

Report to Housing Scrutiny Panel

Date of meeting: 31 October 2006

Portfolio: Housing

**Subject: Epping Forest Local Supporting People Strategy 2006-2010
Six-month Progress Report (October 2006)**

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Committee Secretary: A Hendry, ext.4246**



Recommendations:

That the Six-month Progress Report for the Epping Forest Local Supporting People Strategy 2006-2010, attached as an appendix, be considered, with any comments passed onto the Local Supporting People Core Strategy Group.

Background

1. At its meeting held on 3 March 2006, the Housing Scrutiny Panel considered the Draft Epping Forest Local Supporting People Strategy 2006-2010, and recommended its endorsement by the Housing Portfolio Holder, which was subsequently given.
2. "Supporting People" is a major Government initiative, which introduced a new policy and funding framework for supported housing and ancillary welfare services in April 2003. It brought together a range of national and local funding regimes and consolidated them into a cash-limited "single pot", administered by a Commissioning Body at the County level.
3. Supported housing includes the provision of accommodation for the elderly, physically disabled, people with learning disabilities, the mentally ill, young people with drug and alcohol problems etc.
4. As the "administering body" for Supporting People in Essex (excluding Southend and Thurrock), Essex County Council is responsible for producing an Essex Supporting People Strategy. However, in view of the importance of supported housing in the District, fairly uniquely, the District's Supporting People Core Strategy Group (which comprises agencies involved with supported housing in the District) produces an annual Local Supporting People Strategy in liaison with the District Council. The Local Strategy sets out the local planning and delivering of high quality housing-related support services to vulnerable people.
5. Local providers and user representatives involved in supported housing were consulted on the Local Strategy through the Epping Forest Inclusive Forum, which comprises such representatives, prior to consideration by the Committee.

Six-month Progress Report on the Key Action Plan

6. An important part of the Epping Forest Local Supporting People Strategy, endorsed by the Housing Portfolio Holder, is the Key Action Plan, which comprises all the separate tasks required to develop supported housing in the District. Having formulated the Action Plan, it is clearly important to monitor progress. Therefore, in accordance with good practice, a Six-month Progress Report on the Key Action Plan has been produced. Consideration of the Six-month Progress Report is included within the Housing Scrutiny Panel's Terms of Reference, and is therefore attached as an appendix for consideration by the Panel.

Future Approach

7. The Local Supporting People Core Strategy Group has recently agreed that, instead of producing a new Local Supporting People Strategy each year - which requires extensive input from all the organisations involved – in future, the Strategy should be fully revised every three years, following consultation with partners, providers, users and user representatives. However, the Core Strategy Group also agreed that the Key Action Plan should continue to be updated annually (following consultation) and submitted to the Council for endorsement, followed by consideration of a progress report after six months in accordance with the present practice.