

with these elements incomplete since they do not affect the overall direction of the Strategy.

6. It is hoped that the improved linkages between the Sub-Regional Housing Strategy and the new Supporting People Strategy will lead to better co-ordination between the capital and revenue elements of new supported housing across the County.
7. Given the fact that the existing Strategy has been favourably received by both the ODPM and the Audit Commission there are no radical changes contained in the revised strategy. In particular, the strategic priorities continue to be older people, offenders, young people at risk and adult mental health.
8. The other key elements to note concern resources and spending, specifically
 - the scope for pooling budgets across health, housing, social care and Supporting People to optimise impact. This was discussed by the Commissioning Body on 7th June 2004, and the Joint Member Group on 19th July 2004 endorsed the need to take this thinking forward to the next stage. Accordingly, a discussion paper setting out the options, issues and implications was considered by the Commissioning Body on 29th September 2004. This requires further discussion by the commissioning agencies before it is tested with all partners to Supporting People.
 - the cash limited nature of the budget, £13.5m in Cambridgeshire, but with efficiency savings imposed by ODPM of 2.5% in both 2003/04 and 2004/05 and much larger savings required for 2005/06-see Financial Implications for details
 - population growth in the county, with possibly another 75,000 people by 2016.

Considerations

9. The strategy itself does not attempt to generate “new policy directions”. The position is neatly summarized in the County Council cabinet report:

“This is further assisted by the view taken in Cambridgeshire that Supporting People is a delivery mechanism for implementing the existing health, housing, social care and community development agendas; it does not have a separate existence outside these. Indeed, it is vital that housing support is part of the mainstream agenda for both the statutory agencies in the partnership and other local and regional partnerships, such as Local Strategic Partnerships, the Infrastructure Partnership, the Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership, the Cambridgeshire Care Partnership, the Regional Housing Board”

Options

10. Alternative options for strategic directions and priorities have been discussed and considered in the consultation that has taken place in drawing up this and previous Strategies. This has happened in meetings with key stakeholders and more formally through the Commissioning Body and the Joint Member Group. Members are reminded that Councillor Liz Heazell is the South Cambridgeshire District Council representative on the Joint Member Group.

Financial Implications

11. There are no significant financial implications in endorsing the Strategy. The critical issue is future budgets allocated by the ODPM.
12. In December 2004 the ODPM announced that the 2005/6 allocation for Cambridgeshire would be £12,541,678. This is a reduction of £784,295 (5.9%) compared to the 2004/5 allocation. The allocation is in cash terms so the real reduction after allowing for inflation is in the order of 9%. At the same time the grant for the administration of the programme has also been reduced by £76,446 or approx 15.7%.
13. Taking account of the surplus in 2004/5 which can be rolled forward into 2005/6 the overall effect is a potential deficit of £632K. It is anticipated at this stage that £255k of that will be offset by provider efficiency savings leaving a potential shortfall of £377K.
14. In the longer term the ODPM are moving to implement a new distribution formula and the full implications of this will not be known until the ODPM begin further consultation on the final details of the formula they are proposing to use. However, Supporting People officers believe that the likelihood is that Cambridgeshire and similar authorities could face reductions in allocations for the next 5 years.
15. The Joint member Group on 13.12.04 resolved to lobby the ODPM against the proposed level of cuts and to implement the provider efficiency savings already agreed for 2005/6. They will also seek additional funding of £400K from the Administering Authority, and district councils will also consider whether they can contribute to this. Finally, the value for money of all schemes will be reviewed in preparation for the anticipated savings required for 2006/7 and beyond.

Legal Implications

16. None specific to this report.

Staffing Implications

17. None for South Cambridgeshire District Council in endorsing the Strategy. The annual financial settlements have implications for all supported housing providers in the County.

Risk Management Implications

18. Previous versions of the Strategy have been well received by the regulatory bodies, which supports the case for the allocation of resources to the County. It would seem prudent to continue the existing strategic directions to minimise the risk that the County's allocation will potentially be adversely affected by criticism of the Strategy.

Consultations

19. Formal and informal consultation processes are in place. The most recent Provider Forum was held on 10th September 2004 when the Strategy was discussed. The proposal to make the Vision Statement more concise and accessible was generally well received and the revised version is:

“To improve quality of life and well-being by ensuring housing and housing support is available that reduces risk and enables vulnerable people to live as full a life as possible”

Conclusions/Summary

20. The Supporting People Strategy is an important document, which brings together a range of different services designed to support vulnerable households in the County. It is important that it is submitted to the ODPM in line with their deadline and that it is seen to have the endorsement of all the key partners involved in the allocation of Supporting People funds.

Recommendation

21. That Cabinet endorses the Supporting People Strategy 2005-10.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

Sub Regional Housing Strategy 2004-8

Supporting People Strategy 2005-10 and appendices.

Report to County Council Cabinet on the Supporting People Strategy-agenda item 4

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Contact Officer: Mike Knight, Housing Strategy Manager

Tel: 01954 713377

E-mail mike.knight@scambs.gov.uk