

# Department of Regeneration Supported & Special Needs Housing Commissioning Strategy 2008 - 2011

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<b>Cabinet Report</b>	<b>27<sup>th</sup> November 2008</b>

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# Foreword

Wirral Council, together with Wirral Supporting People Commissioning Body, is pleased to present Wirral's Supported & Special Needs Housing Strategy 2008 – 2011.

Over the past five years, the Supported and Special Needs Housing Section has improved the quality of lives of many vulnerable people.

Whilst acknowledging the successful work that has been developed since the launch of the last strategy, we also recognise that there is still much to do with many challenges ahead particularly in changing the way services are commissioned and developed, to reflect the changing needs in the Borough from the inherited provision of 2003.

This strategy has therefore been developed in conjunction with our partners and focuses on utilising the combined resources of Supporting People, Disabled Facility Grant and Wirral Home Improvement Agency (and where possible to use these alongside other funding sources) to improve lives of vulnerable people in Wirral by providing a range of low-level, housing related services.

Over the coming years the Strategy will seek to increase opportunities for independence for vulnerable people through the commissioning and delivery of quality, cost-effective and preventative support services that meet strategic priorities.

I would like to thank all the individuals and organisations that have contributed to the development of this Strategy and I am positive that through continued partnership working, Wirral can successfully improve the lives of vulnerable people



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George Davies". The signature is written in a cursive style.

**Councillor George Davies**

(Cabinet Member for Housing & Community Safety)

# Executive Summary

The Supported and Special Needs Housing Section sits within the Regeneration Department of Wirral council and consists of merged services comprising; the Supporting People programme, Disabled Facilities Grant, Wirral Home Improvements Agency and the Handypersons' Service.

The aim of the Supported and Special Needs Housing Section 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.

This document refreshes the 2005-2010 Supporting People Strategy for Wirral and reflects the progress made during the past three years, the changing needs of vulnerable people in the Borough and new legislative direction.

The Strategy does identify generally, (within the three "super groups" identified by CLG), how we intend to redistribute resources *within* those super groups, and identify where there will be shifts away from support linked to identified units of accommodation to support which is provided on an outreach basis to maintain individuals in their own homes irrespective of tenure.

The three super groups (clearly, there will be some overlap between groups), and the approach to the use of resources for each, are set out below:

1. Independence with Support; older people with support needs and frail elderly. 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 scheme; greater use of assistive technology as a basis for such a service; expand current number of service users supported within individual contracts where capacity exists; reduce some sheltered charges. (It is likely that Wirral will continue to support the development of extra care schemes but, at this stage, the availability of SP funding cannot be guaranteed).
2. People with Learning/Physical disabilities; withdraw SP funding from higher level learning disability services and reinvest in low level support for those with mild/moderate learning disabilities; reduce funding to those providers whose client base is mainly out of borough placements; some contracts to be negotiated/let as joint contracts with Wirral DASS; for physical disabilities – the development of Wirral Home Improvement Agency services (including DFG provision) as a "hub" for low level and preventive services for this and the older persons' client groups.
3. Socially excluded groups; some rationalisation of current contracts into larger, generic and more value for money contracts; clearer roles for providers within overall provision for this group, based on a pathway model.

Whilst implementation of the final Strategy will bring about change within the SP/WHIA funded sector, providers should be aware that Wirral remains committed to the provision of such services and is committed to working with partners who deliver good quality services.

# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 The Purpose of the Strategy

The Supported and Special Needs Housing Commissioning Strategy aims to build upon the success of Wirral Council's Supporting People Programme and Strategy (2005-10), whilst recognising the need to refresh the findings of the original strategy to incorporate the work of Wirral Home Improvement Agency (WHIA), including the Handy Person Service, and the use of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG).

## 1.2

### The Vision

**Supported & Special Needs Housing aims to improve the lives of vulnerable people in Wirral by increasing their opportunities for independence through the commissioning and delivery of quality, cost-effective and preventive, support services that meet strategic priorities.**

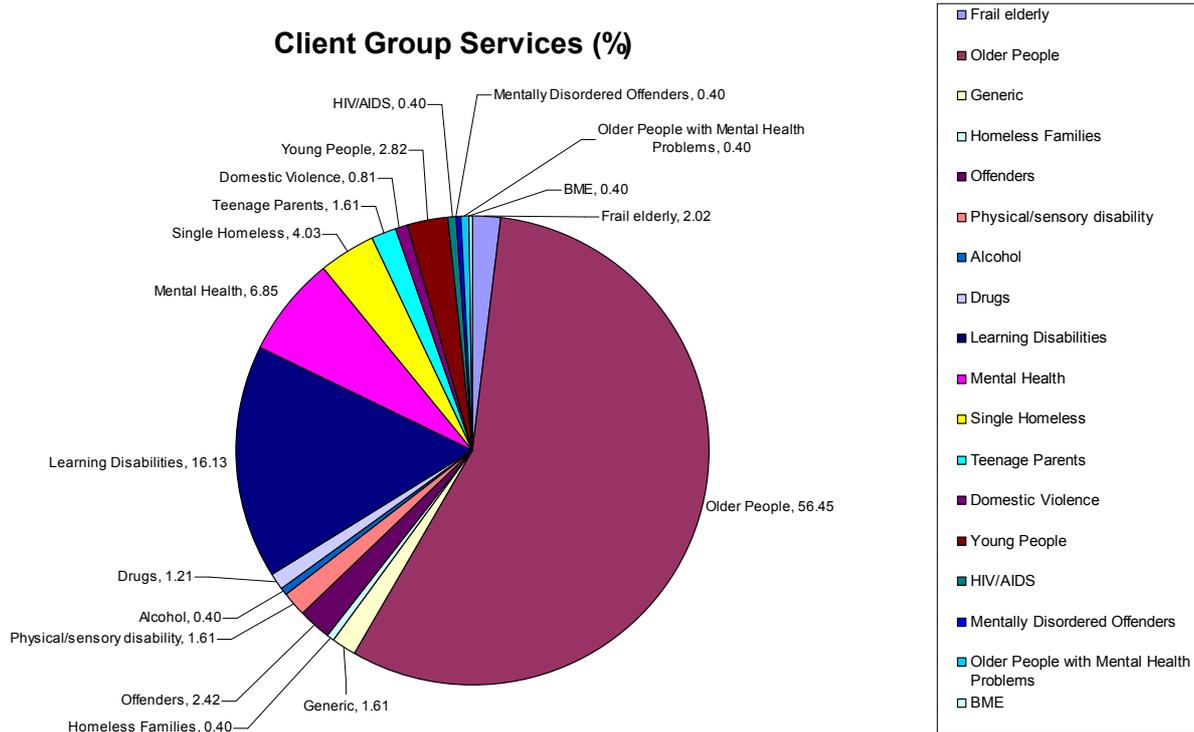
This document sets out the projected development of both Supporting People (SP) funded, and DFG funded, services provided by the Supported & Special Needs Housing Section (S&SNHS) over the next 3-5 years. Reference is made to other funding sources where these also support S&SNHS services, and the use of SP and DFG funding alongside other mainstream funds is also set out.

## 1.3 Current Position

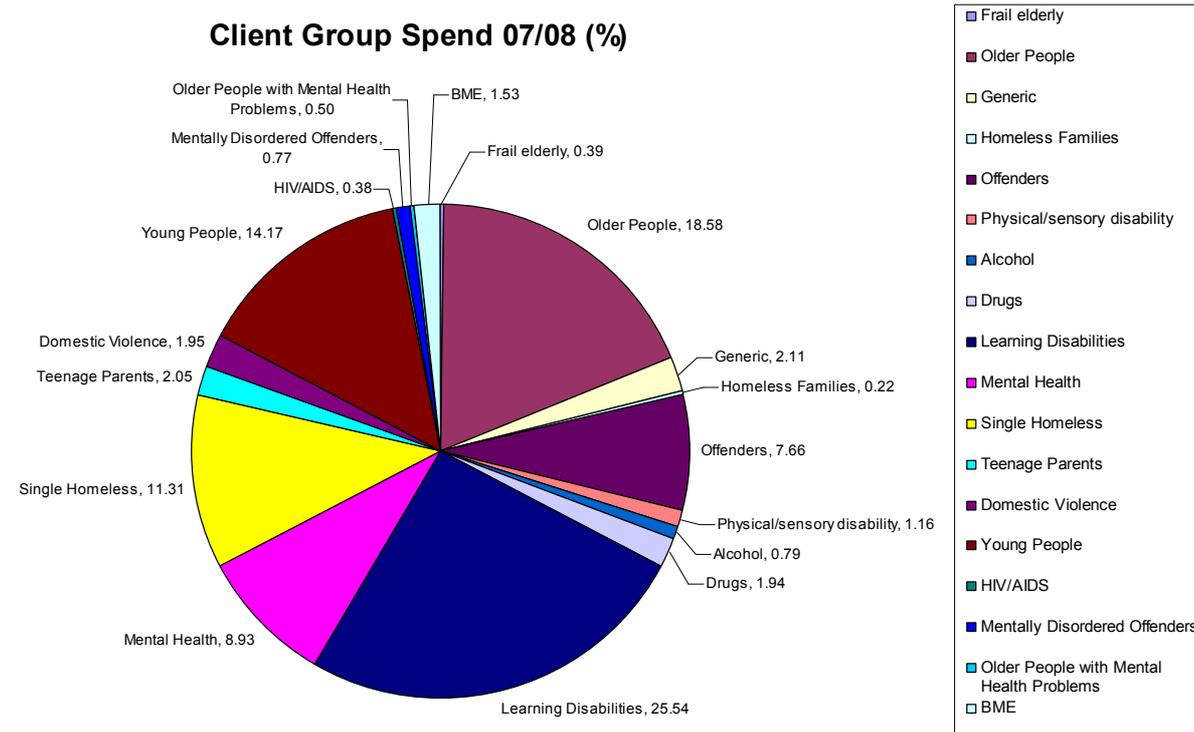
SP contract, monitor and review over 250 services providers via 65 contracts, continuously to approximately 7500 clients across the borough. The WHIA provides numerous services including Handy Person Service, Fast track adaptation, awarding of DFG, etc. to approximately 4000 clients per annum.

The S&SNHS is the budget holder for Supporting People Programme Grant and for receipt of DFG. The SP grant settlement for 2008/9 – 2010/11 is £10.341m per year (subject to confirmation each year) and the DFG allocation is £1.25 million for 2008/9. Other funding sources (charges, contributions to WHIA etc from PCT and DASS) make up a total annual spend of approximately £12.5 million per year. The detailed breakdown of expenditure by client group and funding source is set out in **Figures 1/2/3/4**

**Figure 1: The percentage of Supporting People Funded services by client group in Wirral (2007/08).**

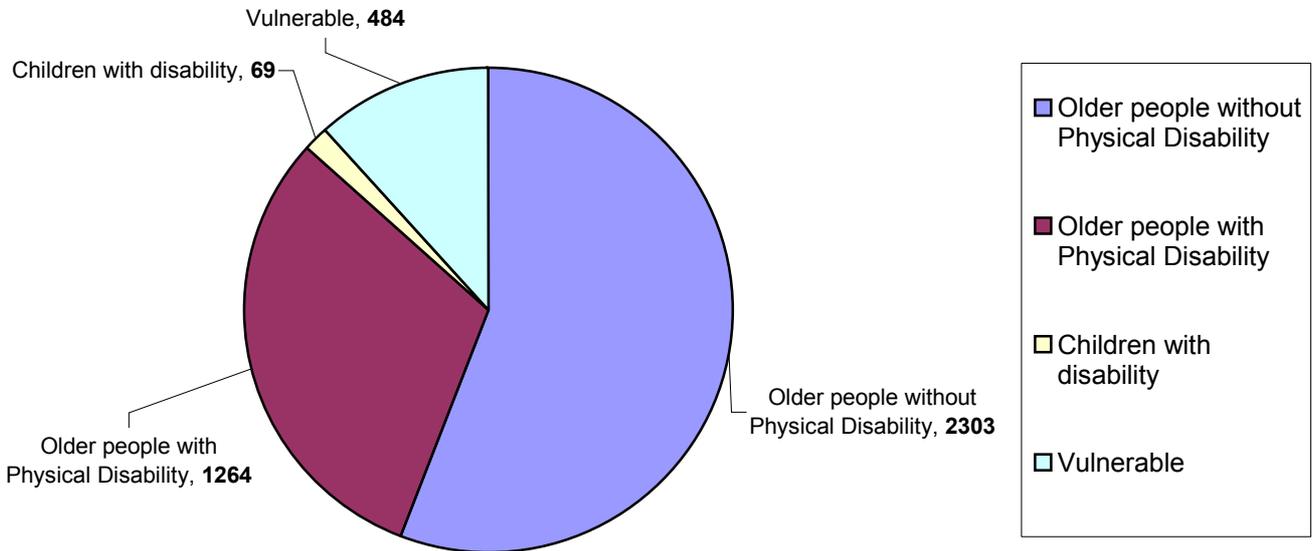


**Figure 2: Wirral Supporting People Budget for 2007/08 was £10.36 million with a percentage by client group.**



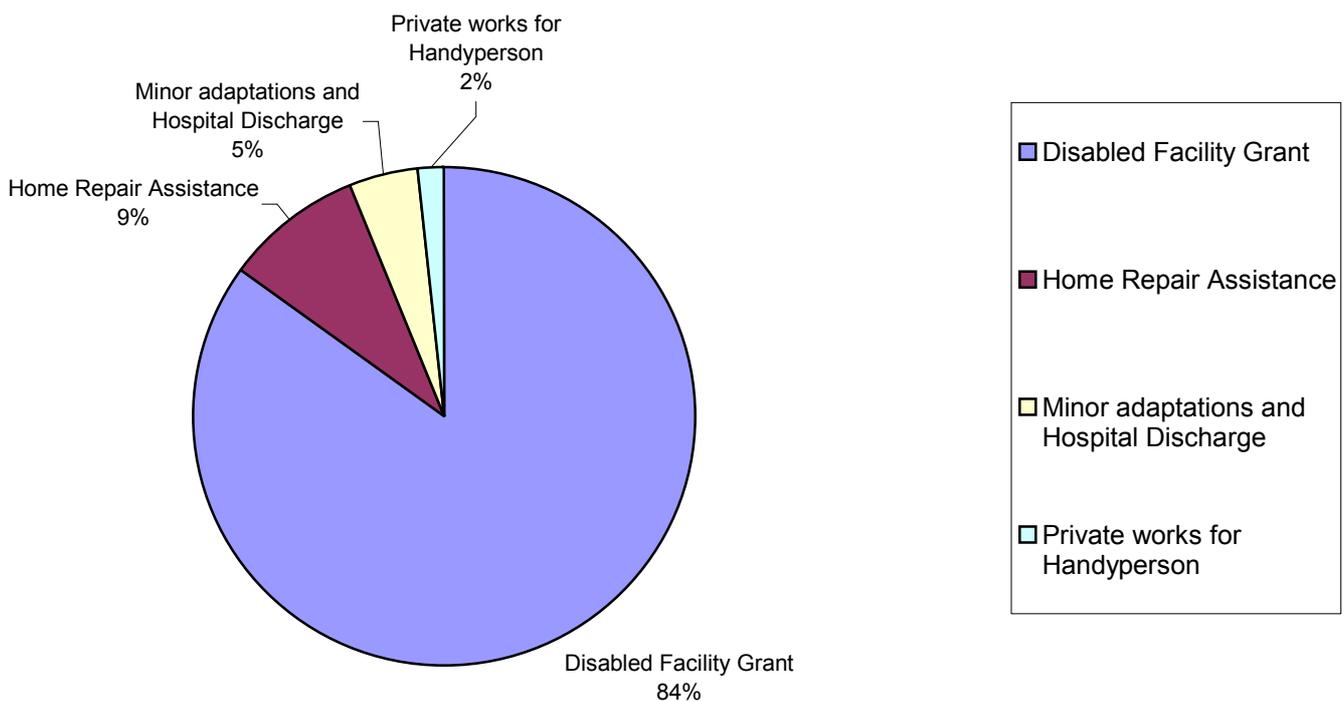
**Figure 3: Number of clients that Wirral Home Improvement Agency assisted in 2007/08  
Total figure 4,120**

**Number of Jobs completed (by client group)**



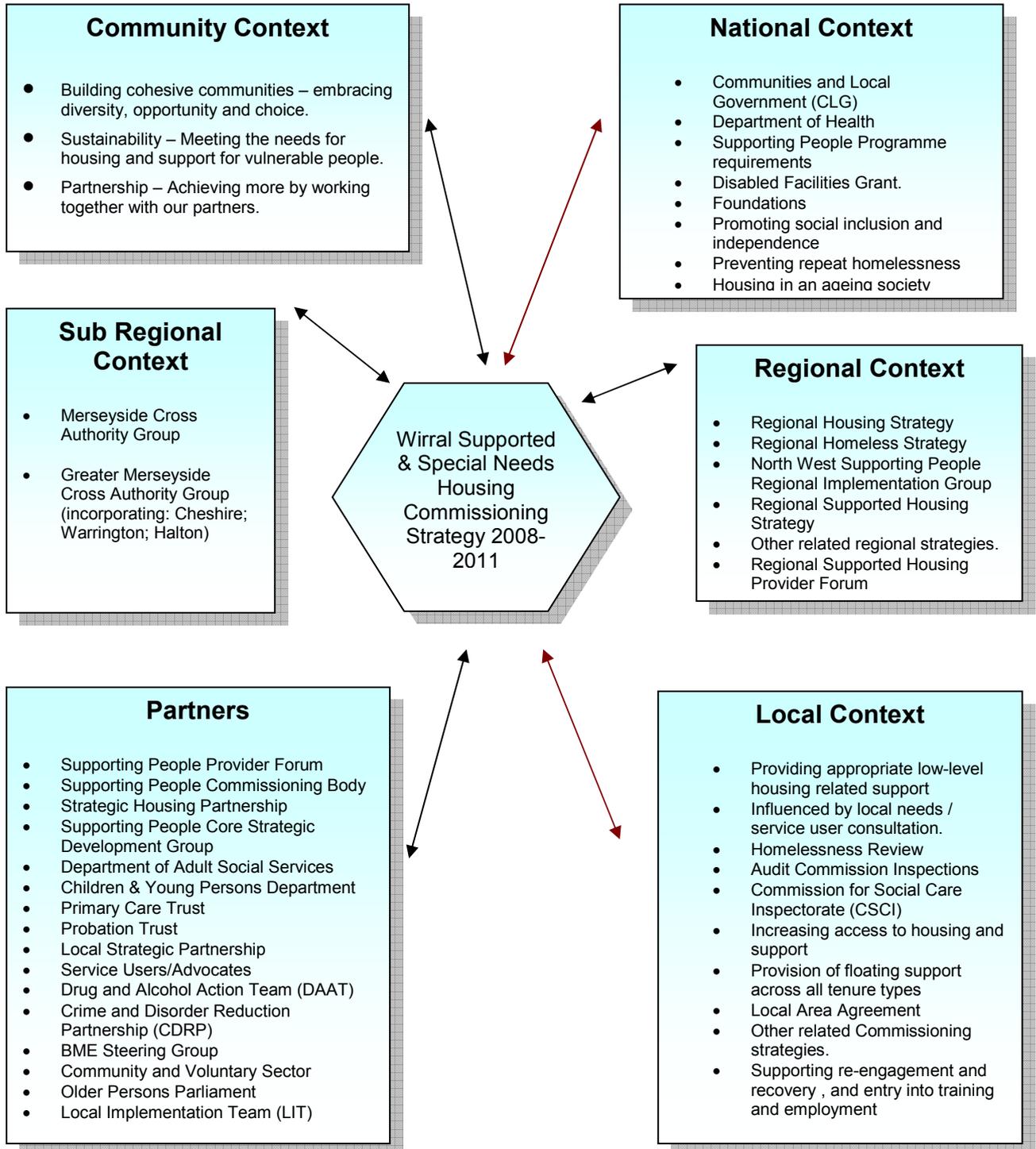
**Figure 4: Total Expenditure for Wirral Home Improvement Agency 2007-08 was £1.32 million**

**Expenditure**



## 2.0 Wider Priority and Strategic Context

The table below explains how S&SNHS operates at a local level but also contributes to and is influenced by National and Regional policy.



## 2.1 National Context

Significant changes have been made to both SP and DFG funding regimes for the next 3 years (and beyond); equally significant is the change to the overall context within which these services are expected to operate. Changes to funding include; the removal of the SP ring fence from April 2009, and the settlement of a 3-year indicative grant to cover 2008/9-2010/11; the broadening of the scope of the Disabled Facilities mandatory grant, and the funding of Registered Social Landlord (RSL) adaptation works. Changes to context include, the alignment in appropriate cases of SP and DFG with other funding streams together with the LAA, and the introduction of Individual Budgets.

## 2.2 Regional Context

The North West Regional Assembly (NWRA) in partnership with the Housing Corporation (HC) and the North West Supporting People Strategic Group (NWSPSG) has established a Regional Supported Housing Strategic Group, with a view to developing a Regional Supported Housing Strategy. The overall aim of the strategy will be to support and inform future planning and investment in the region, which could influence future allocations of capital and revenue funding. The S&SNHS and Housing Strategy Sections are represented at a regional level and contribute to the development of regional strategies, ensuring that the process does not disadvantage the authority. Providers will also inform regional development through their attendance at the Regional Provider Forum.

## 2.3 Local Context

Whilst responding to national and regional drivers for change, the strategy also addresses local issues which include: the desire on the part of service users to see changes to the way services are commissioned and delivered; the need for jointly developed services with partners; continuous quality improvements linked to value for money; the maintenance of a stable provider market, including the recognition of the contribution made by the investment in preventive services and, overall, the need to consult widely to develop a strategy which best reflects these, sometimes, conflicting needs.

## 2.4 Governance

It is widely recognised that the Supporting People Governance Structure has had a positive impact on the direction of the SP programme since 2003 through effective decision-making. With this in mind it has been agreed by the LAA board to maintain the SP programme. It will remain under the 'Stronger and Safer Communities' block of the LAA but, it clearly has cross-cutting themes across the other LAA blocks.

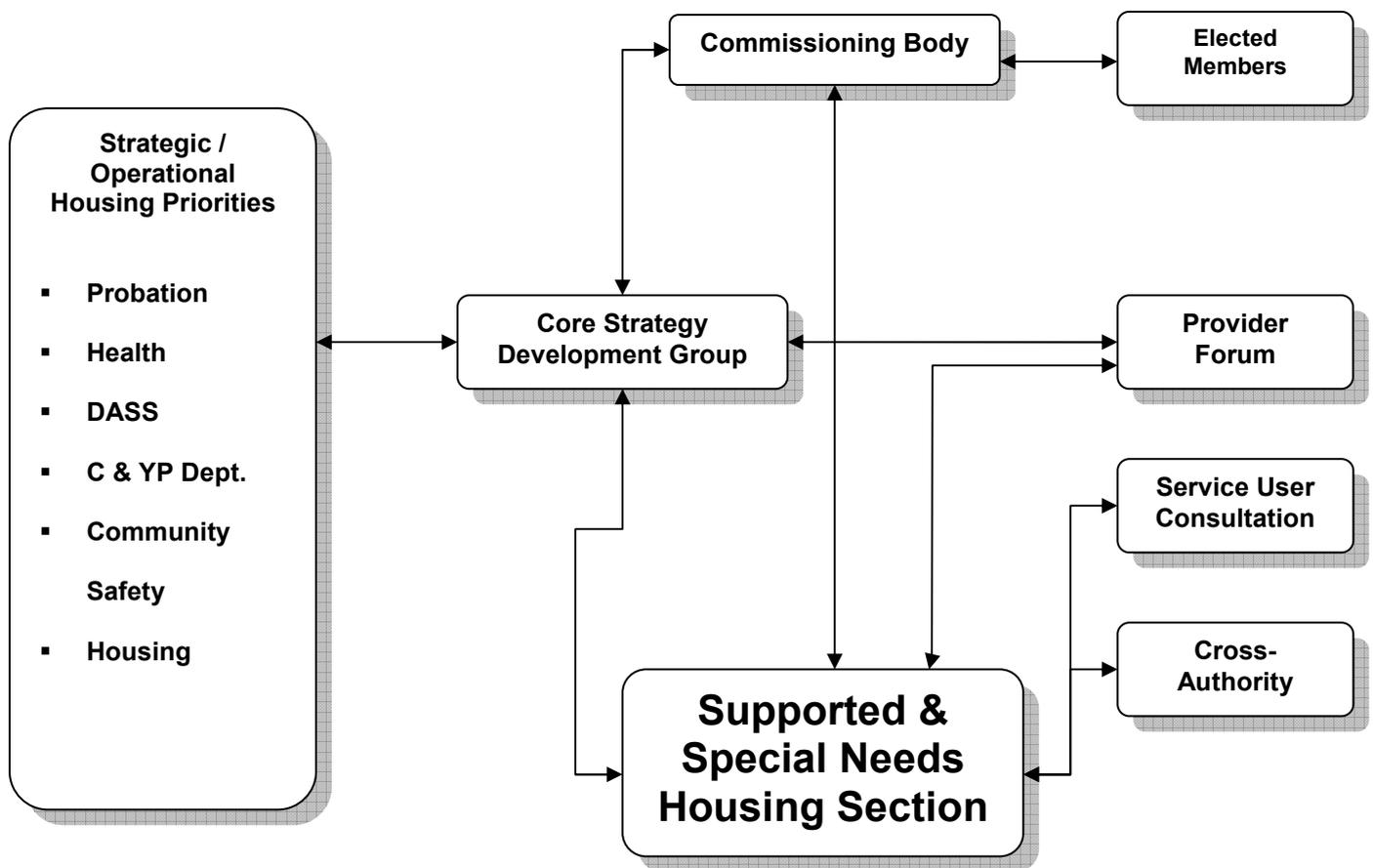
The current governance structure comprises representatives from:

**Commissioning Body:** Director of Regeneration, Director of Adult Social Services, Chief Executive of Wirral PCT, Chief Officer for Merseyside Probation Trust.

**Core Strategy Development Group:** Chaired by the Head of Housing Strategy, attended by Officers from the Housing Division, Commissioning Managers for Regeneration (Housing, Homelessness and Community Safety) and Department of Adult Social Services / PCT (Learning Disabilities, Mental Health and Older People), Wirral DAAT, Children & Young Peoples Departments, Probation Trust and Service Providers.

The existing governance structure also allows for effective links between capital and revenue funding priorities to ensure resources are strategically planned in line with supported housing needs and priorities.

**Figure 5: Governance for the Supported and Special Needs Housing Section**



## 2.5 Strategic Aims

In moving forward from the current position, the recommendations we make are informed by the following:-

- an assessment of the strategic relevance, quality and value for money of all currently funded services
- the views of service users, partners and providers about gaps in service provision which will require future investment , and which currently funded services should no longer be supported
- the resources available, the current distribution of those resources and identification of resources available for investment over the period
- relating S&SNH's priorities to the wider LAA, Regional and National priorities and working to align funding
- maintaining, but adapting as necessary, the governance arrangements (Commissioning Body, Core Strategy Development Group etc) for the Supporting People and S&SNH to

retain focus on low-level service, whilst ensuring a full contribution to broader housing, health, social care, crime and community safety outcomes.

- how to procure the services which are identified as priorities (including a Procurement Methodology and timetable to be developed and added to the Strategy)
- how to deliver those services through a stable provider market and how to secure improvements in quality, value and outcomes for service users.

To inform the strategic aims the following processes were undertaken:

## **2.6 Needs consultation process**

In September 2003, the Supporting People Commissioning Body commissioned a survey to identify unmet need and gaps in services for supported housing. This informed the Supporting People Strategy 2005-10. The recommendations formed the starting point for the extensive consultation exercise that took place from May 2007 to May 08

In response to the recommendations made in the original survey, we have developed both the range and nature of our consultation process with partners, providers and service users. The consultation also considered the changes in the environment in which services will operate in future

- With service users; through a series of consultation exercises aimed at identifying service improvements which will be incorporated into revised service specifications linked to the procurement exercise.
- with partners; through the increased frequency of Supported Housing Core Strategy Development Group meetings, regular Supporting Housing Commissioning Body meetings, individual meetings with joint commissioning managers and with LAA priority area lead officers. These meetings have established the future priorities for investment, both to meet SP/DFG outcomes, and to contribute towards LAA outcomes.
- With providers; through a series of provider workshops held in addition to the regular Provider Forum meetings, individual discussions linked to the value for money exercise, and regular newsletters. These meetings have established the ability of the provider market to deliver the identified outcomes in the Strategy

Details of service user consultation outcomes, provider feedback, and priorities for partners are set out in the needs analysis (available on request) the summary of these findings have informed the recommendation regarding generic and client specific service developments.

## **2.7 Value for Money**

S&SNHS is committed to ensuring that the resources available are used in the most cost-effective way to deliver improved public services according to local priorities. In terms of the SP Programme, this relates to the delivery of better housing related support services for vulnerable people within the available grants and making efforts to find better ways to deliver services whilst maintaining value for money.

S&SNHS assessed the value for money of every contracted service funded through the Supporting People Programme. This was a key element of the review process and remains a consideration of costs, quality, strategic relevance and outcomes delivered by the service.

Meetings were held with providers to discuss cost issues and other strategic and qualitative information. As a result it was possible to identify:

- cost per hour
- percentage of budget spent on staff
- number of support hours provided
- overheads and on-costs

Where there were concerns about the number of service hours per user and the type of activities undertaken by the support workers, Wirral's Supporting People Eligibility Criteria was used.

The outcome from this process has influenced the strategic direction for future commissioning of services as a whole, as well as individual provider negotiations where required.

## **2.8 Reviews and Outcome Framework**

There is no formal requirement for Local Authorities to continue to review supported housing contracts, as all existing services now meet, at least, minimum standard. It has been agreed that, however, in order to ensure continued quality improvements for all services, a random selection of reviews across client groups will be conducted annually (as set out in Wirral's Supporting People Approach to Monitoring Services 2008. Performance information will continue to be collected quarterly from all providers.

The emphasis, both nationally and locally has moved towards Providers and Local Authorities being able to demonstrate effective outcomes for their clients. Communities and Local Government (CLG) outcome framework has been developed by reviewing existing needs assessment and support planning tools as well as other Government department frameworks. The framework is not mandatory, but, it is important that administering authorities ensure that all providers have suitable mechanisms to record and demonstrate positive outcomes for their clients. Wirral Commissioning Body has made the Outcomes Framework a contractual requirement for all services.

## **2.9 Commissioning and Procurement**

Currently there is no legal requirement for Supporting People to undertake a formal competitive tendering process for the commissioning of support services. However S&SNHS have to demonstrate that it is in the council's best interest not to do so if services are not to be tendered.

A procurement methodology outlining the process and protocol used to inform the Supporting People Commissioning Body decision is attached as Appendix 1

## **2.10 Performance Information**

Supporting People has collected detailed, local, supported housing performance data since 2003, (including WHIA services). This has been used to inform future contract and commissioning decisions for the SP Programme locally. It is also submitted to Central Government on a quarterly basis.

CLG has increased the reporting requirements to include outcome that demonstrates the effectiveness of their investment in supported housing services at a local and national level.

Whilst removing the ring fence from the SP Programme budget from 2009, CLG wish to continue to protect the investment and benefits for vulnerable people that the SP programme has achieved. It has introduced 2 SP specific National Performance Indicators:

- NI 141 - Numbers of vulnerable people achieving independent living
- NI 142 - Number of vulnerable people supported to maintain independent living

It is important, therefore, that the council is able to demonstrate an improvement year on year against these indicators.

In addition to this, S&SNHS recognise the importance of the analysis and dissemination of performance data. This will inform future developments, not only for supported housing but for other partners. It also demonstrates the cost benefits of the preventive services funded and provided by the section, encouraging further investment where possible. Performance management is recognised as a service development area within the S&SNHS structure.

## **2.11 Partnership Working**

The S&SHNS has developed effective partnerships and will continue to build upon these relationships to ensure the best possible outcomes for vulnerable people and stakeholders.

### 3. Client Groups

S&SNHS provide services for very diverse client groups. CLG formally recognises 21 such categories split into 3 'super group' categories, as follows:<sup>1</sup>

Housing – related support works with a wide range of vulnerable groups to help them live independently. While there is no such thing as a typical service user, Supporting People/Supported Housing generally works with three different types of need:

People living independently with support	Older people with support needs, Frail elderly people Older people with mental health problems
People in receipt of care with support	People with physical or sensory disabilities People with learning disabilities
People experiencing or at risk of Socially 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.

These are not neat or exclusive categories. Some people will be in more than one category and others will move between them, but this model provides a helpful way to look at how services are designed and joined together.

Whilst there is a need to continue to develop services with a cross-cutting, strategic approach, there are important differences in the nature of housing related support provided when working with crisis situations, to those which are designed to maintain existing independence. The strategy therefore aims to address the overall context affecting all service provision, the needs of the three main groups, followed by recommendations surrounding specific client groups.

#### 3.1 People living independently with support

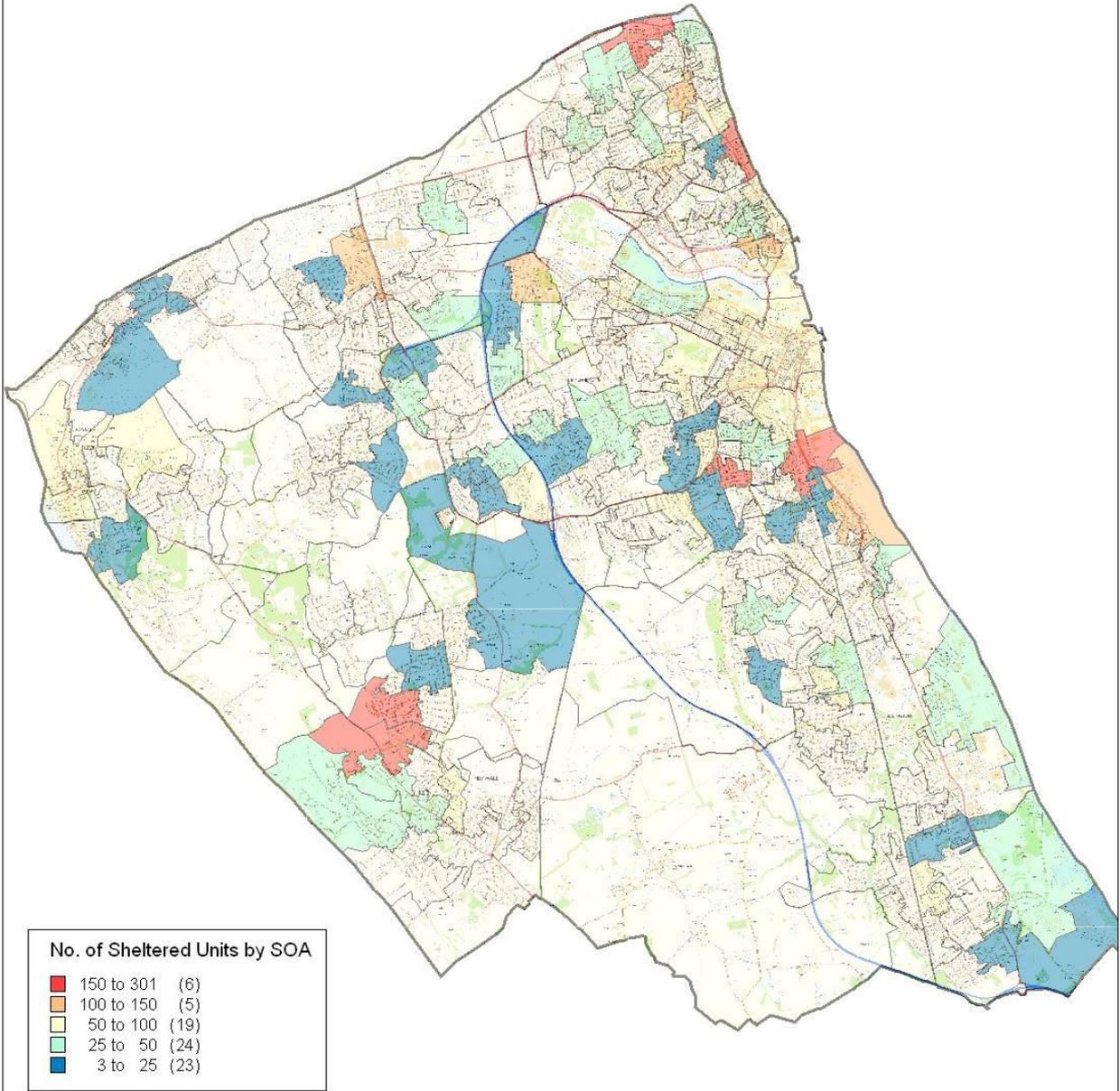
Supporting People currently invests £2 million for older people with support needs, frail elderly people and older people with mental health problems. There are 17 Providers, of 138 Services, providing up to 4,400 clients with either supported accommodation or floating support:

##### 3.1.1 Older people

- Sheltered accommodation either;
  - Enclosed schemes with on site support provided by warden/scheme manager, including access to 24 hour alarm service
  - Peripatetic wardens with access to an alarm service.
- Community Alarm

<sup>1</sup> Creating Sustainable Communities: Supporting Independence CLG 2005

## Number of Sheltered Units



### 3.1.2 Frail elderly people and older people with mental health problems

- 3 Enclosed schemes with on site support provided by warden/scheme manager, including access to 24 hour alarm services
  - 1 specialist extra care facility for clients with mental health problems/dementia
  - 2 extra care schemes with 24 hours on site care and support.

Providing 190 units of supported accommodation

The majority of provision for older people in the borough, funded by Supporting People, is sheltered housing. Whilst sheltered housing still provides essential services and living choices for some older people, through consultation it is evident that the existing levels and type of provision no longer entirely meet the overall aspirations and needs of this client group.

Demographic and social trends are shaping the nature and demand for older people's services in Wirral.

- The number of people aged over 65 is increasing
- The number of frail elderly people is increasing
- Older people who are owner-occupiers are increasing
- The number of older people from black and minority groups is rising

Through its S&SNHS Programme Wirral Council has recognised the need to move away from an ever narrower focus on those older people in most need, usually dealt with at a time of crisis, to a much more proactive policy of targeted prevention. In line with the Social Exclusion Report "A Sure Start to Later Life: Ending inequalities for Older People", it aims to reduce the need for crisis intervention and enable many more people to continue living in the community for as long as they are able.<sup>2</sup>

The main findings of the consultation with older people are:

- Older peoples services in Wirral are inequitable, arising from locality and tenure type
- Some owner occupiers and private tenants would like to receive a warden type service, in the form of an older persons floating support service.
- There is a requirement to promote and raise awareness of assistive technology
- Older people are reluctant to move to sheltered accommodation, for reasons relating to size, locality, etc.

Whilst accepting that sheltered housing providers are addressing some of the issues raised by the decommissioning and reconfiguring of existing services, this is a long-term process. In order to be responsive to the immediate needs of these clients S&SNHS propose the development of floating support provision linked wherever possible to assistive technology, in order to maximise the numbers of clients accessing services.

Wirral has a significant level of sheltered accommodation providing similar levels of support. In order to meet the changing demographic demands such as increasing numbers of frail elderly or people with mental health problems (Dementia, Alzheimer's) there is a

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<sup>2</sup> *Wirral Joint Commissioning Strategy for Older People revised, DASS &PCT, 2006-2010*

need to negotiate with providers, partners and service users with a view to reconfiguring existing services including the use of assistive technology to better meet local need.

As part of the Value for Money analysis, we have benchmarked sheltered housing provision, including:

- Staff to client ratio
- Financial viability
- Unit costs

In addition the Supporting People performance data collection has identified a number of sheltered schemes that are currently under-utilised. The results of both exercises have informed the actions/recommendation for sheltered housing.

S&SNH recognise the importance of the provision of extra-care, which continues to be a priority for the council. Capital funding of £4,364,146 has been secured through National Affordable Housing Programme Allocation, for 70 units of accommodation, including 8 units for people with cognitive problems.

We will continue to work with our colleagues in Housing Strategy, the Department of Adult Social Services and the Primary Care Trust to facilitate and support the development of extra-care schemes. Our main emphasis however will be to invest in low-level preventive services.

### 3.1.3 Actions /Recommendations

In response to the above and related documents, the Commissioning Body has identified the following key actions that will be taken forward through this strategy.

#### **Older people with support needs**

- Decommission unsuitable sheltered accommodation to an agreed timetable
- To re-negotiate with stakeholders the differing levels of sheltered services.
- Re-negotiate with existing sheltered providers regarding a cost neutral expansion into the wider community. To provide tenure neutral floating support services, including Assistive technology to achieve this expansion (target increase of 5%)
- To realise savings identified as part of the Value for Money exercise to commission a tenure neutral, borough wide older persons floating support service (target 200 new service users).

#### **Frail elderly people and older people with mental health problems**

- Council to support the development of the successful two extra care schemes (funded via the National Affordable Housing Programme and Department of Health Extra Care Fund) estimated to be completed during 2010/11.
- In principle support for extra care, but decisions regarding commitment of funding to any future extra care schemes will be based on the financial position at the time.
- Linked to our colleagues in health and social care, assist in the development of a pathway for older people with dementia, in support of National Indicator 124 (people with long term conditions supported to be independent and in control of their condition).

## 3.2 People in receipt of care with support

Supporting People currently funds services for clients with Physical & Sensory Impairment at an approximate cost of £343,000 including a contribution to the WHIA of £160,000 with a further £1.32 million funded via the WHIA services.

### 3.2.1 People with physical or sensory disabilities

#### Physical Disabilities

There are 2 services providing support.

- Floating support (Pilot Service)
- Accommodation based support

#### Sensory Disabilities

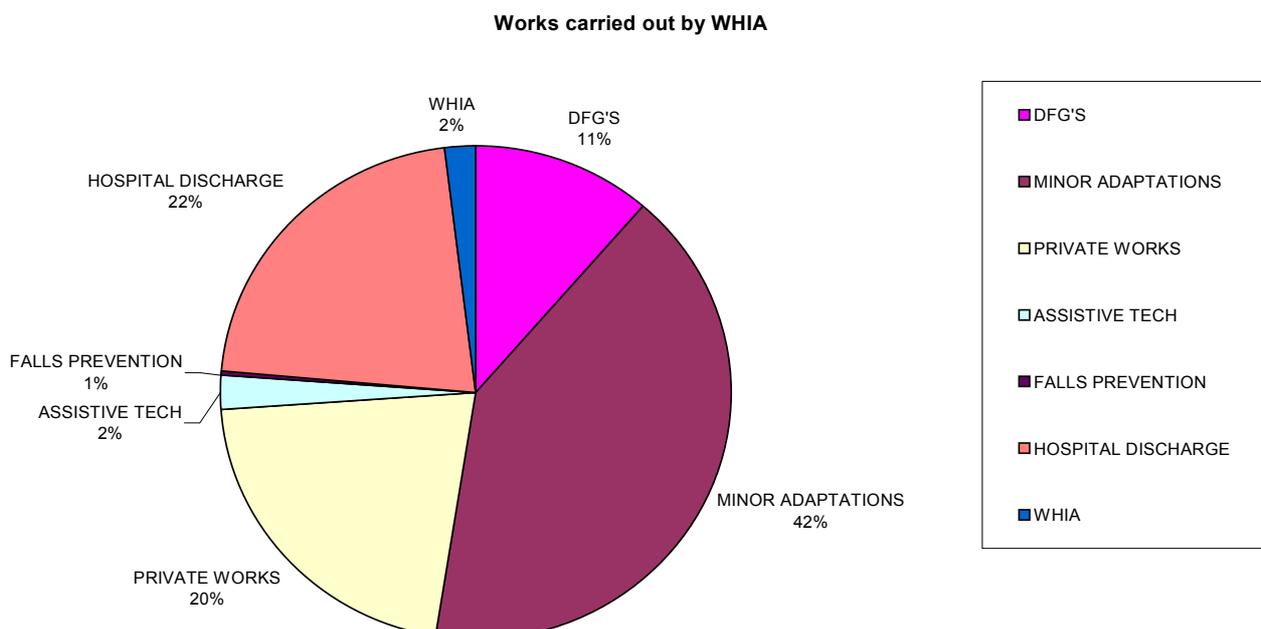
- Floating support for profoundly deaf clients

In order to expand choice and quality of service for people with Physical Disabilities, including Older People where appropriate, investment in the development of the Wirral Home Improvement Agency will continue.

“Effective housing support can reduce the incidences of personal harm and dependence on statutory health and social care services, and many councils are currently working to improve access to adapted property, home improvement agencies....”<sup>3</sup>

### 3.2.2 Wirral Home Improvement Agency

**Figure 5: Services provided via WHIA during 2007/08 totalling 3,285 jobs are as follows:**



<sup>3</sup> Commission for Social Care Inspection: Supporting People – Promoting Independence, May 06

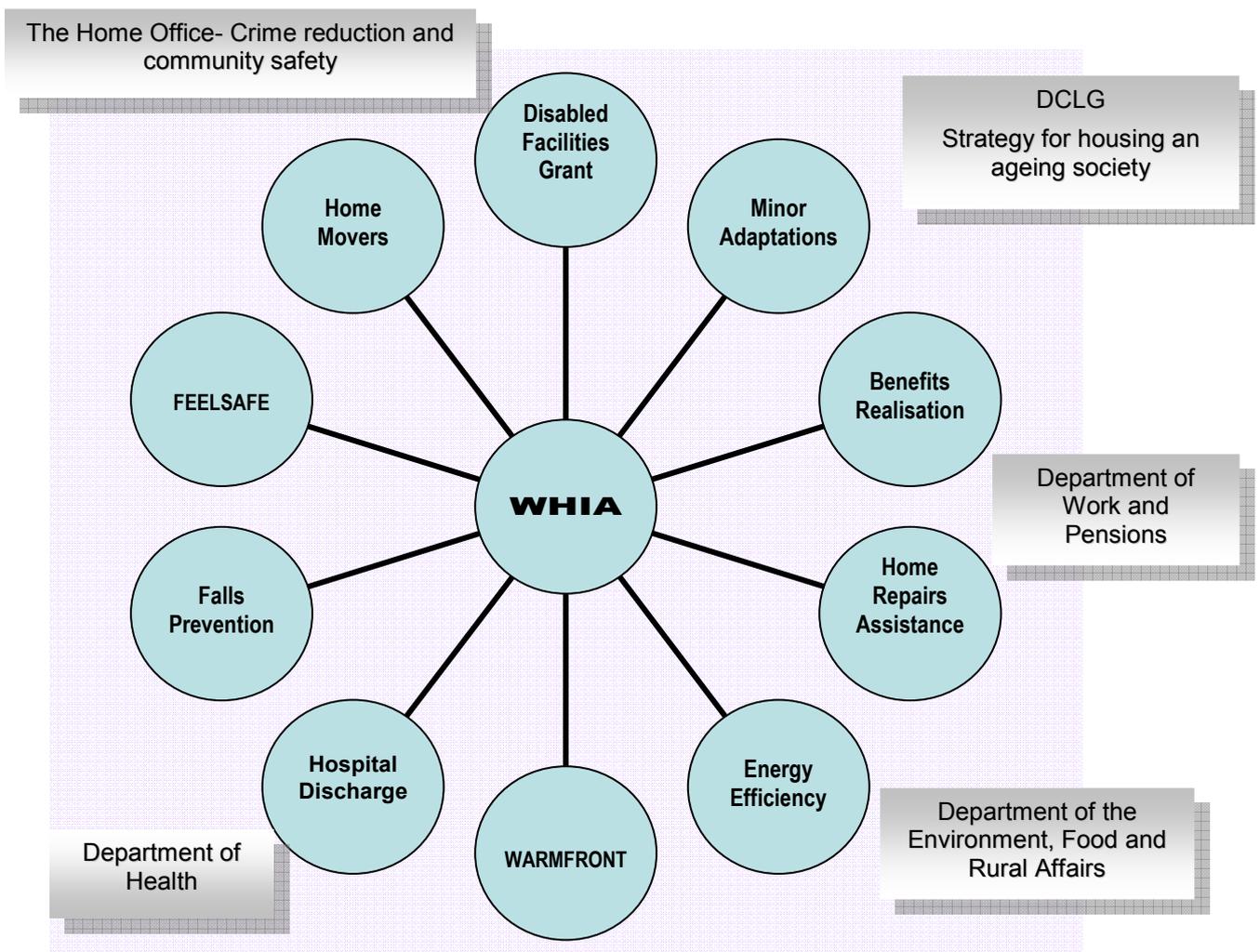
Whilst WHIA provides services to clients of all ages, the majority are older people. On 25 February 2008 CLG published “Impact Assessment of National Strategy for Housing an Ageing Society: Advice and Information, Rapid Repairs Service along side “Life Time Homes’ Life time Neighbourhoods.

The CLG strategy focuses on issues around existing housing stock as well as the requirements for new housing to meet the needs and aspirations of older people. This document outlines the main features of the proposals by Government to create rapid repair and adaptations services and establish a national advice and information service for older people’s housing needs

All WHIA services are currently being revised, via the Council’s 1business/service re-engineering process, to ensure that service delivery meets national and local targets.

In order to achieve both local and national targets S&SNHS will develop the WHIA as a HUB/”One Stop Shop” for clients with Physical Disabilities (including older people). We will commission all low-level, housing related preventive services for this client group via the WHIA. This will ensure that services provided are joined up, cost effective, delivering on time and work for the individual.

**Figure 6: Wirral Home Improvement Agency ‘HUB’ Service:**



WHIA HUB Service will act as a single point of access for all service users. This service will ensure that all housing and support needs are met either via the agency or sign posted to our partner organisations. A comprehensive home safety audit will be carried out to ensure that all clients are living in a warm, safe and secure environment. The primary objective of the Hub is to assist the disabled, older and vulnerable to live independently within their own homes by enabling access to a wide range of services which can help to bring this about for many people.

The future WHIA will seek to provide services that will enhance consumer choice. This will include:

- Adaptation services meeting the needs of people with disabilities
- Rapid response for minor adaptations and home from hospital discharge, community equipment and telecare, in support of National Indicator NI 131 (delayed transfer of care)
- Handyperson service for minor repairs
- Home safety audit.
- Community safety initiatives – feel safe
- Accident prevention – falls and safety in the home
- Staying Put or Moving On options
- Fuel poverty and affordable warmth, and engagement with public health objectives
- Supporting loans and equity release for large scale repairs

### 3.2.3 Actions/Recommendations

In response to the above and related documents, the Commissioning Body has identified the following key actions that will be taken forward through this strategy.

#### People with physical or sensory disabilities

- To review service provision for sensory disabilities, with a view to expansion within current allocation
- To review the outcome of the Pilot Floating Support Service to inform future commissioning of services.

#### Develop the WHIA to:

- Provide a Single point of access, via the Hub Service, for housing and support needs.
- Implement a Comprehensive home safety audit for those contacting the service.
- Meet the changing needs of the housing, health and social care agendas through the implementation of new streamlined practises and procedures to ensure compliance
- Deliver and implement Government led strategies at a local level. (DFG, CLG Outcomes process and value for money)
- Continue partnership working to promote and maintain independent living across all tenures.
- Provide a customer centred approach to all services provision
- Provide a quality Management System (ISO9001) across all areas of the service.

## People with Learning Disabilities

Supporting People currently funds services for clients with Learning Disabilities at an approximate cost of £2.6 million. The contracted services are provided by 17 organisations, via 40 services, supporting 297 clients through:

- Supported Housing with 24 hour cover including waking night staff
- Supported housing with 24 hour cover with sleep-in night staff
- Supported housing with day time staff and access to an on-call service in the evening/night
- Adult placements
- Floating support

The outcome of consultation with service users and commissioners, has demonstrated a need to move away from the traditional models of supported living e.g. group homes, to wider housing options, with the emphasis on more low level/ independent living services for those with mild to moderate disabilities.

Currently, Supporting People contracts with service providers for clients with varying levels of disability. Many of the services are jointly funded with the PCT and/or DASS due to the service user's substantial support and care needs. These clients meet the requirements for statutory service provision.

Nationally CSCI recognises that, "There has been significant growth in supported housing for adults with learning disabilities. The Supporting People grant has been used to subsidise the costs of supported housing in most council areas. This has resulted in new opportunities for some people, but sometimes has resulted in inappropriate use of grant to cover statutory duties."<sup>4</sup>

Whilst Wirral has endeavoured to ensure that all funding has been appropriately spent, there are small numbers of services with clients that have a limited capacity to sustain independent living in SP terms. With this in mind the Supporting People Commissioning Body has made the strategic decision to withdraw funding where SP's contribution to the service is only a small proportion (20% or less) of the full cost of the service provision. The savings will be reinvested in alternative services for this client group.

Further work is needed to develop services for those people with mild to moderate disabilities who do not meet Fair Access to Care requirements. Models of floating support must be flexible enough to allow for a safe reduction in support as a person's confidence and independence skills increase.

As part of the Supporting People Value for Money analysis, we have been able to benchmark the total cost of services considering;

- Staff to client ratio
- Financial viability
- Unit costs
- Support to Care ratio

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<sup>4</sup> Supporting People – Promoting Independence, CSCI, May 06/ Updated March 07

The outcome of the exercise has informed the actions/ recommendation for this client group, including contract re-negotiations with a view to joint commissioning where possible.

The review process also identified that Wirral Supporting People is contributing toward the long-term costs of a number of clients placed by other authorities. Strategically we will be considering the continued funding of clients without a local connection as part of the joint commissioning negotiations.

## Actions/Recommendation

In response to the above and related documents, the Commissioning Body has identified the following actions/recommendations for the life of the Strategy.

### People with Learning Disabilities

- Withdraw Supporting People funding from those services where the Supporting People contribution is less than 20% of the overall cost of service provision.
- Review the continued funding of contracts where out of borough placements are the only or majority of clients.
- Re-invest savings made in the development of a service for clients with low to moderate learning disabilities (target to support an additional 35 clients through the commissioning of a LD floating Support Service.)
- To develop joint contracting arrangements with DASS where appropriate.
- Through partnership working assist delivery of the following outcomes for people with learning disabilities (as recommended in the Wirral DASS Learning Disabilities Accommodation Strategy):
  - Provision of specialist housing where appropriate.
  - Strategically support future bids for capital funding in respect of housing developments, where appropriate and in the context of wider supported housing priorities.
  - Facilitate access routes into mainstream housing, including links to the Housing Priority Panel

All of which will support the National Indicators: 136 (People supported to live independently through Social Services- all adults); 145 (adults with learning disabilities in settled accommodation).

(The CB and CSDG will continue to consider requests for SP funding)

### 3.3 People experiencing or at risk of social exclusion

This is the largest by value of the 3 client groupings, with a total contribution of approximately £5.7 million towards housing support services, for many people this is the only support service they receive or can access. The services are provided as follows:

Client Group	Total units of service	Number of Accommodation Based	Number of floating support units
Single Homeless with support needs	273	265	8
Homeless families with support needs	7	7	0
Young People at risk/leaving care	208	156	52
Women fleeing domestic violence	26	12	14
Teenage Parents	35	21	14
People with drug problems	38	16	22
People with Alcohol Problems	45	0	45
Offenders or people at risk of offending inc mentally disorder offenders	116	40	76
People with mental health problems	152	72	80
People with HIV/AIDS	10	0	10
Generic Floating Support services (including BME service)	106	0	106

This demonstrates the diversity of the client groups, and the extensive levels of service provision. The consultation process and associated findings identified the following key issues is common to all;

- Many people have needs that present in more than one primary client group. E.g. A single homeless person with substance misuse and mental health problems.
- There is a need to improve the awareness of, and the utilisation of relevant services available to clients to ensure the best possible outcome. (Clients are more likely to re – present if they are not supported to move on in a positive way. Sometimes this will require more specialist provision or a multi-agency approach).
- There is limited availability of outreach/resettlement support to assist clients to move on from supported accommodation into independent living.
- The use of temporary accommodation including Bed and Breakfast for single people and families has increased.
- Clients in hostels risk losing motivation whilst waiting to ‘move on’, resulting in disengagement and relapse.
- The nature of the support provided is not always necessarily reflective of the needs of the Service User.

- Throughput for the short-term services is variable with planned moves for 07/08 ranging from 24% to 100% resulting in an average of 52%.
- Access routes and referrals into short-term accommodation have historically relied on existing and informal relationships between referral agencies and service providers. As a result, those in the greatest need are not always able to access accommodation and support services when they need them.
- Additionally, the monitoring of short term accommodation services in terms of their vacancy rates, referral routes, move on rates and support levels has not been coordinated until recently and so performance across the sector is not consistent.
- It is apparent that some short-term services are not identifying the pre-existing issues of their service users. These unresolved issues may hinder access to general needs housing, at the point that the Service User is ready for move-on e.g. previous rent arrears.
- The approach to 'life skills' and tenancy sustainment training amongst short-term services is variable. A lack of emphasis in this area can result in greater incidences of tenancy breakdown, once the Service User has resettled within the community.
- The quality of support planning in short-term services is variable.
- Repeat homelessness acceptances and levels of 'intentional' homelessness are high.

The council therefore needs to take a more holistic approach to the commissioning of short-term services through the development of a 'pathways model' (see figure 7) which can be described as a route through the short-term provision into independent living.

### 3.3.1 **Homeless Prevention Service**

*"..We recognised that the provision of housing alone cannot solve homelessness. Underlying problems which led to homelessness in the first place have to be addressed in order to provide long-term solutions. Failure to address these root causes can lead to repeated episodes of homelessness"*

*"Sustainable Communities: Settled Homes; changing lives"  
CLG, March 2005*

The recent Homeless Strategy<sup>5</sup> has identified the benefits of implementing preventive measures and the potential for these to reduce levels of homelessness in the borough. As such, S&SNHS will work with the Homelessness Section to develop a Homeless Prevention Service.

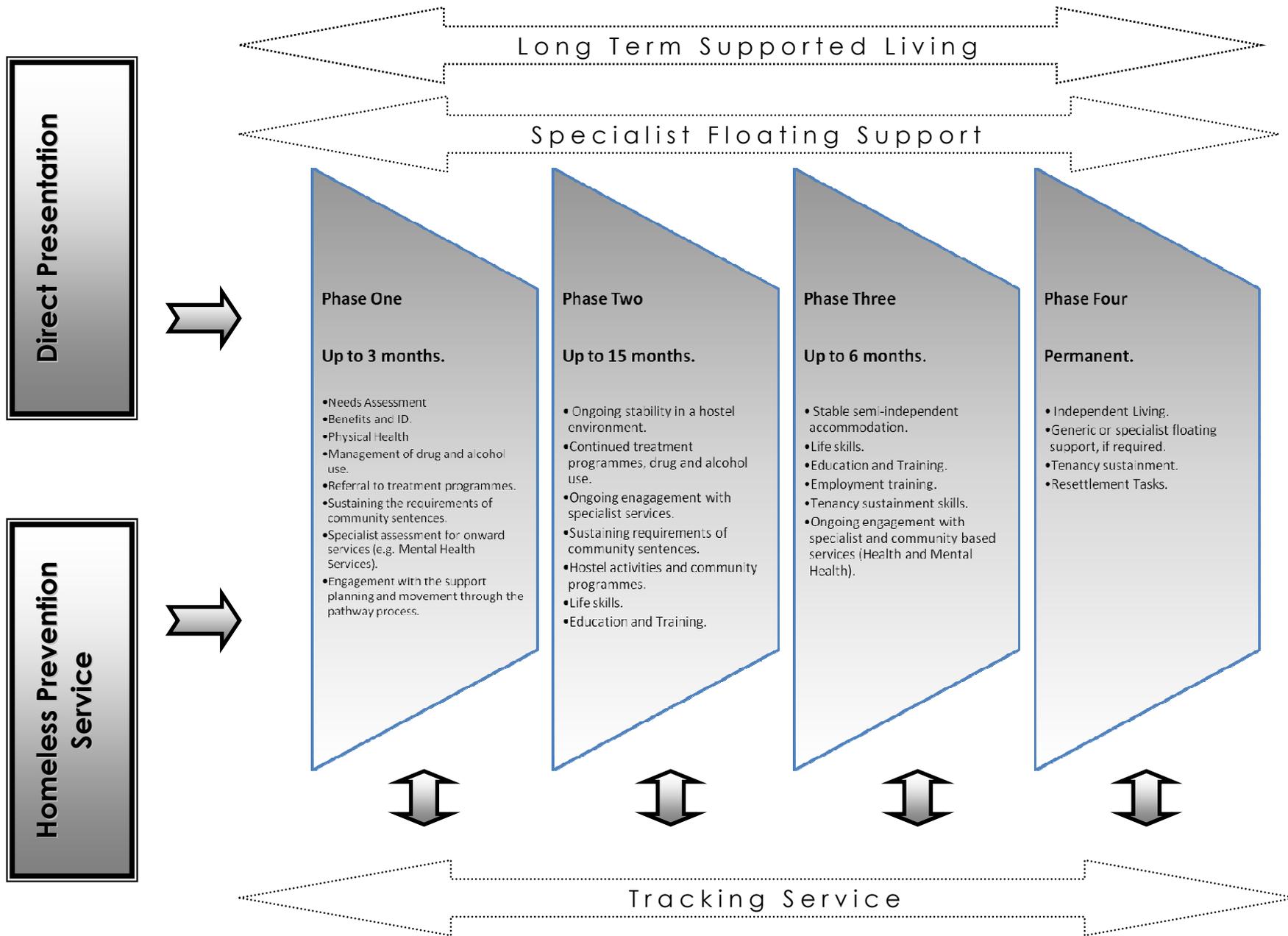
The mechanics of the service will focus on the promotion of housing options and prevention of homelessness and repeat homelessness through the use of facilities such as mediation; 'home visits' for homeless applicants; access to debt and financial advice services and affordable housing options. The approach will empower people by giving information and

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<sup>5</sup> Wirral Council Homeless Strategy 2008-10

advice about the different options and services available to assist them to make informed decisions about accessing accommodation.

**Figure 7: Socially-excluded Pathway.**



### 3.3.2 The socially – excluded Pathway Model

S&SNHS wish to ensure that short-term services are providing pathways to greater independence for Service Users, through the reconfiguration of existing short-term provision to provide an increased range of move-on options.

This pathway through short-term services forms the basis of a process that will best meet the Service Users housing and support needs. It will also allow the development of the individual's abilities to achieve independence, thus creating a positive route to sustainable independent living that makes the best use of all the housing-related support options available.

Previously, hostels and supported housing projects offered similar levels of service. The Pathways approach will ensure that each Provider offers services that different people might need at different stages of their lives. The intended Pathway structure comprises four separate phases that reflect a tapering need. Where necessary, a service user may have to receive a service at each stage of the Pathway, but the benefit of this model is the ability for Service Users to enter into a service at a phase that is reflective of their need. Each phase of the Pathway model will have a specific duration of stay. This will ensure that service users, who have been supported to address their needs, will not remain in a service that they no longer require, resulting in the freeing up of bed-spaces, and therefore allowing access for others. The approximate timeframes allocated to each phase of the pathway ensure that a service user is moved-on within the mandatory two year maximum duration of stay, as set by CLG, however, where it can be demonstrated that it is in the service user's best interests to stay within a service beyond the allocated timeframe, then flexibility will be given.

Although effective support-planning and robust life skills programmes should reduce incidences of deterioration and relapse amongst service users, it is inevitable that some Service Users will experience difficulties in maintaining progression. It should therefore be noted that the Pathways Model allows 'backwards steps' through the phases. This may happen if the behaviour of Service Users makes progression difficult, and they do not address these issues through the support planning process and the services offered to help them. In some instances this may involve a physical move to a different supported-living environment to ensure that the progress of others is not jeopardised by the relapse of one. In certain circumstances however, it may be more appropriate to engage the services of a specialist floating support service to provide an additional tier of support around, for example, substance misuse. On these occasions, the Supported-Living Tracking Service will be on hand to liaise with Providers and to offer advice and guidance.

Historically, Short-Term services tended to operate in isolation. Services within the Pathway Model will now be expected to share all relevant information regarding Service Users, with their consent. We envisage that this will result in service users receiving seamless support packages and no longer being required to undergo multiple assessments.

For the majority of short-term services, the Pathway Model is not a significant departure from the existing format of provision, and most services will continue to operate in a similar capacity as before. The Pathway Model will formalise existing referral relationships amongst Providers but, crucially, will develop referral routes across Providers where these have previously not existed. The Pathway approach to the short-term supported living

services will ensure that all service users receive good quality, consistent levels of service and support that is reflective of their need, and which will help them move towards independent living. It will result in the reduction of silting-up of services and an increase in the level of successful move-on. It will also breakdown the barriers that exist between different client groups.

*The following detailed descriptions will be included in the appendices of the final version. They have been included in this version to assist understanding of the proposal.*

### Phase One

The primary functions of a Phase One Service will be to provide accommodation whilst carrying out robust, holistic assessments of need that determine the optimum level of support required by each Service User. Using this information, the Phase One Service will refer the Individual to a Service, within the Pathway model, that is reflective of their need. Where necessary, referral will be made to appropriate Treatment Programmes, specialist community services or longer-term supported-living services.

During this Phase, service users will also be supported to address their immediate needs, such as securing the necessary ID required for statutory services and benefit maximisation etc.

Service Users who are not already registered with Wirralhomes will be supported to do so and where previous rent arrears exist, then appropriate repayment plans will be arranged.

The maximum duration of stay within a Phase One service will be 3 months.

### Phase Two

A Phase Two service will place emphasis on the Service User's continuing engagement with treatment and specialist community programmes; compliance with community sentences and the addressing of long-term needs but will also begin the process of resettlement by equipping the Service User with the appropriate skills needed to sustain a Tenancy through the delivery of specific 'Life skills' programmes.

Where appropriate, Service Users will be encouraged to attend relevant Education, Training and Employment.

Phase Two services will also place importance on the need to budget and save, for the eventual transition to independent living.

The maximum duration of stay within a Phase Two service will be 15 months.

### Phase Three

A Phase Three service essentially places the Service User in a Semi-Independent environment and allows them to draw on their independent living skills whilst remaining in a supportive environment.

As with a Phase Two service, Service Users will continue to be supported in attending relevant programmes, but a greater emphasis will be placed on employment, training and education. The tenancy sustainment skills that began in Phase Two will continue to be reinforced in a practical setting.

However, the primary focus of attention for a Phase Three Service will be to prepare for the Service Users reintegration into the Community, through the securing of appropriate move-on accommodation, and where necessary, to arrange for an appropriate Phase Four service to provide support, once accommodation has been obtained.

The maximum duration of stay within a Phase Three Service will be 6 months.

#### Phase Four

At this stage, the Service User has secured independent move-on accommodation; therefore the primary thrust of a Phase Four service will be to support the Service User in sustaining their Tenancy.

A Phase Four service will provide the Service User with practical resettlement assistance, such as healthcare registrations, utility connections etc.

As with all Phases, Service Users in Phase Four will continue to be supported in engaging with programmes designed to consolidate their progress to that point. Additionally, in order to reduce feelings of social isolation, Phase Four services will provide support in accessing relevant social groups.

#### **Supported-living Gateway**

It is envisaged that the adoption of the 'Pathways Model' will determine the need for the development of a supported accommodation 'Gateway' at some point in the future.

#### **Supported Living Tracking Service**

In order to assist service providers with the transition into the Pathways Model, S&SNHS will establish a Supported Living Tracking Service (SLTS).

This service will collate details on, and track all residents of the short-term services. The SLTS will work with providers to ensure that service users are able to access services within the Pathway model, to reflect their individual level of need.

The SLTS will liaise closely with providers to ensure that service users are referred to relevant services within the pathways model and are moved on within specified timeframes. The service will assist Providers in facilitating referrals to appropriate services. The SLTS will also feed back to relevant stakeholders, any issues that arise, once a service user has been reintegrated into the community.

The SLTS will carry out qualitative and quantitative studies into the barriers to accessing housing experienced by service users, which will then inform future commissioning decisions.

It is envisaged that a Steering Group will be developed to oversee the work of the Tracking Service and the development of the Pathways Model. Consideration, therefore, could be given to expanding the remit of an existing, appropriate Body such as the Housing Priority Panel Strategic Group.

The purpose of the SLTS is not to devolve responsibility away from Service Providers but rather to ensure that best possible use is made of the various housing-related support services on Wirral.

### 3.3.3 Actions / Recommendations

Implementing the pathways process will result in either reconfiguration or decommissioning of existing services and re-negotiation of current contracts

#### **Single Homeless with Support Needs**

- Re-negotiation of existing hostel provision arrangements to reflect the need to develop the pathways model.
- Assist in the development of an effective Homeless Prevention Service.
- In partnership with the Homeless Prevention Service, to invest further in the development of the Housing Priority Panel, with a view to accessing rent deposits and furniture packages
- To develop the awareness of alternative service provision in the borough.
- Assist providers in improving the quality of service delivery, and, where necessary, in the development of effective 'life skills' and tenancy sustainment training programmes.
- Conduct further research into the numbers of single homeless women to determine whether there is a need for an increase in the number of bed-spaces designated for females.
- Conduct further research into the levels of, and the reasons behind, repeat presentations in short-term supported living services.
- Give consideration to the development of a common needs assessment document across all short-term services that can 'travel' with a Service User through the Pathways Model.
- Make better use of the Private-rented sector as a move-on option for vulnerable people.

#### **Rough sleepers**

- Remodel the Direct Access service provision arrangements to assist in reducing the levels of exclusion.
- Ensure effective move-on within the short-term provision, to reduce incidences of 'bed-blocking'.
- Work in partnership with the PCT, DASS and DAAT to develop appropriate methods to engage with the hard-to-reach groups and to use the expertise of the Town Centre Project

## **Offenders and those at risk of offending**

- Tender for a cross-authority MAPPA (Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements) provision. (Contract to be hosted by Liverpool City Council)
- Tender for specialist offender floating support provision in partnership with Merseyside Probation Service.
- Reconfigure existing supported accommodation provision, in line with the Pathways model.

In support of National Indicators: 18- adult re-offending rates for those under probation supervision; 30- Re offending rate of prolific and other offenders; 143- Offenders under probation supervision living in settled and suitable accommodation at the end of their order or licence; 144- offenders under probation supervision in employment at the end of their order or licence.

## **Mentally disordered offenders**

- Tender for specialist mentally disordered offender floating support provision.

## **People who misuse alcohol or drugs**

- Reconfigure existing supported accommodation provision, in line with the Pathways model.
- Tender for specialist alcohol / substance misuse floating support provision in partnership with the DAAT
- Develop joint protocols surrounding the exchange of information for clients accessing supported living and treatment services, to inform future commissioning decisions.

## **People with mental health problems**

- Conduct further research surrounding incidences of mental health problems amongst homeless people and the effects that these problems have on engagement with support services and subsequent tenancy sustainment.
- Research the barriers to accessing housing resulting in delayed hospital discharge for this client group in partnership with Primary Care Trust.
- Renegotiate existing accommodation contracts, with a view to expansion.
- To tender for specialist mental health floating support provision.

### **Young people at risk/leaving care**

- Reconfigure existing supported accommodation provision, in line with the Pathways model, in partnership with Children and Young Persons Department including the Youth Offending Team
- Review the outcomes of the pilot service 'Stopgap', in order to inform future commissioning decisions in partnership with Children and Young Persons Department including the Youth Offending Team

In support of National Indicators: 117 (16-18 year olds not in education, training or employment) 147 (care leavers in suitable accommodation); 148 (care leavers in education, employment or training)

### **Teenage parents**

- Reconfigure existing supported accommodation provision, in line with the Pathways model and with the involvement of the Children and Young Persons Department and the Department of Health.

### **Women fleeing domestic violence**

- Reconfigure existing supported accommodation provision, in line with the Pathways model and with the involvement of CDRP and Homelessness
- Review the outcome of the pilot floating support service, in partnership with the CDRP.

In support of National indicator: 32 (Repeat incidences of Domestic Violence)

### **Homeless Families with support needs**

- Review the current investment for this client group, in partnership with the Homelessness section, with a view to expansion based on evidenced gap in service provision, in support of LAA Target NI 156 (number of households living in temporary accommodation).

### **Refugees/travellers**

- Re-evaluate the location of the BME Support Service, in partnership with the BME Steering Group and Wirral Council, Corporate Services Department.
- Consider the findings of The Merseyside Gypsies and Travellers Accommodation and Support Needs Assessment at a sub regional level with our partners.

**People with HIV/AIDS**

- Jointly fund a Merseyside Cross Authority service for clients with HIV. The contract will be hosted by Wirral and will inform any future commissioning requirement for this client group.

**Generic Floating Support/Resettlement Service**

- Tender for a single generic floating support service. This will allow for an increase in the number of clients supported.
- Assist in the development of a more effective referral route, in line with the Pathways model.

## 4.0 Increasing access to housing.

The Council recognises the growing demand for appropriate and affordable housing to meet local need, which is supported by the 2007 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). The SHMA has enabled the Council to better understand local housing markets, interaction with the wider sub region and housing affordability.

The SHMA has identified that the Borough has a significant level of special needs population, at 22% of all Wirral households, with the majority being physically disabled at 13%, 4% with a severe disability and a substantial fraction (4.9%) who are frail elderly. In addition 27% of all households in Wirral are older person only households. These findings clearly present some key challenges in terms of increasing access and supply of affordable housing within the Borough to meet both the needs of the general population and those with specific needs. It is therefore essential that the care and support needs are strategically planned alongside the development of accommodation based services. Recommendations for Commissioning Body decisions for capital and revenue funding of supported housing schemes are debated and prioritised by the Core Strategy Development Group.

Wirral's Housing Strategy Statement 2005 – 2010 plays a crucial role in addressing these needs by incorporating and developing key services to respond to identified trends such as the ageing population within the Borough and fluctuations in levels of homelessness.

The overarching Housing Strategy priorities are:

- Delivering Urban Renaissance
- Providing Affordable Homes to Maintain Balanced Communities
- Delivering Decent Homes in Thriving Neighbourhoods
- Meeting the Needs of Communities and Providing Support for those who need it.

The priorities are addressed within the continually reviewed strategy action plan to ensure that all aspects of housing and regeneration are taken forward and developed to meet the changing needs of Wirral's communities.

Key to this is how the Council develops appropriate affordable housing that is sustainable and meets identified needs. The Council has a proven track record in working with Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) to provide homes for rent, sale and homebuy (shared ownership) for both general needs and specific client group's provision. This is done by utilising a range of capital funding programmes such as Housing Market Renewal (HMRI) and the Housing Corporation to develop and improve accommodation both within the social and private sector.

Supporting the requirement both locally and nationally to increase affordable housing supply, Wirral has included NI155 (Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)) in its Local Area Agreement as one of the key priority areas for improvement. Challenging targets have been set up to 2011 which will see a number of additional options utilised for developing affordable housing within the Borough, including the use of Section 106 agreements.

### 4.1 Social Sector

In partnership with local RSL's Wirral has recently secured just over £11 million National Affordable Housing Programme funding which will see 229 units of both general needs and supported needs accommodation delivered during 2008 – 2011. In addition further funding known as Continuous Market Engagement (CME) is available during 2008 – 2011 from the Homes and Communities Agency (HACA) (formerly the Housing Corporation) in response to government targets for increasing affordable housing supply. CME allows ongoing funding allocation from April 2008 to October 2010.

CME aims to provide overall programme delivery along with significant potential benefits. In particular it aims to:

- Target funding towards supply that can be delivered
- Make it simpler for bids to be re-submitted
- Provide quarterly allocation statements to enable local authorities and delivery partners access to funding allocations in their areas,
- Enable better alignment with affordable housing providers business plans
- Enable partners to be responsive to land acquisition and development opportunities.

Initial priorities for this funding include the need to develop and invest in more supported housing. HACA is committed to investing in the needs of vulnerable people and it seeks to ensure that 10% of the overall programme is dedicated towards funding for supported housing and housing for older people. HACA is also keen to increase the proportion of socially excluded adults in settled accommodation and employment, education or training particularly for the following client groups:

- Care leavers
- Adult offender
- Adults in contact with secondary mental health services
- Adults with moderate to severe learning disabilities

## **4.2 Evaluating the Impact of Choice Based Letting for Vulnerable Clients**

The Homelessness Review highlighted that people in housing need required more information about their housing options. This included information about the availability and likely waiting times for different types and locations of social rented housing through the Wirralhomes Choice Based Lettings (CBL) System. A limited amount of information was published weekly in the form of recent lettings results for individual properties, but the Council has now published information about the overall availability and demand for different types of properties and the relative likely waiting times to enable people to make more realistic choices. This information will help prevent homelessness by enabling households to be more informed about meeting their own housing need.

The Wirralhomes CBL allocations policy gives priority through Urgent Need Status to households for the following reasons:

- Unintentional Overcrowding (after 6 months)
- Property under-occupied (for partner RSLs only).
- Accommodation in severe disrepair.
- Violence / Harrassment
- Welfare

- Medical reasons / conditions or disability.
- Clearance

Currently, no priority need is given under the CBL policy for homelessness or the prevention of homelessness (households accepted as owed a full homelessness duty by the Council are offered social housing outside the CBL service). This policy was adopted to prevent the policy offering a perverse incentive for households to become homeless.

There are some anomalies between the Wirralhomes CBL Urgent Need priorities and types and levels of housing need in the Borough and the policy allows very limited choice to applicants accepted as homeless, which may have a negative effect on sustainability. The Council and partners are therefore reviewing the Wirralhomes allocations policy, to better meet housing need and prevent homelessness where possible.

The Wirralhomes quota system advertises two thirds of properties for applicants where Urgent Need is not taken into account. However, due to the distribution of the types of properties and applicant preferences, statistics show that 60% of properties let through CBL are consistently let to applicants on the basis of their length of time on the housing register, rather than their housing need. The Council will therefore review the allocations agreement with its Wirralhomes partners seeking to ensure that more lettings are made to people in housing need.

**Following the recent Wirralhomes review and building on existing partnerships with both the RSL and private rented sector, the Wirralhomes partnership will explore the potential for increasing access to a wider choice of accommodation through the service.**

### **4.3 Private Rented Sector**

The private rented sector is an increasingly important provider of easily accessible, flexible accommodation within Wirral with nearly one in ten households renting their home from a private landlord. This ease of access, coupled with supporting tenants to sustain existing tenancies, is something Wirral is exploring as an aid to homelessness prevention and reducing housing need. This is currently being developed through links with housing advice, partnership working with local private landlords, Wirral's Bond Scheme and tenancy support services to improve access and ensure tenancies are sustained in the longer term.

Although the private rented sector can offer flexibility and ease of access, it should be noted that a particular concern for Wirral since 2003 is that the percentage of homeless acceptances due to the ending of private tenancies has increased steadily to the current level of 24% which is higher than the national average of 15%.

Partly in response to this increase, Wirral has employed a Private Rented Sector Tenancy Support Officer and Bond Support Officer to bring together tenancy support, housing advice and other private rented sector related services including landlord support to help identify and prevent homelessness and maximise the opportunities of wider access and enabling longer term tenancies.

#### **4.4 Housing Priority Panel**

Whilst a range of initiatives are available there are still vulnerable households that are unable to access a choice of housing to suit their needs. The Housing Priority Panel (HPP) is a key resource that the Council is utilising to increase housing access for vulnerable people across the social and private rented sector.

The HPP seeks to assist vulnerable clients, principally those who are resident in short-term supported living services, in accessing general-needs housing through assessment and subsequent referral to appropriate re-housing options such as Wirralhomes. The work of the HPP reflects the Allocations Policy and is therefore not an alternative route to acquiring social housing.

The HPP meets on a monthly basis to consider referrals from agencies that work with vulnerable people and comprises representatives from Housing, Adult Social Services, Service Providers, RSLs, Wirral Primary Care Trust, Wirral Drug and Alcohol Action Team and Merseyside Probation Trust. Successful applications to the HPP result in the award of Urgent Needs Status on Welfare Grounds, which has the effect of prioritising the Applicant through the existing Choice-Based Lettings System. As at March 2008, the HPP has secured Urgent Need Status for 54 people.

The HPP also offers practical support, through a dedicated Resettlement Support Officer, once applicants have been re-housed. This service is intended to last for approximately 3 months, and, during this time, if required, the Resettlement Officer will provide appropriate housing-related support, in order to minimise incidences of tenancy breakdown and subsequent re-admission to short-term supported living services. The Resettlement service will also be in a position to inform future reviews of the floating support provision on the Wirral.

#### **4.5 Directory of services**

In order to raise awareness of the wide range of SP-funded services, a Directory of services, will be issued in autumn 2008 and will be updated accordingly. The document will contain contact details, service descriptions, referral routes and eligibility criteria of all organisations that are in receipt of SP funding.

It is envisaged that the S&SNHS will also develop an online 'Vacancy Database'. This will be a web-based application that allows Service Providers to upload information on vacancies within their service(s) as they arise. Consultation with Service Providers and other relevant professionals will begin shortly.

## **5.0 Delivering the Strategy**

### **5.1 Procurement Methodology**

In order to continue to Grant Fund services it is a requirement to review all contracts and ensure compliance with council's Standing Orders and EU Procurement Directives.

The majority of these services were inherited through the Transitional Housing Benefit Scheme during the Supporting People Implementation period (2000-2003). As a result many of the services have never been subjected to a procurement and tendering process.

We have set out the methodology in full, to be found in Appendix 1

### **5.2 Working with providers**

The changes outlined in the strategy cannot be achieved without working in close partnership with providers. We believe that all providers understand the importance of providing a service that meets local needs in a continuously improving and efficiency-driven environment. We meet regularly with providers in local forums to ensure that they are updated on our progress and are aware of any changes to practices, procedures or grant conditions that may affect them. Additionally, providers are represented at the CSDG.

Where possible the team will also provide or facilitate training to improve:

- the understanding and requirements of programmes
- service delivery or awareness
- provider knowledge or skills.

Most recent scheduled training has included, Outcome Framework, Resettlement Seminars and co-ordinating tender-preparation training, the latter being at the providers' request.

## **6.0 Future Developments**

### **6.1 Needs Analysis**

Whilst the extensive consultation exercise provided the evidence base to support the proposals outlined within the strategy, we recognise the need to develop an information baseline which we can routinely update. This would allow us to undertake ongoing and consistent needs analysis to ensure we are best informed on the current needs of vulnerable people in Wirral.

It is our intention to develop an ongoing supply and needs analysis process, which, along with our performance resource, will assist us to manage future commissioning and procurement decisions. The approach will include:

- Analysis of information obtained through the Multi-agency Homeless Monitoring System (MAMS) to inform unmet need for socially excluded groups on a local and sub regional basis.
- Working with council and its partners to capture information, which is routinely collected by other departments e.g. number of homeless applications, teenage pregnancy rate etc.

- Working with providers to ensure they are recording applications for support, which they are unable to meet, or changing patterns of support.
- Agreeing joint data collection methods with co-commissioners e.g. DAAT
- Development of an Information System for the effective collation and analysis of supplied data.

## **6.2 Service User Involvement**

Following on from the consultation, service users from various client groups agreed to make themselves available for future contact. Resultantly, a database of service users has been collated along with their preferred method of consultation. S&SNHS aim to develop a service user Forum that will include representation from the voluntary and community sectors.

S&SNHS will identify the resources required to provide training for our service users such as capacity building, with a view to establishing a peer review service. In time S&SNHS envisage the involvement of service users to assist in future commissioning decisions.

## **6.3 Individual Budgets**

The Government White Paper on Community Health and Social Care included the potential for Individualised Support Accounts that shifts the power of the choice of service to the service user.

At this stage, it is not expected that many of the S&SNH services will be subject to Individual budgets. For those clients who meet the criteria for care services, we are committed to working with social care colleagues in introducing this in Wirral where it is appropriate and beneficial.

## **6.4 Contracting and Charging**

S&SNHS will continue with the current contract and charging regime. Short-term services (i.e. those with an intended duration of two years or less) will continue to be paid through block gross contracts and Long-Term services will continue to be paid on a subsidy basis.

## **6.5 Cross Authority Working**

S&SNHS is committed to partnership working with both the Greater Merseyside Cross Authority Group and the North West Regional Group. We adopt local, regional and national best practice wherever possible. Through this process, we will ensure that we are working to latest learning from other authorities as well as improving consistency and reducing duplication for regional and national providers.

As a member of the North West Supporting People Strategic Group, we contribute, to the funding of a North West Regional Supported Housing Co-ordinator who will be key in sharing good practice across the region and improving links with North West Housing Board and Government Office North West.

We will continue to engage with Merseyside authorities on a cross- authority commissioning and procurement. This will ensure economies of scale through the procurement of larger contracts where applicable, and for the services where future needs analysis identifies that local demand does not warrant single authority provision.

## **6.6 Monitoring the Strategy**

Due to the diversity of the services provided through S&SNHS, a Project Management approach will be used when delivering the strategy. An Action Plan will be developed to ensure that the allocation of actions and resources are linked to the overall performance management of the S&SNHS.

We will continue to provide regular progress reports to the Core Strategy Development Group, the Supporting People Commissioning Body, and Elected Members as well as updating providers and service users through Performance Management reports, forums, meetings and newsletters.

The strategy will be reviewed on a yearly basis, and will inform future developments through the Annual Plan.

We will continue to report against our National Performance Indicators and where appropriate through the Local Area Agreement and the Local Strategic Partnership. Whilst updating the councils corporate Performance Management System.

## 6: Action Plan:

ACTION PLAN					
Task	Action with Priority	Timescale	Targets	Resources	Responsible Team/Partners
<b>CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS/OPERATIONAL</b>					
Issue Supporting People Steady state contracts	Arrange negotiation meeting with all providers	October 08 (Start Date)	To develop strategically relevant services to meet local need	Existing resources	Supported & Special Needs Housing Providers DASS Primary Care Trust Probation Trust Homelessness
	Re-negotiate accommodation based services in line with the Procurement Methodology.	October – December 08  March 08	To meet with all providers and implement effective changes to provision  To ensure that all contracts comply with procurement requirement, ensuring they are efficient and cost effective.	Existing resources	S&SNHS Support Provider Organisations Partners in PCT, Social Care, Regeneration Department
	Review Supporting People contract	December 2008	Ensure the contract is fit for purpose and compliant with Local Authority Standing Orders whilst protecting service provision for vulnerable people	Existing Resources	Procurement Team Legal & Member Services S&SNHS
	Issue tender documents for floating support services	December/ January 08	To commission floating support to; expand provision; deliver across all types of tenure;	Existing resources	S&SNHS Procurement Section Legal & Member Services

			realise economies of scale; deliver value for money; ensure greater flexibility		
	Develop a decommissioning process	December 08-April 2009	To agree timescales with individual providers, to include consultation with existing service users were the outcome of negotiations/tender may result in an alternative service provider	Existing Resources	S&SNHS Provider Organisations Service User groups
	Review and refine the Value for Money process	August 2009	To ensure value for money is achieved and demonstrated to inform future commissioning. Benchmarking will take place Regionally and Nationally as required	Existing Resources	S&SNHS Procurement Team Provider Organisations Partners
	Review and monitoring of services	Ongoing	Continue to monitor and review services as set out in Wirral Supporting People Approach To Monitoring Services 2008 document	Existing resources	S&SNHS Supporting People Providers Service Users Stakeholders
	Implementation of the revised Quality Assessment Framework	November 2008	To implement changes to the Quality assessment Framework as part of the review and monitoring process. To offer advise, support, information and training to service providers to facilitate the smooth transition to the new	Existing Resources	S&SNHS Supporting People providers

			Quality Assessment Framework regime		
LAA Targets and National Indicator set	Monitor and review performance of NI141 & NI142.	Quarterly	To improve performance by a minimum of 2% each year to 2010-2011 for NI141. To maintain performance at 97.5% each year up to 2010-2011 for NI142	Existing resources	S&SNHS Supporting People Providers
<b>CONSULTATION</b>					
	Service User Consultation and Involvement	December 2009	Establish Service User Forum, and consultative methods required to inform/review future commissioning.  To identify representation for Regional Service User Forum and to feed into and inform the forum.	Existing Resources	S&SNHS Provider organisations Service User groups 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sector Organisations
	Provider Involvement	Ongoing	Continue to consult and inform providers through the provider Forum, Information sheets, workshops and training sessions.  To identify representation for the Regional Provider Forum and to be involved in and inform agendas and outcomes.	Existing Resources	S&SNHS Provider Organisations Partners

## STRATEGIC

Governance Arrangements	Develop the Governance Structure to ensure it reflects the requirements of both capital and revenue investment locally	November 2008	Ensure a full contribution to the broader Health, Social Care, Community Safety and Housing outcomes which will also reflect the wider views of the community, for example: LSP, Older Persons Parliament, children and Young Peoples services, etc.	Existing Resources	S&SNHS Adult Social Services Children & Young People Dept. PCT Probation Service LSP Older Persons Parliament Regeneration Department
	Expand/develop the role of the Core Strategy Development Group to ensure it reflects the requirements of both capital and revenue investment locally	December 2008	Ensure a full contribution to the broader Health, Social Care, Community Safety and Housing outcomes which will also reflect the wider views of the community, for example: LSP, Older Persons Parliament, children and Young Peoples services, etc.	Existing Resources	S&SNHS Regeneration Department (Housing Strategy, Community Safety, Homelessness, Wirral Homes, etc) Adult Social Services Children & Young People Dept. PCT Probation Service LSP Older Persons Parliament Providers
	Align Strategy to assist other LAA/NI targets where appropriate	Annually	To ensure appropriate representation from partner agencies when re-negotiating/tendering contracts	Existing resources	S&SNHS Adult Social Care C&YPD PCT Probation Service Regeneration Department (Community Safety, Homelessness, Housing Strategy, etc)

	Review the Action Plan to reflect negotiations and implementation targets.	Quarterly	To update action plan to reflect continuously changing environment and other internal & external influencing factors	Existing resources	S&SNHS Housing Strategy Adult Social Services LAA/LSP Providers Service Users Procurement Legal & Member Services PCT C&YPD Older Persons Parliament
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# Acknowledgements

**The Supported and Special Needs Housing Section would particularly like to extend our most grateful thanks to all service users, service providers and stakeholders who assisted in the development of this strategy:**

Abbeyfield Heswall	Local Solutions
Abbeyfield Hoylake & West Kirby	Macintyre Charity
Abbeyfield Oxton & Prenton	Making Space
Abbeyfield Wallasey	Mencap
Advocacy in Wirral	Merseyside Probation Trust
Alpha Homes	Merseyside Society for the Deaf
Alternative Futures Group	Northwest Community Services
Anchor Housing Association	Novas
Arch Initiatives	Nugent Care
Arena Housing	Numast
Autism Initiatives	Options for Supported Living
Beechwood & Ballantyne	Pauline Sutton
- Community Housing Association	
Birkenhead YMCA	Liverpool PSS
Cambrian Supported Living	Phoenix Futures
Carr-Gomm	Potens
CDS Housing	Regenda
Contour Housing	Riverside Housing Association
Corporate Services	Sahir House
Cosmopolitan Housing	Salisbury Independent Living
Drug and Alcohol Action Team	Servite Houses
English Churches Housing Group	Venture Housing Association
European Wellcare	Wirral Churches Ark
Family Housing Association	Wirral Independent Living & Learning
Family Safety Unit	Wirral Independent Living Services
Forum Housing	Wirral Methodist Housing Association
Harbour Supported Services	Wirral Mind
Harwell Manor	Wirral Partnership Homes
Home Farm Trust	Wirral PCT
Housing 21	Wirral Women & Children's Aid
	Members of the Core Strategy
Housing Strategy	Development Group
Imagine Mental Health	Members of the Commissioning Body
	Members of the Housing Priority
Liverpool Housing Trust (Rodney)	Panel



# APPENDIX ONE



## Supported & Special Needs Housing Procurement Methodology

Version	Revision date	Revision description	Author	Sign-off
Draft	July 08	N/A	S&SNH	
CSDG	Aug 08			
CB	Sept 08			19/09/08
Cabinet	27 Nov 08			

# Procurement Methodology (Supported & Special Needs Housing Section)

## Background and the Legal Framework

S&SNHS has contract arrangements with 65 service providers of 250 services. These services support vulnerable clients to live independently in the community, they assist with: life skills training; accessing and maximising benefits; liaison with professionals, for example Doctors, etc. The majority of these services were inherited through the Transitional Housing Benefit Scheme during the Supporting People Implementation period (2000-2003). As a result many of the services have never been subjected to a procurement and tendering process.

In order to continue to grant fund services it is a requirement to review all contracts and ensure compliance with Council's Financial rules and EU Procurement Directives. The purchase of goods and services are subject to EU regulations, but they differentiate between different types of services, classifying them as either Part A- which requires a full EU competitive tender exercise or Part B- where only limited requirements apply. The council has had to determine whether Supporting People services fall under Part A or Part B.

<b>Definition of services</b>	
<b>Part A Services (full tender regime)</b>	<b>Part B Services (partial regime)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Accounting, auditing, book keeping</li><li>- Market research and opinion polling</li><li>- Management consultancy</li><li>- Architectural, engineering, planning, landscaping and related technical services</li><li>- Advertising</li><li>- Building cleaning and property management</li><li>- Sewage and refuse disposal</li><li>- IT services</li><li>- Financial services</li><li>- Transport and courier services</li><li>- Maintenance and repair of vehicles and equipment</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Hotel and restaurant</li><li>- Legal</li><li>- Security</li><li>- Educational</li><li>- Health and social services</li><li>- Recreational, cultural and sporting</li><li>- Other services</li></ul>

Following extensive discussion with the Director of Law, HR & Asset Management it has been agreed to classify Supporting People services provided as Part B as they maintain clients health and well being by assisting them to remain independent within the community. Therefore there is currently no legal requirement to undertake a formal competitive tender for the commissioning of these services. However, there are limited legal requirements for part B contracts with an aggregated value over £139,893:-

- Production of a technical specification
- Publication of a contract award notice in the Official Journal of the European Union.
- The approach must comply with the principles of the regulations which require-
  - Non discrimination
  - Equal treatment
  - Transparency
  - Mutual recognition
  - Proportionality

Part B services must comply with UK Procurement policy for Local Authorities: which is to seek and demonstrate value for money in all public procurement.

Bearing this in mind, along with the findings of the Value for Money exercise, S&SNHS has developed a Procurement Methodology. Whilst there is no requirement to tender in some circumstances by doing so it will be possible to realise efficiencies, economies of scale and expansion of a number of services resulting in better value.

The Councils' aim in the procurement and commissioning of services is to make sure:

- Except in so far as service users themselves have identified changes required, the effect of changes for service users is minimal: no disruption in the quality of service received; no effect on their housing and their day to day lives
- we do not de-stabilise the market for support services
- we commission efficient and cost effective services
- we re-invest resultant savings in support services, either in new services to expand the reach to more clients or in existing services to improve the outcomes

## **Further considerations**

The council has also considered a number of requirements and options in arriving at the actions/recommendations in this strategy. They include:

- Is the service wholly or partly statutory and is alternative funding available?
- Is there sufficient demand for services?
- Are services meeting the council's and partners priorities?
- Do services have good prospects for improvement in the future?
- Are services meeting the councils, partners and the client's expectations?
- Can we ensure that standards are maintained?
- Do the benefits of the service outweigh the costs?

- Are there alternative providers available?
- Can economies of scale be achieved?
- Could alternative providers deliver improved performance and efficiencies?
- Are providers willing to re-negotiate?
- Would the benefits of re-negotiation outweigh the costs?
- Are the services, as they stand, able to meet the requirements of the council, the region and CLG and do they fit with our preventative agenda?
- Are we ensuring that clients continue to have access to housing and support as required?
- Are there opportunities for joint commissioning or joint delivery of services in the future?

The views of stakeholders, partners, providers and service users have been taken into account when setting up the commissioning and procurement process.

## **Accommodation based services**

S&SNHS will prefer to re-negotiate existing contracts with supported housing providers for the lifetime of this strategy (2008-2011)

In reaching this decision we have given consideration to the following:

- The risks to the council, providers and service users will usually be minimised by negotiation of existing contracts but may increase if there is open tender
- S&SNHS has already carried out an extensive value for money exercise, the findings of which will form the basis for re-negotiation and re-modelling of all contracts and specifications
- This approach is economical and efficient in terms of resources and also offers continuity for both providers and service users
- Some service providers have tri-partite agreements in place with support providers, landlords and the Local Authority. These arrangements are legally binding and cause complications and practical difficulties that inhibit a blanket tendering approach. All parties would have to be involved in, and cooperate with, changes to service providers. This could be very time consuming and expensive for all parties.
- If providers withdraw services but retain ownership of the accommodation the council would have little or no influence over alternative use of the building.
- It is believed that in most instances the tendering process would not yield savings or expansion of provision that could not be achieved through re-negotiation of the existing contract.

Negotiations will take place from October 2008 to March 2009.

In the event that a negotiated agreement can not be reached on what is reasonable between existing providers and S&SNHS we will implement decommissioning, and determine whether the service can be put out to competitive tender having regard to the specific circumstances of the case. If not the particular service will be decommissioned and the existing contract ended.

## **Floating support services**

Whilst justifying our reasons for negotiation of accommodation based services we believe that, taking in to account all of the influencing factors, S&SNHS should go to tender for all floating support services.

In reaching this decision we have given consideration to the following:

- Many of the reasons that inhibit the tendering for accommodation based service (listed above) do not apply to floating support services
- It is envisaged that a procurement process will:

- Lead to the expansion of provision
  - enable service delivery across all types of tenure
  - result in economies of scale
  - deliver best value and value for money
- It will enable S&SNHS to model and commission more flexible services in order to meet our strategic expectations and requirements.

## Decommissioning

In the event that a negotiated agreement cannot be reached and/or when contracts will not be renewed the following decommissioning process will apply:

- Appropriate negotiations will be conducted on an individual basis, to include joint commissioning issues, service user consultation, notice periods, stakeholder involvement and timescales. (If appropriate a phased approach will be agreed to allow for restrictive timescale).
- All contracts expire on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2009. There is no requirement to re-new or give notice but, if necessary, an extension will be issued in order to facilitate a smooth transition for all affected parties
- Up to the date of expiry of the current contract both parties will be expected to adhere to the terms and conditions in particular:
  - Clause 30 Information and re-tendering
  - Clause 31 TUPE
  - Clause 42 Conclusion of contract

**For ease of use Steady State contract clauses in more detail:**

### 30 information and Retendering

- 30.1 At our reasonable request, you must provide us with such information and data as we may reasonably require to enable us to prepare the necessary documentation to appoint another person to provide the Support Services in your place.
- 30.2** The requirement set out in clause [30.1] does not include any information or data which you consider *relates solely to your business or tax affairs and does not touch or concern the Support Service you make to any Service User or the arrangements you make for such Support Service.*
- 30.3 You shall co-operate with us (at our reasonable request) to secure (as necessary) the continuity of the Support Service, its orderly winding up, the

administration of any recoupment provision and other exit and succession arrangements as the case may be and you shall do such other things and execute such documents as may be necessary for such purpose.

## **31 TUPE**

- 31.1 You must provide us with such information as we may reasonably require to enable us to comply with our obligations pursuant to TUPE when either this Agreement comes to an end or it ceases to apply to a particular Support Service.
- 31.2 You must supply us with the information referred to in clause [31.1] as soon as possible.
- 31.3 You must promptly provide information concerning your workforce and the conditions of employment within this service.
  - 31.3.1 at our reasonable request made at any time in the 9 months before an Expiry Date; or
  - 31.3.2 if this Agreement or its application to a particular Support Service is terminated) within 20 Working Days of your giving or receiving notice of any such termination; or
  - 31.3.3 if this Agreement or its application to a particular Support Service is terminated immediately within 20 Working Days of termination.
  - 31.3.4** You must obtain our prior written consent if in the 9 months before an Expiry Date or after you have received notice of termination from us if you increase either the remuneration or the numbers of your workforce assigned to the support service/s.

## **42 CONCLUSION OF CONTRACT**

- 42.1 When this Agreement ends you must give us, or to any person we may specify, all data, information, files, records, documents and the like which we supplied to you for the purposes of this Agreement or which were produced or augmented by you in connection with the carrying out of your obligations under this Agreement.
- 42.2 Unless we authorise you to do so, or you are required at law to do so, you must not retain any copies of the information etc referred to in clause [42.1].
- 42.3 Clause [42.1] is subject to the provisions of clause [17] (**Data Protection Act**).