

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

Review Title: **Supporting People**

A Review by the Housing & Community Safety Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Background

Supporting People (SP) is a £4.5m programme, which brings together a number of funding streams for supported housing and housing related support including the support element of Housing Benefit, Probation Accommodation Grant and Supported Housing Management Grant. Bath and North East Somerset Council receives the annual funding allocation and administers this funding, in accordance with Government guidance, at a local level.

There is a significant risk of future reduction in Government funding. The Government has set savings targets for this financial year and given clear messages about larger savings targets in the next financial year. A future lack of central funding would leave the Council with a dilemma to either reduce services or subsidise the Supporting People Programme from its own revenue streams.

Next years allocation of Government funding is likely to be advised by November 2004.

A Council Strategy for future management of the SP programme is currently being developed (by a multi-agency Core Strategy Group). This has to be with Government by next March and must address how savings targets, likely to be advised in November, will be met. This Strategy will look at which services are priorities for continued/increased funding and which services should receive reduced funding and/or be reconfigured. If savings targets are significant then it may be necessary to identify services that would not receive SP funding in future years.

At previous H&CS Panel meetings, Councillors have raised questions about the Supporting People programme. This has led to the request for an O&S Review.

Purpose of the Overview & Scrutiny Review

The purpose of this review is to provide input, via consultation with council staff and affected organisations, to Bath & North East Somerset's 'Supporting People Strategy'.

The review is being undertaken by the **Housing & Community Safety Overview & Scrutiny Panel** prior to the Strategy being presented to Government in March 2005 (the strategy will be approved by the Council Executive in February 2005).

The Panel's findings and recommendations will be made available to the Housing & Supported Living Service for them to incorporate in the final version of the Strategy before it is presented to the Executive.

Objectives

The objectives of the review are:

- To review and explore future challenges of providing services under the SP programme and highlight potential problems over funding allocation.
- It is timely to review now, to consider future opportunities ahead of any changes in the Government's SP programme, so that appropriate Council strategies can be developed.
- Overall, the purpose is to open up the debate about the Supporting people program, to inform direction of travel in support of the future decision making by the Executive and implementation of the SP programme in Bath & North East Somerset.

Scope

To achieve its objective, the Panel will:

- Review national Government policy.
- Consider whether there are any risks for Bath & North East Somerset.
- Identify the providers of SP services. What impacts will occur?
- Consider Pros & cons of volunteer vs. professional workers.
- Visit a small selection of organisations to see the work being done.
- Consider whether the Council's SP administration team possess the right resource mix to manage the SP programme and all its challenges ahead? Look at existing structure and processes that support the SP programme.
- Consider what would be the consequence of say, a 10% reduction in Government funding? Seek views of providers, commissioners and others with an interest.
- Identify the risks to the Council associated with the SP programme and make recommendations about how these risks are best managed.
- Provide feedback on proposed 'direction of travel' for the 5 year Strategy.
- Provide feedback on provider's experience on SP reviews and recommend how the experience might be improved.
- Consider how the Panel can play a part in monitoring development of the 5-year strategy and implementation of the SP programme.

Excluded from the Review

- Individual services funded through the Supporting People Programme, which are subject to a statutory review process.

Outputs from the Review

- Notes & papers from O&S meetings
- Short summary report incorporating key findings, conclusions (situation today, possible situation tomorrow) and recommendations for the Council Executive and involved officers.

Constraints

- The review must be managed within the budget available to the Panel.
- The review will be carried out in accordance with the Bath & North East Somerset Council Overview and Scrutiny project management processes.

Appendix 1 – Terms of Reference for Supporting People Review

- Project management resource is available from the Overview & Scrutiny Team, Democratic Services.

Outline Plan

Key dates & activities:

Date	Activity	Meeting Type
18 May	Project Steering Group*: Scoping Meeting	Private meeting
18 June	Lead in date for papers	
1 July	Panel to receive introductory presentation on Supporting People & discuss/agree ToR for Review	Public Panel Meeting
mid July	Project Steering Group: Plan details of Review	Private meeting
July & Aug	Benchmarking, fact finding, private panel meetings, briefings, visits - as required	Private meetings / visits
Late Aug.	Lead in date for papers	
9 Sept.	Panel review information received, debate to reach conclusions, and make recommendations for inclusion in summary report	Public Panel meeting
Mid Sept – late Oct	Steering group produces and agrees final draft report	Private meeting(s)
End Oct.	Lead in date for papers (final draft report)	
11 Nov	Panel agree final report to Executive	Public Panel meeting

* Additional steering group meetings may be required throughout the life of the Review.

Review Project Team

Overview & Scrutiny Panel:	Housing & Community Safety
Chair of Panel:	Cllr Chris Watt
Additional Steering Group Member:	Cllr. David Bellotti
Strategic Director :	Jane Ashman (Social & Housing Services)
Housing & Supported Living Service:	Jane Shayler (Head of Housing & Supported Living) Lesley Hutchinson (Supporting People Manager) Sarah Shatwell (Supporting People Manager)
Project Manager:	David Langman (O&S Project Manager)
Democratic Services Officer:	Jack Latkovik (Committee Administrator)