

REPORT TO: **HOUSING SUPPORT STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP**

REPORT FROM: **DEVON SUPPORTING PEOPLE TEAM**

DATE: **24TH FEBRUARY 2009**

Home Improvement Agency Contract Review – Interim Report

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Housing Support Strategic Partnership (HSSP) to:

1. Be advised of the Home Improvement Agency (H.I.A) Review process
2. Note the opportunities for further contribution into and amendment of projects and work packages arising from the H.I.A review.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Devon Supporting People team has been working in partnership with the 8 District Councils, the PCT, and the 'Foundations' partnership to review Devon's Home Improvement Agency, or 'HIA' countywide contract with 'Devon Care and Repair' or 'DCR' agency, provided by Devon and Cornwall Housing Association (DCHA).

1.2 The contract review process began in November 2008. The aims of this first stage half day meeting were to:

- Review the Partnership Agreement between commissioner stakeholders, and when later joined by DCR,
- To present and share the national and local strategic drivers from a commissioner, provider and service user perspective.

1.3 Stakeholders were invited to submit and present their differing perspectives in advance of the meeting, and as many of these as possible were compiled into a presentation which is Appendix One to this report. A gap of 6 weeks between this first half day and the second half day allowed for stakeholders to develop some of the themes and ideas discussed, prior to the next meeting.

1.4 The second half day meeting in December set out to review the current DCR contract in light of the strategic drivers presented and discussed at the previous meeting. The minutes of this meeting are Appendix 2 to this report.

1.5 The third half day in February 2009 was designed to conclude the review process. All issues raised by the review were grouped into 5 project themes, and set into 9 structured work packages. Commissioners and providers worked as a group to amend and develop these work packages, which are being compiled into a full final report. The outline of the project themes and work packages are Appendix 3 to this report.

2. CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

2.1 The HIA contract review has captured a range of practical and aspirational strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for Devon Care and Repair stakeholders. These have been systematically grouped into work packages with named contributors. All known issues – including that of the recent bid to CLG – are captured with the work package activities.

2.2 The next steps are to co-ordinate the time scales of the work packages in the most efficient sequence, making best use of existing milestones such as expiry of current contract etc. A full Contract Review report will be published by April 2009. Stakeholders will continue to have opportunities to comment upon the draft final report prior to its publication.

2.3 A further half day event will be scheduled in for September 2009, where progress and obstacles in delivery of the work package activities will be reappraised.

Name	Organisation
Clare Miller	Policy Manager, DCC
Max Sillars	Supporting People Manager, DCC
Elaine Wells	Children's & Young People's Services, DCC
Rebecca Beasley	Contracts and Procurements, DCC
Kathy Keegans	Devon Care & Repair, DCHA
Ian Parker	Devon Care & Repair, DCHA
Sarah Hadley	Devon Care & Repair, DCHA
Liz Steele	Torrige DC
Dick Scott	Mid Devon DC
Eve Fitzgerald	Mid Devon DC
Keith Williams	Exeter City Council
Robert Norley	Exeter City Council
Simon Smale	East Devon DC
Steve Brown	Devon PCT
Philip Shears	Teignbridge DC
Mike Davidson	Teignbridge DC
George Greenaway	West Devon Borough Council
Ian Higgins	North Devon DC
Melanie Burke	Management Information, DCC
Christiana Fisher	Supporting People, DCC

Agenda	Actions
<p>1. Minutes of last meeting and Welcome and Introductions and Apologies</p> <p>Apologies were received from: Rosemary Rives-Roberts, Living Options Francis Philippa, Foundations Julia Page, Devon PCT Meryl Spencer, East Devon DC Nick Payne, West Devon DC Andrew Powell, South Hams District Council.</p> <p>Updates of action points from the last meeting included the following: - The HSSP and JCB will be updated as to the outcomes from the review meetings once the process has been completed. - The reporting schedule will be amended once the review has been completed. - The MoA will be updated once the review has been completed.</p>	
<p>2. Purpose of the Day</p> <p>The stage two meeting was to discuss the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree Shared Vision • Consider if Current Contract is fit for Purpose • Contract Delivery (time permitting) <p>Max Sillars said that it is important to agree on which visions for the Devon HIA service constitutes radical changes to the existing contract.</p>	
<p>3. Shared Vision</p> <p>Each partner summarised their feedback, of the current service delivery of the HIA service, which they had been asked to provide following stage one of the review. They covered the following themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must Haves • Desires / Aspirations 	<p>The feedback from each organisation, both written feedback provided prior to the meeting and verbal feedback offered at the</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance <p>Further discussion included the following points:</p> <p>Kathy Keegans said that there is no process at present that helps to identify vulnerable people to assist the agency in targeting services to specific client groups.</p> <p>Dick Scott said that a universal definition of a vulnerable client should be agreed upon and suggested adopting the definition that is being put forward by choice based lettings service and currently out for consultation. Clearer definitions of client types and housing options will improve choice and access and funding routes for clients.</p> <p>Eve Fitzgerald said that Mid Devon were concerned with aspects of contract monitoring and delivery that included qualitative measures; continuity of the service and support, and appropriate levels of skills of staff and standards.</p> <p>Philip Shears believed that more focus on client satisfaction should be used as a qualitative measure. Clare Miller agreed that customer feedback is invaluable but costly. Melanie Burke remarked that HIA have been taking part in an outcome pilot.</p> <p>Mike Davidson informed the group that Teignbridge has recently experienced a housing review and audit that had raised concerns about their relationship with the agency.</p> <p>Max Sillars said that the findings of the audit would be useful information for this review.</p> <p>Liz Steele remarked that Torridge has also recently experienced a review and offered to share the outcomes to inform this review process.</p> <p>Robert Norley suggested amending the service specifications to modify delivery whilst achieving the same outcomes. This can be achieved by jointly commissioning services through a single contract. The Memorandum of Agreement ensures the mechanisms of partnership funding.</p> <p>Max Sillars said that less bureaucracy and more confidence in the contract would help to move the contract forward. Supporting People have been looking to adopt cost and volume contracts to enable flexible spending and investing in additional activity.</p> <p>Eve Fitzgerald suggested having separate contracts for different service elements.</p>	<p>meeting, has been collated into a separate document.</p> <p>Action: Teignbridge and Torridge District Councils to share appropriate information from their respective housing reviews and audits to help inform this review.</p>
<p>4. Current Contract</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the current seven service elements match our vision? <p>The fundamentals of the service elements seemed to be the types of provision that partners wanted. However it was agreed that certain developments, amendments and improvements are necessary to move the HIA service forward.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes may be required to the service specification? 	
<p>5. Contract Delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues to be Addressed <p>1. Monitoring performance.</p> <p>There was concern that DMG representatives do not have the</p>	

<p>knowledge to analyse the quarterly performance reports to a level that is required by the SMDB.</p> <p>2. Agency role Definition. Clarification is needed for the contribution that other agencies make to service delivery; possibly to include mapping delivery routes and streamlining processes.</p> <p>3. Funding routes. Clarification is needed on service delivery costs; on what is full cost recovery, what services are funded through core contract activity and what services can be delivered in addition.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggested Improvements <p>A number of options were put forward for consideration:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Upgrade the current contract for the remaining two years with a re-design prior to the next tender. 2. Separate contracts for each service element. 3. Cost and volume model. 4. Retain contract flexibilities for districts who wish to commission other services 5. Options to be appraised <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Assurance Methods <p>Philip Shears suggested monitoring strategies be put in place to address value for money and delivery of agreed outcomes Ian Parker said that with the appointment of a new data analyst, the agency had been more pro-active in management information.</p> <p>The DMG's were considered to have an essential role to play in involving service users to gain valuable qualitative input. George Greenaway suggested forming cluster sub groups of the DMG chairs to scrutinize performance figures. Further advantages of this would mean that districts could work collaboratively and innovatively.</p> <p>Collective delivery of agency services with regular activity updates to the SMDB. Kathy Keegans said that DCR are aware of other services that have an impact on the HIA and it is a matter of identifying provision gaps at a district level.</p>	
<p>6. Summary and Action Planning for Stage Three Max Sillars, Rebecca Beasley and Clare Miller to draft a proposal for contract revisions to include considerations to the Memorandum of Agreement.</p> <p>Proposals for improved guidance and delivery of qualitative measures and operating procedures.</p> <p>Stage Three Meeting: The afternoon of February 11th 2009</p>	<p>Action: Max, Clare, Rebecca and Christy to meet prior to the stage three review meeting and implement the action points and recommendations from the first two stages.</p>

(not in bold) Project Theme Category (In bold) Work Package	Priority	Time scale	Time scale
<u>Governance & Monitoring:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Performance Protocol o Partnership Agreement 			
<u>Communication Strategy:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Business Processes & Process Mapping o Communications Strategy 			
<u>Finance:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Financial Strategy 			
<u>Re-configuration of Services:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Home Safety Assessment o Handy Persons Service 			
<u>Strategy Development & service User / Carer Involvement:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Qualitative Information o Service Specification Post Contract End Personalisation 			