

## **PART TWO - INTRODUCTION**

### **2.1 Introduction to the Supporting People Programme**

The Supporting People Programme was launched on 1 April 2003 and is committed to providing a better quality of life for vulnerable people to live more independently and maintain their accommodation.

Nationally, the Supporting People Programme provides housing related support services to more than 1.2 million vulnerable people in order to prevent problems that can often lead to hospitalisation, institutional care or homelessness.

Devon County Council is one of 150 Administering Authorities responsible for ensuring the Programme is delivered locally by our 160 providers via 640 services under 235 individual contracts.

### **2.2 What is Housing-Related Support?**

The primary purpose of housing-related support is to develop and sustain an individual's capacity to live independently in their accommodation. It also complements other, more intensive services, such as residential care, domiciliary care and hospital. To date, eligibility for accessing housing related support services has focussed upon tasks and activities, rather than upon successful outcomes for vulnerable individuals. These activities typically include advice and support to enable people to access correct benefit entitlement, ensuring they develop the necessary skills to maintain a tenancy, and advising on home improvements. Support services also help people to access complementary funded services, such as training and education. Devon is working with its local and regional partners to develop a local eligibility criteria and assessment process that complements the principles of 'Fairer Access to Care' and is focussed upon outcomes for service users rather than task based activities.

### **2.3 The Context for the Five Year Strategy**

The Devon Supporting People Shadow Strategy, agreed in October 2002, provided the first step in moving towards the full implementation of the Programme by offering a strategic framework and principles for housing related support service commissioning. Much has been accomplished over the last two years. Innovative support packages that place an individual's needs at the heart of jointly commissioned support and care plans have proved invaluable in creating opportunities and choices for people to stay in their home, or be able to move into a home of their own.

This Five Year Strategy builds upon the work started by the Shadow Strategy. It sets out how we will begin to reshape our inherited housing-related support sector to ensure local and national priorities are met through cost effective, good quality, flexible and accessible housing-related support services across

the County. The Strategy and its implementation does not stand in isolation, but is complementary to a range of key planning activity within the wider Health, Social Care, Housing and Community Safety arenas. Updates to the Strategy, and performance to date in its implementation, will be made annually, alongside the production of each new Annual Plan.

### **2.3.1 Financial Context**

This Strategy covers a period of great financial uncertainty. Nationally, the level of Supporting People grant is reducing from £1.8 bn to £1.7 bn over the period 2005/06 to 2007/08, with no addition given for inflation. The individual allocation of grant to Administering Authorities over this period will be influenced by a distribution formula that Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) appointed consultants are currently developing. The distribution formula will be consulted upon in the first quarter of 2005, but early drafts show that Devon could expect between 15 and 21 percent of its current grant allocation re-distributed to other Administering Authority areas. The Administering Authority and Joint Commissioning Body (JCB) will be responding to the consultation and lobbying the ODPM and Treasury to ensure that Devon is not adversely discriminated against under the proposed Formula.

Locally, the Supporting People Grant that Devon receives to fund housing related support services in 2005/06 is £19,705,395. Together with a need to fund an inflationary award for providers, this represents a reduction in real terms of some £1.6 million from that received in 2004/05. For 2006/07 and 2007/08, Devon could also see further year on year reductions of around £1.1 million per year; dependent upon the outcome of the distribution formula consultation.

In the short term, Devon will seek to manage its reducing Grant allocation through the roll-forward of under-spend achieved from April 2003 to April 2004, and the service review process. The Devon JCB will not seek to apply across the board savings to provider contracts, but will adopt a clear strategic approach to efficiency savings based upon the strategic relevance of services and their overall value for money. However, our experience to date shows that whilst this will achieve the national savings target in the short to medium term, it will not be possible to sustain this over the longer term.

We will continue to lobby ODPM and Treasury for the flexibility to roll forward over/under spends within the three year Grant announcement period. This will allow us to manage savings targets over a longer timescale, alongside our lobbying against the use of the distribution formula. We will also continue to develop our local needs assessment and analysis to robustly evidence the need for sufficient resource to meet growing demands in the County.

### **2.3.2 Local Context**

Devon is a large, predominantly rural County and is the third largest administrative area in the Country. According to ONS Census 2001 data, in

2001 the population was 705,600, making it one of the most sparsely populated counties. Over 13% of the population live in areas that are amongst the 25% most disadvantaged in England, with Torrington and North Devon being the most affected. The Black and Ethnic Minority population has doubled in the last ten years and is now around 8,000 (1.1%), with 72% living in rural areas.

ONS Census 2001 data also shows that 10.4% (73,800) of the population of Devon are over 75 years of age compared to 7.6% in England and Wales. Within this figure over 3% (21,000) are over 85 years of age compared to 1.9% nationally. 10.5% of Devon's population is in the 65-74 age range compared to 8.4% nationally and the number of over 85's is projected to rise by 7% by the year 2006.

The average yearly income in Devon is £19,594, some 16% below the national average. In many parts of Devon a house costs more than 8 times average earnings, with house prices increasing by 95% since 1999 with the average cost of a home in 2003 being £168,764 (Devon Community Plan).

Exeter is the main regional centre of Devon, with Barnstaple and Newton Abbot acting as sub-regional centres, supported by 23 market and coastal towns.

## **2.4 Service Review Programme**

In accordance with ODPM requirements, Devon has agreed a clear and transparent process by which all Supporting People grant-funded services are reviewed under a three year timetable. The approach adopted for the first round of reviews predominantly focuses upon strategic relevance and value for money issues whilst seeking to ensure services meet the minimum standards for quality and performance. The second round of reviews will focus heavily on achieving ongoing improvements in quality and performance against the wider Quality Assurance Framework objectives, set against the new Regional Value for Money framework that will be in place by this stage.

The service review process, timetable, review outcomes to date and value for money methodology are described in greater detail in Annexe One to the Strategy.

## **2.5 Local Charging Policy**

Devon has fully adopted the principles of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's national policy. Full details of our local charging policy can be found in Annexe Two to the Strategy.