

# OXFORDSHIRE SUPPORTING PEOPLE COMMISSIONING BODY – 26 MARCH 2010

## REVIEW OF SUPPORTING PEOPLE STRATEGY

### Introduction

1. Oxfordshire Supporting People Strategy would be reviewed in 2010-11 with a view to set strategic and financial objectives for the programme in 2011-2014. As part of this review, two key administrative elements of the programme - the eligibility criteria and charging policy would also be reviewed.
2. The Commissioning Body members have requested an early consideration of a range of new flexibilities available to the partnership in managing the programme in future years. This paper summarizes key areas of flexibility to be considered and aims to facilitate this discussion.

### National drivers

#### Area Based Grant and transition package

3. From April 2010 Supporting People grant allocation would be transferred in to Area Based grant allocation. Although national government recently announced its intention to continue to indicate to local authorities how much of the Area Based grant allocation is for Supporting People type services, this allocation would become un-ring fenced. Administration grant for the management of the programme has been part of the Area Based grant since April 2009.
4. National government has committed to support local authorities during transition to these new arrangements in 2009-10 through a programme of work streams, also known as the transition package. This programme of work has been extended in to 2010-11 in recognition of the fact that Supporting People partnerships and local authorities would still benefit from national support in demonstrating regionally and locally substantial benefits delivered by this programme for local population, particularly in the current challenging financial climate. Nationally this case has been made by the Audit Commission in their 2009 Supporting People evaluation report and by CLG in their response to the Supporting People Select Committee report also published in 2009.
5. National government has also decided that local authorities' ability to meet the needs of vulnerable groups currently supported by this programme would in future be monitored through their performance on two programme specific indicators (NI141 and NI 142), other related measures for socially excluded groups (e.g. PSA16) and assessed

through Comprehensive Area Assessment. The Audit Commission are also working on developing a KLOE for service provision for socially excluded and vulnerable groups.

6. It is suggested that in response to these drivers Oxfordshire Supporting People partnership should:
  - Establish robust links with the Public Services Board to inform and influence development of new methodology for allocating Area Based grant from 2011-12 onwards
  - Undertake a cost benefit analysis of Oxfordshire programme to assess and demonstrate its contribution to key local strategic priorities
  - Establish robust links with the Health and Well Being Partnership and other thematic strategic partnerships at all levels to ensure that cross-cutting benefits produced by Supporting People type services are well understood, recognised and supported through work of these partnerships; for example, so that collective bids for future funding could be made where relevant
  - Remain engaged with the development of the national agenda for housing related support and other types of preventative services for socially excluded and vulnerable people via direct links with the transition programme and regional structures described below

#### Personalisation and self directed support

7. Nationally it has been widely acknowledged that Supporting People programme is well placed to embrace and deliver this broad policy objective. In particular, national government, local authorities, supported housing provider sector, together with service users and their carers, have advocated continuing use and development of the Supporting People quality assurance and personalisation tools (such as the Quality Assurance and Outcomes Frameworks), which have been instrumental in the success of the programme to date.
8. A wide range of initiatives looking at how these policy drivers could be best translated to housing related support sector is taking place nationally, regionally and locally.
9. It is suggested that in response to these drivers Oxfordshire Supporting People partnership should:
  - Review Oxfordshire strategic objectives and eligibility criteria to reflect emerging best practice in commissioning preventative services focused on promoting independence and recovery, social inclusion, stable housing and keeping vulnerable people safe and well in the home of their choice for as long as is reasonably possible
  - Continue to use the Supporting People quality assurance and personalisation tools to ensure continuing improvement of local services and outcomes for service users

- Continue to play an active part in the Up2Us project, Oxfordshire based pilot of establishing ways in which vulnerable people could be enabled to exercise collective purchasing rights to purchase support services
- Set new objectives for commissioning outcome-based services focused on delivering personalised support and incremental targets for moving from block purchasing based on contracts to self-directed support, based on emerging models of best practice in the sector

### Regional drivers

10. As part of this transition phase for the programme greater emphasis is being given to retaining and further developing robust regional, sub-regional and local structures to ensure that local authorities are supported in meeting the needs of vulnerable people. In the South East Supporting People lead officers meet twice a year to oversee and co-ordinate regional approach to taking this agenda forward. These meetings are also attended by key representatives from CLG regional implementation team, GOSE and National Housing Federation.
11. A similar structure exists at sub-regional level, with Thames Valley lead officers also meeting twice per year to work on cross-authority projects agreed on annual basis. Oxfordshire Supporting People programme manager has been selected to chair this group in 2010-11.
12. It is true to say that in the South-East two-tier authorities are more engaged with these structures, with an increasing number of unitary authorities struggling to make sustained contribution to this work throughout the year. This is often the case due to decreasing number of dedicated Supporting People teams in the region and varied approaches to merging this preventative programme with adult social care structures.
13. It is suggested that in response to these drivers Oxfordshire Supporting People partnership should:
  - Sustain current strong level of engagement with these structures to retain its ability to influence regional and national agenda
  - Lead on sub-regional projects that are of strategic importance for Oxfordshire (for example, the offenders project)
  - Continue to contribute to regional events and initiatives that promote the housing support sector as a whole and build strong evidence base for its long term future

### Local drivers

14. In Oxfordshire partners have long recognised that, not withholding these and other national and regional social policy and financial drivers, imminent review of the Supporting People strategy would

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provide all stakeholders with an opportunity to review key fundamental principles on which Oxfordshire programme has been built:

- What role does housing related support have in delivering positive outcomes for vulnerable people?
- Which groups of vulnerable people benefit from this type of support?
- What type of services should be commissioned to deliver these outcomes and how?

15. In practical terms this would mean creating opportunities for the partnership to consider and debate these key principles, which would in turn provide a strategic steer for the review of Supporting People:

- Strategy
- Eligibility criteria
- Charging policy

16. At the same time clear desire has been expressed to take this opportunity to also further review current administrative arrangements for the delivery of the programme, with a view for example to establishing more flexible and efficient ways of maximising joint-commissioning opportunities, monitoring performance and managing the budget.