

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**CABINET
MONDAY 28 OCTOBER 2002 AT 2.00 P.M.**

Agenda Item No.

2

**SUPPORTING PEOPLE STRATEGY AND
ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMISSIONING BODY**

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1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To seek the approval of the Cabinet to:

- (a) the establishment by the County Council of a Supporting People Commissioning Body
- (b) the nomination of the Director of Adult Care Services to represent the County Council on the Commissioning Body
- (c) use of Cabinet process to approve key supporting people policies and decisions.
- (d) endorsement of the shadow supporting people strategies for 2003/04.

2. Summary & Conclusion

A complex programme of work has been undertaken to put in place the supporting people arrangements. Progress on implementation has been scrutinised by the Adult Care Services Scrutiny Committee on 3rd October 2002. Decisions are now required from the Cabinet on the formal establishment of the Commissioning Body and the way in which the County Council wishes to exercise its decision-making powers with regard to Supporting People.

In addition, the approval of the Cabinet is requested to the Shadow Supporting People Strategy for 2003/04 (copy attached).

3. Background

- 3.1 The Supporting People programme represents major change in the way supported housing is funded and will combine at least 5 streams of funding into one grant. This grant will be administered by a local authority which, in the case of Hertfordshire, will be the County Council and will be used to fund organisations which provide supported housing or housing related support services. The District Councils, the County Council, the Probation Service and the Health Services are partners in these arrangements.
- 3.2 The aim of the change is to ensure that the new development of supported housing and housing related support services is in line with identified needs and that new developments contribute to other major community plans and ensure that shared objectives are achieved and, in addition, to establish good quality supported housing by introducing single performance standards and quality assurance programme. Finally, the government also aims to establish the true cost of service in this sector.
- 3.3 The funding streams, which will be amalgamated, into the single grant are:
- Social Housing Management Grant
 - Transitional Housing Benefit
 - Specific payments made under Income Support
 - Job Seekers Allowance for Housing Support
 - Grants paid by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) as part of Safer Communities funding or from the Rough Sleepers Unit
 - Grants from the ODPM for Home Improvement Agencies.

4. Role of the Administering Authority

- 4.1 As the Administering Authority, the County Council has been responsible for putting in place a Supporting People Team to undertake all the preparatory work necessary to take forward the Supporting People Programme. This has included supply mapping, publicising the changes and working with providers to disaggregate costs to determine the amounts of money to be transferred to the supporting people budget. All of the preparatory work has been done in accordance with Guidance and Directions issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. The ODPM is regularly monitoring progress against pre-set milestones.
- 4.2 As Administering Authority, the County Council will be responsible for managing the supporting people budget, which is likely to be between £12-£15 million in Hertfordshire. The County Council will also be responsible for contracting with all the provider organisations offering supporting people services and for administering an agreed charging policy.

- 4.3 In addition, the Administering Authority is required to put in place a Commissioning Body, which comprises representatives of all the partner organisations. In Hertfordshire, the Commissioning Body needs to comprise a representative of each Housing Authority, of PCTs and from Probation as well as from the County Council. The Supporting People Strategy and Plans and any policies associated with Supporting People have to be approved by the Commissioning Body, but also have to be endorsed by the elected members of partner organisations.
- 4.4 In terms of working with the Commissioning Body, partner organisations can choose to exercise their decision-making powers in one of two ways. Either they can give delegated authority to their representative on the commissioning body to approve such strategies, plans and policies and come forward through the supporting people process, or they can ask that such policies be approved through their own organisation's decision-making process. In the case of the County Council, this would be through the Cabinet.
- 4.5 The guidance on the establishment of commissioning bodies allows organisations to nominate either officers or members to sit on the body and, in Hertfordshire, we have a mix of people nominated. One or two District Councils have nominated elected members and given them delegated authority to take decisions on behalf of their organisation at Commissioning Body meetings, but the majority of members are likely to require that strategies, plans and policies are approved through their own organisations' decision-making processes. The County Council at this stage has nominated its Director of Adult Care Services as its representative on the Commissioning Body and it is suggested that any relevant policy decisions are taken through the Cabinet process. The supporting people guidance suggests that all decisions taken must be unanimous and we do not as yet know what will happen if we are unable to reach this conclusion.

5. Supporting People Strategy

- 5.1 One of the aims of the supporting people programme is to put in place for each area a strategy for development of supported accommodation, which will aim to ensure the provision meets needs and will take account of the gap analysis which has been done.
- 5.2 As we approach the first year of supporting people, the requirement is to put in place a shadow strategy for the first year, which will be followed by a more substantial 5-year development strategy, which must be in place for 2004/05 onwards. Other representatives of all the partner organisations have been working together through the format of a Core Strategy Development Group to bring the programme together and draft a shadow strategy for the first year. It has generally been agreed that, for the first year, we should seek to consolidate the information that we have and investigate further the levels of provision as they relate to need and the comparative costs of different schemes. The Commissioning Body in its first meeting considered a draft of the shadow strategy and made some suggestions for improvement. At its second meeting

on 14 October, the Commissioning Body approved the outline strategy, which is attached to this report. What is now required is the approval of all the partner organisations to the adoption of this strategy for the first year.

- 5.3 As we move forward, we are putting in place arrangements to ensure that the planning we do for each of the care groups within the County Council is linked in to the supporting people programme and that the commissioning strategy for supporting people will take on board the requirements of these various care groups into the future.