

# **Report to Housing Scrutiny Standing Panel**

**Date of meeting: 30 July 2009**

**Subject: Presentation by In Touch Support**

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**Committee Secretary: Adrian Hendry (01992 56 4246)**

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## **Recommendation:**

**The Housing Scrutiny Panel is asked to receive a presentation from Essex County Council's provider of housing-related support services, In Touch Support, and make any comments to the Housing Portfolio Holder on the services provided.**

## **Report:**

1. "Supporting People" is a major Government initiative, which introduced a new policy, and funding framework for housing-related support services from April 2003. These services include housing related support delivered to vulnerable tenants and applicants either living in the community or in temporary accommodation.

2. The Supporting Team undertook a value for money review of housing-related support services in Essex and as a result the service was tendered. In April 2007, "In Touch Support" was appointed as the service provider. In Touch is a specialist subsidiary of the Hyde Group and was established in April 2006, originally to undertake all of the Group's supported housing work. Hyde Group is a major RSL (Registered Social Landlord) who manage around 36,000 homes and employs more than 800 staff.

In Touch Support provide the following services to the Council:

- Assisting up to twelve single homeless vulnerable people who are housed in Council accommodation who are provided with support from the floating support worker until they have sufficient skills to live more independently;
- Providing support to vulnerable tenants throughout the District who are referred by Housing Management;
- Providing support to single vulnerable homeless applicants placed in bed and breakfast accommodation;
- Providing specialist support to residents in sheltered accommodation when the Scheme Manager requires additional assistance;
- Providing specialist support to residents in the Council's homeless persons' hostel, Norway House, North Weald when Managers need additional assistance; and
- Providing assistance to tenants who are moving to smaller accommodation, thereby assisting the Council's aim to reduce under occupation.

3. Prior to receiving the service, all tenants and applicants are referred through the In Touch Support assessment "Gateway" to ensure that those in most need are supported, and that the service is appropriate for the user.

4. The Assistant Housing Options Manager (Homelessness) meets on a monthly basis with In Touch Support Managers to discuss performance and matters relating to service delivery.

5. The Housing Scrutiny Panel is asked to receive a presentation from Essex County Council's provider of housing-related support services, In Touch Support, and make any comments to the Housing Portfolio Holder on the services provided. The presenter is Team Manager Gloria Osbourne, and will take place in the Council Chamber from 5pm.