

APPENDIX P

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

11 JANUARY 2010

EXECUTIVE - 2 FEBRUARY 2010

Title:

REVIEW OF SUPPORTING PEOPLE SERVICE

[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Keith Webster]

[Wards Affected: All]

Summary and purpose:

This report, which was considered by the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 11 January 2010, updates the Committee on the ongoing review of Supporting People Services, new commissioning intentions from Supporting People and the possible implications for the future of support services for Waverley tenants.

How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

This report relates to support for vulnerable tenants (priority 2), the management of Council housing (priority 3), and funding support to Waverley tenants (priority 5).

Equality and Diversity Implications:

The support provided to vulnerable Waverley tenants is directly related to the principles of social inclusion.

Resource/Value for Money implications:

The external funding provided by Supporting People is an important part of the revenue stream into Waverley's Housing Revenue Account.

Legal Implications:

There may be issues arising from Supporting People commissioning intentions which could affect employment rights.

Introduction

1. Members will recall that a presentation was given at the last Committee about the direction of travel in respect of the Supporting People funded services that are provided by Waverley to its tenants.

Background

2. Until 2003, housing support services provided to elderly tenants received either a fully sheltered service with an on-site manager, deputy and assistant warden living in 11 sheltered housing schemes, or a visiting warden service to dispersed independent schemes within the community. Both services were linked electronically to the Guildford Care Centre. The sheltered service was provided by 33 on-site staff, whilst the community warden scheme operated through 16 visiting staff based in periphery offices.
3. In addition two Housing Support workers provide support to tenants with mental health issues assisting them to maintain their tenancies and living as independently as possible within the community. This mental health 'floating support' provides tenancy support for a maximum of 2 years.
4. The support services for the elderly were funded from the HRA through pooled rents, whilst support for tenants with mental health problems was funded from Housing Benefit.

Supporting People Contract

5. In 2003 support services were reviewed nationally and the Surrey Supporting People Service began commissioning services within the county. This changed the way housing support services were procured and funded. These were no longer funded from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) but externally through Supporting People (SP).
6. The funding of the mental health support service also changed. Previously this service was funded via Housing Benefit (HB). Under the Surrey Supporting People regime, support costs were separated from housing costs and Supporting People began funding 'floating support' contracted services.
7. So from April 2003 Waverley were awarded contracts from Surrey Supporting People for the cost of the services formerly paid for from the HRA and HB.
8. Since then, Supporting People have given 2% inflationary uplifts each year to floating support services (but not to services for the elderly) whilst the increases in staffing costs year on year have exceeded this, causing an increasing imbalance. This difference has had to be met from the HRA.
9. This was compounded by Supporting People reducing their budget for Waverley by 25% over the three years from 2005 to 2008. The subsidy required from the HRA to fund this shortfall in 2007/8 was £336,070.

Support Services Review – Sheltered Housing

10. A comprehensive review of all three services took place in 2007/8 leading to a successful bid for new three-year contracts from Surrey Supporting People in April 2008.

11. The sheltered service was remodelled in consultation with residents, families and staff. Staffing was reduced to a Manager and Assistant Manager for each of 9 schemes working office hours only, no longer based on-site. This enabled staff accommodation to be returned to the housing stock. During evening/night times and weekends the Guildford Care Centre took over via the individual resident's alarm unit.
12. In 2007/8, Supporting People Team's Strategic Review of Older People's Services identified a general oversupply of 'traditional' sheltered housing in Waverley. In addition to other factors, this contributed to the closure of two sheltered schemes (Dorlcote in Witley, Rowland House in Cranleigh), reducing sheltered housing by over 90 units. A sheltered housing scheme was also decommissioned in Godalming by a housing association.
13. Occupancy of the nine remaining schemes during 2008/9 stood at 97.25% (the remaining 2.75% representing void periods) whilst throughput was 102.07% (the number of service users during the year as against the capacity of the service). On-going occupancy rates in all schemes continued to be closely monitored and remains relatively high.
14. Two schemes in Waverley (Falkner and Riverside Courts) are designated as 'extra care', which means external care services are based on site and delivered to frail elderly residents with extra support needs.
15. Supporting people have recognised this enhanced sheltered service, designating it 'Very Sheltered', underlying the extra care aspect of these two schemes. This is reflected in Supporting People funding of the sheltered service in Waverley by applying the top rate of funding (£24 per week per unit).
16. As a result of these changes, very significant net staff savings were achieved amounting to £518,997 in 2008/9 thus eliminating any 'top-up' from the Housing Revenue Account.

Support Services Review – Community Support

17. The review of the Community Warden scheme also resulted in significant changes to the service, which has also helped to reduce costs. In 2008/9 the community service began operating a single enhanced service via 5 staff and a manager from two teams occupying two buildings, helping to reduce the budget deficit in support costs from £336,070 in 2007/8 to £143,360 in 2008/9.
18. Following the merging of the two Careline teams (private and Council housing) this year the staffing has reduced further to 3 staff and a manager.

Support Services Review – Complex Needs

19. The two Mental Health Support Workers operate a service within the SP contract with a client capacity of 40, visiting clients in their home providing valued support to those with significant mental health problems living in the

community, reducing negative impact on communities and maintaining tenancies. It has developed substantially, now facilitating two user-led self-help groups, one in Farnham and one in Godalming meeting weekly.

20. It became clear that a significant number of tenants were experiencing difficulty in maintaining their tenancies without necessarily having any mental illness and not falling into any standard category of support need. These tenants can often cause disturbance in their communities, requiring a separate level of support to manage this.
21. In 2008, a bid for supporting people funding was rewarded with a contract to fund a single complex needs Community Housing Officer, managed by the Anti-Social Behaviour Officer, providing help and support to these vulnerable tenants. This includes those both perpetrating as well as suffering from anti-social behaviour.

Challenges for the Future

22. The national debate about services for older people is set against a steeply rising population of the over 55s, highlighting the present and future housing needs for older people and the close relationship between housing, health and social care. 57% of all Waverley tenants are over 55 and 25% over 75.
23. However, Surrey Support People funds other services apart from older people eg Waverley's mental health support and complex needs support. In addition SP funding provides for countywide services to other vulnerable groups eg learning disabilities, drug and alcohol dependency, offenders, gypsies and travellers.
24. This year Surrey Supporting People announced fundamental changes to the way funding would be provided in the future. Both the commissioning and procurement of support services will change significantly.
25. The current three-year contract with Supporting People ends in March 2011 and Surrey Supporting People have indicated a likely substantial budget reduction from April 2011 of around £1 million.
26. The main focus of change will fall on 'floating support' services, which will be decommissioned from April 2011. This includes the mental health and complex needs service in Waverley. It is proposed by SP that these services should be recommissioned in a different way, with an emphasis on moving to a smaller number of generic floating support services.
27. It is clear that Waverley will have to look to remodel its floating support services and key to this is looking cross-border to other providers of small floating support services with a view to exploring joint service provision via a consortia approach, creating overall cost savings.

28. A possible likely model put forward by Surrey Supporting People is for generic floating support services to be provided by a group consisting of Waverley and Guildford, or alternatively Waverley, Guildford, Woking and Surrey Heath and this is currently being explored.
29. SP have recognised that services for older people across the county have either already remodelled or are in the process of doing so. SP have acknowledged the need for sensitivity within the process of consultation and have indicated that they are generally supportive of Waverley's approach so far.
30. Expanding the 'enhanced' community support service (the former Warden service for Waverley tenants) into the private sector where a need exists has already been recognised. This is to be explored further, but SP have already indicated that this approach could receive SP support.
31. Regarding the future of sheltered housing in Waverley, it is clear that occupancy rates and spend on sheltered building infrastructure and amenities will continue to have to be closely monitored to ensure sheltered housing, now and into the future, represents real value for money and meets the housing needs of the elderly.
32. Scope exists for expanding the 'extra care' element to other sheltered schemes in Waverley. This focus on bringing the extra external support in-house within a scheme has prevented many residents from having to move on to expensive residential nursing homes, averting the need to give up their secure sheltered home and the level of independence this affords.
33. Other models for sheltered services also need consideration such as floating support provision to sheltered schemes linking to local cluster units, decommissioning sites, redevelopment, selling off to other providers etc.

Conclusion

34. The current SP contracts end in March 2011. How future SP funded services are to be commissioned from April 2011 have not yet been fully decided by Surrey Supporting People.
35. Further reports on sheltered housing and floating support will be brought forward when Supporting People intentions are clearer.

Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee

36. The Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed the officer recommendation as set out below.

Recommendation

The Executive is asked to endorse the report in the knowledge that further reports will be made available as the future of Supporting People funded services is clarified.

Background Papers

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

CONTACT OFFICER:

Name: Chris Rudkin

Telephone: 01483 523293

E-mail: chris.rudkin@waverley.gov.uk

G:\bureau\comms\executive\2009-10\2010 2 February 2010\016 Supporting People.doc