

WIRRAL'S SUPPORTED AND SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING STRATEGY 2008-2011

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek (i) Members' endorsement of the new Supported and Special Needs Housing Strategy 2008-2011 for Wirral and (ii) seek approval of the Procurement Strategy.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Supported and Special Needs Housing Section (S&SNHS) consists of services comprising: the Supporting People programme, Disabled Facilities Grant, Wirral Home Improvements Agency and the Handypersons' Service.

2.2 The aim of the S&SNHS is to develop or sustain an individual's capacity to live independently. The section is committed to providing a better quality of life for vulnerable people to help them to maintain their housing.

2.3 The S&SNHS contract, monitor and review over 250 providers of services to vulnerable people via 65 contracts, providing services to approximately 7500 clients across the Borough.

2.4 Additionally, S&SNHS, through the Home Improvements Agency, provides numerous services including a Handy Person Service, a fast track adaptation service and the awarding of Disabled Facilities Grant to approximately 4000 clients per annum.

2.5 The S&SNHS is the budget holder for the Supporting People Programme Grant and the Disabled Facilities Grant. The Supporting People grant settlement for 2008/9 – 2010/11 is £10.341m per year, which is subject to confirmation each year. The Disabled Facilities Grant allocation is £1.25 million for 2008/9. Other funding sources such as contributions from the PCT make up a total annual spend of approximately £12.5 million per year.

2.6 The Supported and Special Needs Housing Strategy refreshes and, where necessary, expands on the 2005-2010 Supporting People Strategy for Wirral which was agreed by Members on the 14th March 2005. The Strategy reflects the progress made during the past three years, the changing needs of vulnerable people in the Borough, and responds to new legislative direction and a changing financial environment.

2.7 Wirral's Supported and Special Needs Housing Strategy has been developed in line with CLG guidance and sets out the intended and planned use of the combined resources of Supporting People, Disabled Facility Grant and Wirral Home Improvement Agency over the period 2008-2011.

2.8 The current distribution of funding is largely determined by the inherited position in 2003/4 and there is a need for redistribution of funding if the Strategy is to meet identified need and support emerging agendas within the housing, health and social care sectors. The services encompassed within the Strategy remain aimed at the low-level, preventive and (generally) housing related end of the support/care continuum.

3.0 **WIRRAL'S SUPPORTED AND SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING STRATEGY 2008-2011**

- 3.1 Since the Supporting People 2005-2010 Strategy was agreed, the Commissioning Body has undertaken a full consultation exercise and needs analysis, carried out by the S&SNHS, which identified a range of issues and, of direct relevance to this strategy, also identified the need to restructure the current format of provision of supported accommodation, to reflect the changing needs of vulnerable people.
- 3.2 The Strategy has been written within the context of the need to maintain high quality services that meet the needs of vulnerable people within the borough, whilst recognising the drive from Central Government to make efficiency savings where appropriate.
- 3.3 S&SNHS provide services for very diverse client groups. CLG formally recognises 21 such categories split into 3 clusters or 'super-group' categories, as follows:
- 3.4 **People living independently with support** (Older people with support needs, Frail elderly people, Older people with mental health problems)
- 3.5 The Strategy proposes a move away from accommodation based support, where the accommodation is no longer viable as sheltered, to a tenure neutral and borough-wide floating support service that will make greater use of assistive technology. The strategy also identifies the need to expand the current number of service users supported within existing individual contracts, where such expansion is feasible.
- 3.6 **People in receipt of care with support** (People with physical or sensory disabilities, People with learning disabilities)
- 3.7 The Strategy proposes the withdrawal of Supporting People funding from higher level learning disability services and the subsequent reinvestment in low-level support for those with moderate learning disabilities. Additionally, reductions in contract values have been proposed for those services whose client base is predominantly out-of-borough placements. The Strategy recognises the need to continue to work in partnership with DASS through joint contract arrangements.
- 3.8 **Wirral Home Improvement Agency (WHIA) – "HUB" Service.** In order to achieve local and Communities and Local Government (CLG) national targets and strategies for people with physical disabilities (including older people) it is proposed to develop the WHIA as a HUB/Single access point of contact, to ensure that clients receive a joined up, timely and cost effective service.
- 3.9 The HUB will deliver all housing and support needs either directly by the WHIA or by sign posting to partner organisation, whilst assisting clients to maintain their homes and independence for as long as possible.
- 3.10 **People experiencing or at risk of Social Exclusion** (Single homeless people with support needs, homeless families with support needs, rough sleepers, people with mental health problems, refugees, travellers, teenage parents, young people leaving care, young people at risk, people with HIV/AIDS, women fleeing domestic violence, offenders and those at risk of offending, mentally-disordered offenders and generic.)
- 3.11 The Strategy proposes the rationalisation of existing small scale contracts into larger, generic and more cost-effective contracts and the development of a Pathways Model, to ensure more effective use of current provision resulting in improved outcomes for vulnerable people.

4.0 GOVERNANCE

4.1 It is widely recognised that the Supported and Special Needs Housing Governance Structure has had a positive impact on the direction of the SP programme since 2003 through effective decision-making. The current governance structure comprises representatives from:

- **Core Strategy Development Group:** To make recommendations based on local, regional and national driving influences (Chaired by the Head of Housing, attended by Commissioning Managers for Regeneration and the Department of Adult Social Services/PCT, Wirral Drug and Alcohol Action Team, Children & Young Peoples Department, Merseyside Probation Trust and representatives from Service Providers).
- **Elected Members:** To endorse strategic and operational directions made by the Commissioning Body.
- **Commissioning Body:** To make decisions on recommendations from the Core Strategy Development Group. (Director of Regeneration, Director of Adult Social Services, Chief Executive of Wirral PCT, Chief Officer for Merseyside Probation Trust).

5.0 PROCUREMENT

5.1 The awarding of further contracts will be carried out in partnership with the Finance Department and the Department of Law, HR and Asset Management.

5.2 The full Procurement Methodology is attached as Appendix 1 of the Supported and Special Need Housing Strategy 2008-11, and outlines the basis for which future contracting and commissioning of services are negotiated or tendered. The overall aim of the Procurement Methodology is to create stability for service users and supported housing services, by awarding 3 to 5-year contracts whilst achieving efficiencies and economies of scale.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The actions identified within the strategy can be met through the existing programme grant and through the realisation of efficiency savings.

7.0 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Agreement of this strategy will have no impact on current staffing levels.

8.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The needs of vulnerable and marginalised groups have been considered, and are central to the Supported and Special Needs Housing Strategy. It is a key objective of the strategy to ensure that vulnerable people have equal access to opportunities.

9.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Strategy contains policies and programmes that will have a positive effect on the safety of communities.

10.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are none arising from this report.

11.0 PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are none arising from this report.

12.0 ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 The Supported and Special Needs Housing Strategy aims to reduce poverty, isolation and exclusion by meeting local needs and developing the provision of support to vulnerable people.

13.0 SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS

13.1 The action targets highlighted in the Supported and Special Needs Housing Strategy aim to promote social inclusion.

14.0 LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

14.1 The Strategy has borough-wide implications and should be noted by all Members.

15.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

15.1 Supporting People Strategy 2005-2010 – Cabinet – March 2005

16.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

16.1 That Wirral's Supported and Special Needs Housing Strategy 2008-2011 be endorsed and the Procurement Strategy for contracts approved.

Alan Stennard
Regeneration Department

This report was prepared by Ian Grindrod/Sheila Jacobs who can be contacted on 691 8341 and 8345