps in current services, some of which will be met through re-directing the savings mentioned above.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 The management of the Supporting People programme and the implementation of the proposed 5 Year Supporting People strategy has legal implications relating to: tendering of contracts, issuing contracts, de-commissioning of services and contract compliance.
- 5.2 Following review, some contracts may be re-tendered or de-commissioned, this has legal implications and advice is sought on a case by case basis.
- 5.3 Supporting People services are subject to an interim contract developed in 2002, using a model contract issued by the ODPM. The management of the future Supporting People programme will require agreement of a "steady state" contract with providers which will be issued when contracts have been reviewed and changes agreed. Given the uncertainty about the level of the long term budget, short term contracts will be issued.
- 5.3 The steady state contract will be developed with Legal Services, using the model interim contract and will be subject to consultation with providers, planned for March 2005.
- 5.4 Where new services are to be commissioned, these will be subject to a transparent process of selection, including tendering where

appropriate. Again advice is taken from Legal Services on a case by case basis.

6.0 Diversity Implications

- 6.1 Client record information about all new service users is collected from providers. This shows that the breakdown of new service users reflects the ethnicity of the local population. In many services, there is a higher representation of BME communities.
- 6.2 Diversity issues are considered when Supporting People contracts are reviewed. 34% of contracts (18 out of 55) reviewed by October 2004 have not met the required diversity standards. These will need to be met before a longer term (steady state) contract can be put in place. Issues raised by service users related to the lack of availability of interpreting, to a lack of awareness of cultural facilities in the local area. The Supporting People team will be monitoring this with providers and continue to get feedback from service users.
- 6.3 A Supporting People diversity statement has been developed, and is included as an Appendix to the 5 Year strategy. This sets out a statement about intentions and a programme of action to deal with diversity issues.

7.0 Staffing Implications

- 7.1 In November 2004 the ODPM also announced a cut in the administration grant paid to LB Brent to cover the cost of the Supporting People team. A cut of 20% was announced reducing income from ODPM from £285,000 to £228,000. This is a larger cut than had been anticipated. Housing Services are considering local options for managing this cut within current budgets.
- 7.2 The Supporting People team falls within Housing Services, although it has close links with Joint Commissioners and other service managers in Social Services, Brent PCT and Probation. The effective implementation of the programme and the strategy will require continued close working.

Background Papers

See footnotes below.

Director of Housing
Martin Cheeseman

Contact Officers

Helen Duckworth
Supported Housing Policy Manager
Mahatma Gandhi House
34 Wembley Hill Road
HA9 8AD
0208 937 2283
Helen.duckworth@brent.gov.uk

ⁱ ODPM Supporting People Grant Conditions, November 2004

ⁱⁱ ODPM Supporting People Programme, Independent Report, RSM Robson Rhodes LLP, January 2004