Meeting: OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE)

Date of Meeting: 7 APRIL 2009

Title of Report: SUPPORTED HOUSING NEEDS

Report of: C.J. Elwood
Legal Director

Contact Officer: Janet Borgerson
(Telephone No.) 0151 934 2176

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>This report contains</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CONFIDENTIAL Information/</td>
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<td>EXEMPT information by virtue of paragraph(s)............ Of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 (If information is marked exempt, the Public Interest Test must be applied and favour the exclusion of the information from the press and public).</td>
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| Is the decision on this report DELEGATED? | √   |

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To formally present the report of the Supported Housing Needs Working Group, prior to being submitted to the Cabinet.

REASON WHY DECISION REQUIRED

The Working Group has made a number of recommendations requiring consideration prior to being forwarded to the Cabinet for further action.
RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) That the Committee notes the report of the Supported Housing Needs Working Group;

(2) That the Committee supports the recommendations contained within the report; and

(3) That the report be forwarded to the Cabinet Member (Health & Social Care) for consideration and the Cabinet for further consideration.

Corporate Objective Monitoring

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corporate Objective</th>
<th>Positive Impact</th>
<th>Neutral Impact</th>
<th>Negative Impact</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Creating a Learning Community</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Creating Safe Communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Jobs and Prosperity</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Improving Health and Well-Being</td>
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<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Environmental Sustainability</td>
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<td>6. Creating Inclusive Communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening local Democracy</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Children and Young people</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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Financial Implications

<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funded by:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sefton Capital Resources</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific Capital Resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REVENUE IMPLICATIONS

| Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure   |           |           |           |           |
| Funded by:                              |           |           |           |           |
| Sefton funded Resources                 |           |           |           |           |
| Funded from External Resources         |           |           |           |           |

Does the External Funding have an expiry date? Y/N When?

How will the service be funded post expiry?

There are no direct financial implications arising out of this report.

Departments/Organisations consulted in the preparation of this Report

- Analysis Intelligence Management, Sefton Council
- Business Development Division, Health & Social Care Department, Sefton Council
- Central Services Division, Health & Social Care Department, Sefton Council
- First Initiatives
- Supporting People Division, Health & Social Care Department, Sefton Council

List of Background Papers relied upon in the preparation of this Report

Refer to the reference section of this report.

SEFTON M.B.C.
SEFTON COUNCIL

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Health & Social Care

Supported Housing Needs
Working Group

REPORT

April 2009
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Foreword

I am really pleased to present this Working Group report for consideration, as I believe the issues raised are of real significance for the local authority and its partners in examining how we support our more vulnerable residents.

The impetus for the Working Group was the poor result of the Supporting People Inspection Report, but the Working Group quickly sought to look at wider supported housing issues for vulnerable people.

The Working Group is satisfied that the action plan for reviewing the issues highlighted in the Audit Commission’s report is robust and fit for purpose. However, we believe that the plan needs to be closely monitored, and that elected members get closed to the issues involved. This conclusion is therefore reflected in the recommendations.

This is a vast and complex subject of which the Working Group has only touched the surface and we believe deserves more in-depth focus. I am very grateful for the interest and efforts displayed by my colleagues, Councillors Clifford and Sylvia Mainey, and their forbearance of my personal approach to this subject. Special thanks go to Janet Borgerson for her organisation of the Working Group and the preparation of the report.

Thanks also goes to all those people who took part in the research carried out by the Supported Housing Needs Working Group, and kindly contributed to the quality information gathered for this report. A warm thanks goes out to staff at Sefton Council, who went out of their way to involve the Working Group in current events and informing Members on local initiatives and policies in place to support the housing needs of vulnerable adults.

A special thanks is extended to those key people who continuously linked into the Working Group with updates on local services, new initiatives and models of good practice to be replicated and mould future strategies. These people have also been invaluable to the research and include Margaret Milne, Lesley McCann and Jim Ohren from the Health & Social Care Department.

Members of the Supported Housing Needs Working Group:

Cllr Paul Paschal Cummins (Lead)    Cllr Sylvia Frances Mainey    Cllr Clifford Anthony Mainey
**Introduction**

Housing is a basic human need. A comfortable home can enable people to feel safe, give them privacy and allow them to spend time with family and friends. However, owing to illness or disability, many people are unable to live independently in their own homes without the care and support of others. For some, the need for high levels of care and support means that they may have to move to some form of supported accommodation.

It is very easy for people starting with disadvantages to slip into deprivation and social exclusion, and the lack of help in finding the right accommodation and ongoing support can be the crunch point. Often, as a result of being able to find and stay in housing that meets their needs, people can regain self-respect and, for those who have been socially excluded, the respect of others in their community. (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, November 2005). And for many people, one of the most important aspects of having their own home is the independence that it offers.

Much work has already been done to tackle disadvantage and support the most vulnerable adults. For example going back to 2002, the most common living arrangement for adults with severe learning disabilities no longer able to live with their relatives, was a care home. Nationally, about a third of adults with severe learning disabilities known to statutory services, (32%), lived in residential homes, compared with just 12% living in their own tenancies with support (Harker, 2003).

Residential care homes are for adults who are unable to manage living in their own homes, even with the support from home care services. People can stay in residential care homes for a short time (known as respite care), over a longer period or permanently and receive care from staff 24 hours a day.

Social services charge for long-term residential care and assess residents to determine their financial situation and what their financial contribution will be, this will range from a minimum amount to full cost contribution. Local councils are not allowed to operate their own scale when deciding who qualifies for residential care funding. Also, local councils cannot use lack of resources as an excuse for not providing financial assistance with residential care (DoH, October 2001).

However, the government aims to move away from placing vulnerable adults unnecessarily into residential care homes and instead wants to promote independence to those adults who do not need 24-hour support. There are various options available regarding the type of accommodation, which range from living in shared accommodation, also referred to as Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), hostels and solo occupancy or self-owned homes.

Whilst promoting independence and moving away from the traditional housing benefit, the Supporting People grant became available in April 2003. Supported housing covers housing projects that are provided for the benefit of people who need additional support to manage and keep their home. This includes
accommodation-based support, live-in support for adults who want to live in the wider community, and floating support for adults who can almost live independently in their own home.

Floating Support, which is also funded by the Supporting People grant, is for people who are living in their own home with no support but feel they are at risk of losing their home or not managing with daily life, then a floating support worker can visit each week in a person’s home. The support worker can help with tasks such as sorting out debts, speaking to landlords and accessing other services such as healthcare.

This support stays with a person for as long as they need it, up to a maximum of two years. Floating support is also useful for people who are moving on from supported housing and need a low level of support whilst they settle into their new home and get used to living in a more independent setting.

This Supporting People programme was launched across the United Kingdom by central government, to provide a better quality of life for vulnerable people to live more independently and maintain their tenancies. There is much variety in the types of supported housing available and different types of accommodation to suit different levels of need and this programme provides housing related support to prevent problems that can often lead to hospitalisation, institutional care or homelessness and can help the smooth transition to independent living for those leaving an institutionalised environment (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, November 2004).

The Supporting People programme provides housing related support services nationally to over 1.2 million of society’s most vulnerable people. Given the importance of this having a local focus, it is delivered at a local level by 150 Administering Authorities (one of which is Sefton Council). This amounts to the commissioning of over 6,000 providers of housing related support, and an estimated 37,000 individual contracts nationally.

The key objectives of the Supporting People programme are to promote the quality of life and independence of vulnerable adults and ensure the planning and development of the services is needs led. Administering Authorities are also expected to work in partnership with probation, health, voluntary sector organisations, housing associations, support agencies and service users.

Central government is taking forward the Supporting People programme to ensure authorities are delivering what is needed in the best way possible. How services are delivered in the local scene is changing rapidly and central government plan to look at the programme in the light of these changes and expect the programme to be fully integrated with local strategies and plans aimed at tackling priorities in the area and improving the quality of life for people in our communities. The expectation is that all services are designed and delivered with a better focus on the service user, which will need central government to install the right framework and flexibilities to allow all of this happen.
With this in mind, an assessment was recently carried-out on Sefton’s Supporting People programme by the Audit Commission. Although Sefton Council was praised for its strengths in the programme and drivers for improvement, the council was awarded an overall rating of ‘0’ stars from a maximum of 3. This indicated that the council administers a ‘Poor’ Supporting People programme with ‘Uncertain’ prospects for improvement (Audit Commission, March 2008)

Consequently, the Supported Housing Needs Working Group set out to scrutinise the provision of supported housing services and all care provision, and whether these are sufficient for the needs of vulnerable adults in Sefton.

Prior to presenting the findings, the next section outlines the methodology used in conducting the research by the Supported Housing Needs Working Group.
**Methodology**

In May 2008, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Health and Social Care resolved that a Working Group would be established to investigate the Supported Housing Needs of vulnerable adults (Minute No. 8) and the following Councillors have since been nominated to this Supported Housing Needs Working Group:

**Working Group Membership**
- Councillor Paul Cummins (Lead)
- Councillor Clifford Mainey
- Councillor Sylvia Mainey

The following Supported Housing Needs **Working Group Meetings** took place:
- Tuesday 22nd July 2008 (meeting notes - *Appendix A*)
- Monday 4th August 2008 (meeting notes - *Appendix B*)
- Thursday 4th September 2008 (meeting notes - *Appendix C*)
- Thursday 16th October 2008 (meeting notes - *Appendix D*)
- Thursday 20th November 2008 (meeting notes - *Appendix E*)

These meetings formulated ongoing actions, which were integrated into an ongoing action plan for the Working Group (*Appendix F*).

The Scoping Exercise (*Appendix G*) produced the following Terms of Reference and Key Questions/Statements by the Supported Housing Needs Working Group:

**Terms of Reference:**

Determine whether the provision of supported housing services in Sefton is sufficient for the needs of vulnerable adults

Target Population - vulnerable adults in Sefton that need supported housing.

(Exclude solely older people (as too diverse), although an older person may fall into a vulnerable adult category, e.g. mental health, learning disabilities, physical disability etc.)

The **key questions/statements** from these Terms of Reference were determined as follows:

1. **Target Population:**
   - vulnerable adults, including mental health, drug users, physical disabilities, learning disabilities;
   - who have supported housing needs;
   - exclude solely elder people, as too diverse, although the categories chosen may well include older people)

2. **Determine what supported housing there is in Sefton, including:**
   - the number of supported houses?
   - the number of vulnerable people that each of these supported houses can accommodate, e.g. 1–3 people?
c. the type of vulnerable adults accommodated in these supported houses?

3. How many organisations have been commissioned to supply/provide accommodation for vulnerable adults with supported housing, and the names of these organisations?

4. In the report published by the Audit Commission, ‘Supporting People Inspection – Sefton Council, March 2008’, page 5 of the report (Summary), point 5 refers to “23 services are still below minimum required standards…….”
   a. What are these services?

5. Is there a Supported Housing Strategy?
   a. If ‘yes’, is the strategy/plan efficient enough to address the needs of vulnerable adults requiring supported housing, i.e. there are plans in place, sufficient enough, to support the housing needs for vulnerable adults?
   b. If ‘no’, what are the problems/issues, including details on any:
      i. unmet needs?
      ii. waiting lists?
      iii. short falls/shortages of housing – needs analysis?
      iv. sufficient types of housing to suit all types of needs?

6. The amount of funding available to commission supported housing for vulnerable adults, in Sefton, including the specific allocations to different types of housing? And where does the funding come from for this?

7. Who is involved in commissioning supported housing for vulnerable adults?

8. Is there another local authority that has scored better than Sefton Council in the Inspection Report by the Audit Commission?

9. What are the supporting housing needs for vulnerable adults in Sefton?

10. What supporting housing needs provision is there is Sefton?

11. What funding is available for carers in Sefton and is there funding for specific types of care? And where does the funding come from for this?

12. Have the supported housing needs for people who have experienced post-trauma in recent war, e.g. Iraq?

During the process of this review, Members of the Working Group gathered a substantial amount of information from various sources, which are noted in the ‘Reference’ section.

The findings from this research are reported in the next section.
Findings

This section highlights some key results, in bullet point format, which will help gain a picture of the provision of supported housing services for the needs of vulnerable adults in Sefton.

The target population of vulnerable adults in this research now includes the 'extra care sheltered housing schemes for older people', at the request of a witness from Sefton Council. Extra care sheltered housing schemes caters for elderly people who are mentally infirm (EMI) and includes studios, apartments and bungalows – each have their own front door but form their own mini-community, looked after by a scheme manager, in many cases living on the site. This was because this particular group of vulnerable adults was identified as a strategic priority in both the Supporting People Programme and the Housing Strategies (Question/Statement 1). Sheltered housing comes in various forms, including studios, apartments and bungalows – each have their own front door but form their own mini-community, looked after by a scheme manager, in many cases living on the site.

- There are 199 Supporting People Services providing a service to 5,265 clients, with the following breakdown:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supporting People Service</th>
<th>North +/- or South Sefton</th>
<th>No. Clients being supported by the service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Floating Support</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floating Support</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floating Support</td>
<td>North + South</td>
<td>321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supported Housing</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supported Housing</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supported Housing</td>
<td>North + South</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Alarms</td>
<td>North + South</td>
<td>1036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older People</td>
<td>North + South</td>
<td>2446</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Sefton Council’s written response the Members question 2 in the Key Questions/Statements, October 2008).

To put the above figures into perspective, the total population for Sefton is 280,942 (North is 115,509 and South is 165,433), as per estimated figures for 2006:

North Sefton includes the following wards:
- Cambridge (11,857);
- Meols (13,085);
- Dukes (12,207);
- Norwood (14,041);
- Kew (12,745);
- Birkdale (13,438);
- Ainsdale (12,853);
- Harington (12,847); and
- Ravenmeols (12,436).
South Sefton includes the following wards:

- Manor (13,114);
- Blundellsands (11,601);
- Victoria (13,913);
- Church (11,851);
- Linacre (12,459);
- Derby (12,860);
- Litherland (12,283);
- Ford (13,028);
- St Oswald (12,313);
- Netherton & Orrell (12,482);
- Molyneux (13,285);
- Sudell (13,337); and
- Park (12,905).

(Analysis Intelligence Management, Sefton Council).

- Information regarding supported housing outside the Supporting People programme is being gathered (Question/Statement 2).

- Of the Supported Housing Services 1,255 clients, supplied by 42 Services providers across north and south Sefton (refer to above table), the following breakdown highlights the type of accommodations provided to the different groups of clients:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Client Group</th>
<th>No. Clients</th>
<th>Type of housing provided</th>
<th>Part of Borough</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol problems</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Shared or Self-contained</td>
<td>North</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless families with support needs</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Homeless hostel, B&amp;B or other temporary accommodation</td>
<td>North &amp; South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Disabilities</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>Shared or Self-contained (131) / Supported Lodgings (6)</td>
<td>North &amp; South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Disabilities/Mental Health problems</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Shared or Self-contained</td>
<td>North &amp; South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Disabilities/Physical or Sensory disability</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Shared or Self-contained</td>
<td>South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health problems</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>Shared or Self-contained</td>
<td>North &amp; South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offenders or at risk of offending</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Supported Lodgings</td>
<td>South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older people with supported needs</td>
<td>749</td>
<td>Shared or Self-contained (735)/ Sheltered housing for older people (14)</td>
<td>North &amp; South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical or Sensory disability</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Shared or Self-contained</td>
<td>South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Single homeless with support needs</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Shared or Self-contained</td>
<td>South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single homeless with support needs / Offenders or at risk of offending</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Shared or Self-contained</td>
<td>South</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women at risk of domestic violence</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Women’s Refuge</td>
<td>South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people at risk</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Supported Lodgings</td>
<td>South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people at risk / Single homeless with supported needs</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Shared or Self-contained / Homeless hostel, B&amp;B or other temporary accommodation</td>
<td>North &amp; South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,255</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

(Health & Social Care, Supported Housing, October 2008)

The Health and Social Care Team have a Service Provider control list, however, the Supporting People Programme does not commission people to provide accommodation for vulnerable adults, only the support service (Sefton Council’s written response the Members question 3 in the Key Questions/Statements, October 2008). The Health & Social Care Team do a Needs Analysis for each client and through this are able to determine the level of support needed including the type of accommodation. If it is determined that a client needs accommodation, then the relevant organisations are informed. Depending of the needs of the client, different organisations are approached as appropriate, e.g. Drugs Action Team provide accommodation for people with drug related problems.

- Floating support is funded by the Supporting People grant. It is for people who are living in their own home with no support but feel they are at risk of losing their home or not managing with daily life, then a floating support worker can visit a person’s home. The support worker can help with tasks such as sorting out debts, speaking to landlords and accessing other services such as healthcare.

- The Supporting People Programme provides Floating Support, which dependent of the need and the level of this need and is allocated as appropriate.

- There is no separate Supported Housing Needs Strategy within Sefton Council.

- If hostels are provided, they are usually only short-term or used for safety until something more suitable is available.

Hostels provide accommodation where people can rent a bed, sometimes a bunk bed in a dormitory and share a bathroom, lounge and sometimes a kitchen. Rooms can be mixed or single-sex, although private rooms may also be available. There is often a distinction between hostels that provide longer term accommodation to specific types of clientèle, where the hostels are
sometimes run by Housing Associations and charities, and those offering short term accommodation to travellers or backpackers (wikipedia)

- The Health & Social Care Directorate have set up a ‘Move-on’ Panel, which finds accommodation for people classed as high priority. Although the number of clients moving through this panel is fluid at the moment, the Health & Social Care Directorate are going to monitor and firm up the process of monitoring, so it then becomes a more formalised approach.

- The High Priority Move-on panel was established to enable service users living in temporary accommodation to move into independent living with, or without, the continuation of support services, when they are having difficulty moving on and have no need for the service provided in the temporary accommodation. The nature of the individual’s situation is only taken into account if it is relevant to the assessed need for a service required in general needs accommodation. If the individual is not in receipt of a support service then an application can be made to the High Priority Panel coordinator by other professionals such as the mental Health team or a GP - these are only examples and applications that will be accepted from appropriate referrers. If the individual in question requires access to supported housing they can access the Supporting People local directory of services via the councils website, which tells individuals what service is provided, where the services are located and what the referral routes are in to the services.

- Housing and Care/Support Workers need to work more closely integrated with general plans for improving, extending and making most effective use of the local housing stock.

- The housing providers need to have a better understanding of the mental health issues that some people have or when they have slight learning disabilities (therefore requiring low-level support) and can be perceived as having no vulnerabilities and evicted by the landlord owing to lack of understanding of their clients' mental health conditions.

- If clients have caused problems and their landlords evict them, the Health & Social Care Directorate only become aware of this at a later stage, when it is too late for the Health & Social Care Directorate to intervene and avoid the client being evicted. Some private landlords give tenancies for just 6 months, who are often unsympathetic to vulnerable adults’ needs. Therefore, these types of tenancies are avoided, to prevent evictions of clients.

- The 23 services that the Supporting People Inspection highlighted, as being below the minimum required standards (Audit Commission, March), refers to the quality assessment framework, which was missing one standard and had an impact on obtaining the minimum quality required within one objective out of 6 mandatory objectives. The standard did not directly impact on the quality of the service received by the clients’. All services have now reached their required level (Sefton Council's written response the Members question 4 in the Key Questions/Statements, October 2008).
• The Supporting People Strategy is the Council’s plan to address the housing related needs of various client groups. The Supporting People Strategy has, at its core, a Needs Analysis for a range of client groups including vulnerable adults. For example, people with learning disabilities, people who have drug and alcohol problems and people with mental health problems. The Supporting People Strategy has recently been refreshed for the period from 2008 to 2011. This Strategy contains a number of actions, flowing from the Needs Analysis, to address the needs of vulnerable client groups via accommodation based and non-accommodation based support services.

The Supporting People Strategy will adequately and effectively inform future decision-making and commissioning plans. It will be monitored and updated on a regular basis and supplemented by more detailed work in relation to particular client groups (e.g. people with learning disabilities, people with drug and alcohol problems) and also the work taking place at a North West level to detail existing supply, and project current and future levels of need for all vulnerable client groups.

Where there is an additional need for additional provision, this is taken forward through the Council’s enabling work, for example working with Registered Social Landlords to identify suitable sites and submit bids to the Housing Corporation or Department for Communities and Local Government. This activity is part of the Council’s general strategic approach and is enshrined in the priorities of the Housing Strategy, for example to ‘provide affordable and sustainable homes in neighbourhoods where people want to live’, and to ‘enable to live at home independently and improve their health’ (Sefton Council’s written response the Members question 5 in the Key Questions/Statements, October 2008).

• In terms of revenue funding, there is predominantly Supporting People funding commissioned via the Supporting People Commissioning Group. There are be other funding streams from Sefton Council’s Health & Social Care core budget, which in turn may be funded in part by a Central Government grant.

Capital funding for the ‘bricks and mortar’ element of Supported Housing schemes is possible from the Council’s single capital pot, although in practice this is rare, given significant competing pressures on the capital programme. However, a recent example is a contribution of some £200,000 from the housing section of the capital programme towards the refurbishment of the Bosco Society Hostel in Bootle (a hostel for people with substance misuse problems) and this was agreed since it levered in a grant from Central Government coffers of over £1 million, for which the Council was successful in bidding. This use of the Council’s capital resources makes sense, but, mostly, funding for supported housing schemes must be obtained via bidding to the Housing Corporation as described in the response to question 5 (above). An example is support from the Housing Corporation for an Extra Care Scheme in Maghull (for clients with learning disabilities), which the Council helped obtain in partnership with Arena Housing Association and the Parkhaven Trust. Capital funding is not automatic; it is allocated to successful bids made in competition.
Another funding stream is the Extra Care Housing Fund available via the Department of Health, but, again, this funding is not automatic and is subject to competitive bidding. (Sefton Council’s written response the Members question 6 in the Key Questions/Statements, October 2008)

- Partnership Boards are involved in commissioning supported housing for vulnerable adults and are dependent on the needs of the clients, which are identified via a Needs Analysis completed by a Service Manager. In respect of the Supporting People programme, the commissioner representative would have to bring proposals to the Core Strategy Group and the Commissioning Group to secure funding (Sefton Council’s written response the Members’ question 7 in the Key Questions/Statements, October 2008).

- The results of Sefton and other nearby Councils that have been inspected for their Supporting People programme by the Audit Commission (Question 8 in the Key Questions/Statements, October 2008):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Council</th>
<th>Report Date</th>
<th>Rating - Service</th>
<th>Rating - prospects for improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowsley MBC</td>
<td>May 2005</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lancashire County Council</td>
<td>Oct 2005</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Promising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liverpool County Council</td>
<td>Sept 2007</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rochdale MBC</td>
<td>June 2008</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Promising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sefton MBC</td>
<td>March 2008</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Uncertain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tameside MBC</td>
<td>Oct 2007</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wigan MBC</td>
<td>July 2007</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Promising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wirral MBC</td>
<td>Dec 2008</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Promising</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


- There is a need for both floating support and accommodation based services across a wide number of client groups as listed in the strategy. These may be achieved by remodelling current schemes. Increasing capacity within contracts, commissioning cross authority working expanding provision of floating support, develop new services (Sefton Council’s written response the Members question 9 in the Key Questions/Statements, October 2008).

- Floating support is provided to clients in north and south Sefton by thirteen Service Providers to the following primary client groups:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Client Group</th>
<th>No. Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Offender or people at risk of offending</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People with mental health problems</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older people with mental health problems</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older people with support needs</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single homeless with support needs</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People with physical or sensory disability</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generic</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Units 528

(Health & Social Care, Floating Support, October 2008)
• Funding available in Sefton (Sefton Council’s written response the Members question 11 in the Key Questions/Statements, October 2008).

- The Adults allocation for carers included in the Council’s Area Based Grant for 2008-09 was £1,137,600;
- Funding is available for Carers through the Department of Work and Pensions;
- Carers allowance is paid at £50.55 per week for those carers who spend at least 35 hours per week looking after a person who receives ‘Disability Living Allowance Care Component at the middle or higher rate’ or ‘Attendance Allowance at any rate’
- A claim for Carers Allowance could also lead to other means tested benefits such as Housing/Council Tax Benefit, Income Support or Guaranteed Pension Credit. But as these are means tested entitlement, dependent upon the individual's age, circumstances and income.

• The supported housing needs for people who have experienced post-traumatic stress in recent wars, has not been identified as a particular need in Sefton and does not form part of the Strategy. However, if there were referrals, they would go to the Move-on Panel after all normal access routes to had been exhausted.

• Concern regarding ageing parents of disabled children who provide the care and housing without asking for support from social care. These vulnerable disabled children develop into adults with parents that either become too ill or die and therefore not able to care for their disabled children. These disabled children then become vulnerable adults and come to the attention of authorities at a late stage. There need to be clear mechanisms in place that can highlight cases such as this, so planning can occur for these vulnerable adults including respite care.

• First Initiatives is a voluntary organisation with charitable status and provides person-centred support to people with mental health issues and learning disabilities. They own twenty-five properties and support 150 clients plus a school with two units. Some of the issues encountered by this organisation include:
  - Group Tenancies/ Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) - This type of housing is difficult to obtain when an individual is bidding. Some vulnerable adults prefer to live on their own, yet at the same time feel as though they are part of a community. Need to think about how vulnerable adults relationships are built-on when living independently.
  - Home Search - a website that has a choice based approach to allocating social housing and aims to give people more choice in deciding where they want to live. People register an interest to a specific property on the web and make a bid for this property if their application has been accepted onto the Council’s housing register. This service will help resolve the problem of single people bidding for HMOs.
  - Vulnerable Adults - some vulnerable adults do not meet the eligibility criteria.
Fear of certain service user groups - people living in the surrounding areas to the people in supported housing, can fear certain types of vulnerable adults and make complaints or cause resistance from community groups.

Housing Panels also called the ‘Move-on Panel’ used by vulnerable adults considered as high priority. Some groups use a separate process. Some vulnerable adults may view other vulnerable adults as being treated better.

Affordable Housing – the concern of how to role this out to people with learning disabilities.

External Partnerships – Partnerships with Liverpool and Knowsley and so on, and the reconfiguration of services when reviewing the whole region.

Private Sector/Partnerships – there are no shareholder in a charity such as New Directions and any surplus cash goes back into the charity, whereas private organisations have shareholders who get any profits made by the organisation.

Choice of Accommodation/Areas – concern of how to encourage and facilitate choice based on needs versus the area of preferred choice.

Decreasing Housing Stock – some tenants have the ‘right-to-buy’ and therefore this decreases the housing stock.

Anti-Social Behaviour – some housing becomes a target and attracts anti-social behaviour. The concern is how to manage this.

(First Initiatives, November 2008)

The Audit Commission assessed Sefton Council as providing a ‘poor’, no-star programme that has ‘uncertain’ prospects for improvement. Their judgement was based on the following evidence (Audit Commission, March 2008):

The Programme was assessed as ‘Poor’ due to the following weaknesses:

- there is very limited focus on outcomes for service users;
- governance of the programme has failed to develop an appropriate focus on strategic objectives, to prioritise them and to put in place systems to ensure their delivery;
- there is very limited user engagement and some groups are not represented. Feedback from service users is not routinely sought and acted upon;
- the five-year strategy lacks comprehensive needs analysis or commitments to better meet the needs of vulnerable people;
- neither the strategy nor the comprehensive needs analysis that it recommends have yet been refreshed;
- at the time of inspection in year 5 of the programme the Council still contracted with twenty three services that do not meet minimum Quality Assessment Framework (QAF) standards;
- there has been insufficient focus on improvement. Service reviews only assessed providers to level C of the QAF, and there has been insufficient emphasis on improvement beyond this;
- the Council has failed to undertake accreditation work until very recently, and steady state contracts have still not been issued. The draft contract fails to establish medium term confidence among providers;
– the workplan aligned to the strategy and subsequent team plans have not been routinely monitored by accountable groups and slippage has not been identified and challenged;
– no value for money targets have been set following completion of service reviews; and
– access to services is confusing and in some cases complicated and inconsistent across the borough.

The Programme had ‘uncertain’ prospects for improvement due to the following:
– despite a clear vision for the development of the Supporting People programme there has been only modest achievement of those aims;
– although a strategic needs assessment is being undertaken conclusions for all service user groups are not yet available, and it is not clear how the information will be used to update the five-year strategy;
– there has been limited commissioning activity. Services are largely the same in nature and scope as when the programme commenced, choice for service users has not been improved;
– performance management is seriously lacking with little evidence of appropriate challenge at governance or operational levels;
– commissioning plans have not been developed; and
– project management disciplines are lacking and serve to decrease certainty that initiatives will be thoroughly implemented to time, with clear expectations and outcomes measures.

Although extremely disappointed with the overall rating of the inspection the Council accepted the recommendations made in the report and have used them to develop a detailed improvement plan. The recommendations made by the Audit Commission are as follows:

(1) Improve arrangements to involve service users and to ensure that improved outcomes for service users are prioritised by:
– developing with service users and providers appropriate measures of improved outcomes;
– surveying satisfaction levels across services, using this information in contract monitoring and to drive improvement;
– effectively engaging carers, advocacy groups and the voluntary sector to enable them to influence the development of the programme;
– measuring the difference made for service users and using this routinely at appropriate levels including the Commissioning Body to assess contract and programme performance; and
– ensuring that steady state contracts enhance the focus on outcomes for service users and that robust monitoring arrangements are applied to all contracts.

The expected benefits of this recommendation are:
– better connection of the programme with service users needs; and
– ensuring improvements are focused on the things that matter most to service users.
The implementation of this recommendation will have high impact with low costs. This should be implemented within six months of publication of this report (September 2008).

(2) Improve the delivery of key strategy priorities by:
- updating the five-year strategy with comprehensive needs analysis information and more clearly referencing how the council aims to address gaps in service provision;
- comprehensively reviewing performance monitoring and reporting for the programme ensuring that appropriate information is available to the right people and groups to ensure delivery and appropriate challenge;
- issuing steady state contracts that will lead to enhance services, improved focus upon outcomes for service users and maintain stability and confidence in the provider market;
- ensuring that move on arrangements are formalised, monitored and routinely reviewed and that this results in improved access to appropriate accommodation;
- introduce project management disciplines that improve the prospect of delivery of the programme's initiatives within agreed timescales and with clear expectations and outcomes measures;
- introducing structured approaches to capture learning throughout the programme and using this to improve;
- developing and maintaining forward work plans covering at least 12 months ahead for the Commissioning Body and Core Strategy Group;
- routinely reviewing the roles of formal groups including their outputs and establish clear and complementary roles for each;
- ensuring that political engagement with the programme is enhanced by routine and appropriate update reports that indicate the progress made in delivering key priorities; and
- developing a medium-term commissioning and financial plan for the programme that identifies key programme savings planned as well as how commissioning will address priority needs.

The expected benefits of this recommendation are:
- improved certainty that plans can be delivered;
- improved monitoring of delivery at appropriate levels; and
- better integration of actions with strategies.

The implementation of this recommendation will have high impact with medium costs. This should be implemented within six months of the publication of the inspection report (September 2008).

(3) Improve access to services and service quality by:
- introducing clear, consistent and reliable access arrangements through Council offices to housing support services;
- introducing routine reality testing of access to services and linked improvement arrangements monitored by governance groups;
- introducing firm arrangements for dealing with provider services that do not meet minimum service standards with appropriate incentives for improvement where necessary;
- introducing a structured approach to improving quality beyond minimum QAF standards including target setting and monitoring of achievement; and
- reviewing how complaints are handled and introducing improvements that ensure robust recording, monitoring, reporting and learning.

The expected benefits of this recommendation are:
- reliable access to services for vulnerable people;
- provider services that as a minimum achieve level C of the QAF and which are supported to improve to higher standards; and
- routine learning from complaints linked to continuous improvement.

The implementation of this recommendation will have high impact with low costs. This should be implemented within six months of publication of the inspection report (September 2008).

(4) Improve value for money by:
- introducing a clearer and agreed methodology for assessing value for money. Using this to inform contract negotiations with providers prior to issue of steady state contracts;
- introducing value targets that are monitored to ensure their delivery; and
- introducing outcomes measures for the programme and reporting to ensure that the administration of the programme is challenged in terms of efficiency and effectiveness.

The expected benefits of this recommendation are:
- delivery of value improvements;
- better understanding of value assessments and how providers can improve value; and
- team resources that are well directed to programme priorities.

The implementation of this recommendation will have high impact with low costs. This should be implemented within six months of the publication of the inspection report (September 2008).

Many of the issues raised in the report started to be addressed 12 months prior to the inspection taking place. The collection of information to refresh the 5-year strategy commenced in November 2006 to enable the strategy to be relaunched in 2008.
Conclusions

It is evident from the findings within this report that there are some barriers to making improvements to the supported housing needs of vulnerable adults in Sefton.

The Working Group discussed the key findings, documentation and notes from various discussions with the Health & Social Care Directorate and external organisation, and developed a number of fundamental recommendations that would strengthen the Supporting People programme and the provision of supported housing services to meet the needs of vulnerable adults in Sefton.

These recommendations included communication and training of the appropriate people. For example regular updates on improvements made within the Supporting People programme and provision of these services, to ensure people are informed and up-to-date of related events within Sefton. This could include training, regular updates, annual Working Groups being established by the appropriate Overview & Scrutiny Committees to monitor the progress, having more engagement by Elected Members and Ward Councillors. In order to achieve this, mechanisms need to be put in place to ensure these are successfully implemented and maintained.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (November, 2005) does suggest that Elected Members need to ensure corporate support for the Supporting People programme and within this they should ensure that:

• The Supporting People programme is well integrated into local plans for housing, social care, education, employment and regeneration;
• Connections are made between Supporting People programme and other local programmes (both those delivered by the authority and others more broadly); and
• Supporting People programme should become part of the mainstream of council activity.

This could be achieved by having Member(s) acting as champion(s) for the programme to ensure it is recognised within the authority, including by partners and the general public. Publicly acknowledging and valuing the programme will assist officers in making and maintaining effective working relationships with commissioning partners and providers.

Through their local ward knowledge, Elected Members could have a key role in informing a making the case for services for vulnerable people and in feeding back experiences of people who use the services. To make this fully inclusive, the experiences of not only existing service users but also those who are denied services, perhaps due to gaps in service provision or because of tenure restrictions of legacy services.

Clear arrangements would then need to be established between the Administering Authority (Sefton Council) and the Commissioning Group, to allow Elected Members to feed their knowledge, including local political perspectives, into Commissioning Group deliberations.
Elected Members may also wish to develop partnership arrangements with Board Members of NHS Sefton (the Primary Care Trust) and Probation in order to strengthen and consolidate the partnership arrangements established through the Commissioning Group. They may also wish to put in place a similar arrangement to support cross-authority partnership working. (The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, November, 2005).

Bearing these thoughts in mind, the Members of the Working Group formed eleven recommendations, which are highlighted in the next section ‘Recommendations’.
Recommendations

R1 Elected Members need to have more engagement on issues related to the supported housing needs of vulnerable adults, through gaining knowledge of Supported Housing in their wards, and the needs of vulnerable groups.

R2 A mechanism needs to be introduced to implement and sustain the engagement of Elected Members in issues related to the supported housing needs of vulnerable adults.

R3 An Elected Member should have the role of Champion for the supported housing needs of vulnerable adults. The Champion should have clear objectives and be regularly briefed by people who deal with these issues. Thereby, the Elected Member Champion will always be informed and up-to-date.

R4 The appropriate Overview & Scrutiny Committees should receive regular updates on issues related to the supported housing needs of vulnerable adults, including monitoring reports on the Supporting People action plan.

R5 Appropriate training should be given to all dealing with supported housing needs for vulnerable adults, to ensure they are informed and up-to-date. This would include compulsory mental health training for housing workers.

R6 Providers of Services should be regularly informed of issues relating to the supported housing needs of vulnerable adults, to ensure they are informed and up-to-date.

R7 Ward Councillors should be regularly informed of issues relating to the supported housing needs of vulnerable adults, to ensure they are informed and up-to-date.

R8 An annual Working Group should be established in the Overview & Scrutiny Work Programme, to ensure updates and new issues/schemes regarding supported housing are dealt with accordingly.

R9 There should be a separate Housing Strategy for vulnerable adults, matching needs analyses with a programme of development to meet those needs.

R10 There should be compulsory training in safeguarding vulnerable adults and in mental health issues for all members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Health and Social Care).

R11 The Working on Access to Social Care should consider the routes into supported housing.
References


Department of Health, *Residential Care, housing, care and support schemes and Supporting People*, October 2001


Harker M, *Housing Option*, 2004

Health & Social Care, Floating Support, October 2008

Health & Social Care, Supported Housing, October 2008


[www.audit-commission.gov.uk/](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/)