

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The Overview Scrutiny Committee agreed to undertake a review of the Implementation of Supporting People, a Central Government initiative to fund housing related support for vulnerable people at a local level.

1.2 The terms of reference of the Review were:

To examine all aspects of how the Government's new regime entitled Supporting People impacts upon Gravesham Borough Council - including the new relationship this subject entails with Kent County Council and to report to Cabinet on the Committee's findings highlighting any aspects that require particular attention.

1.3 The context in which the review was undertaken was an implementation date of the Supporting People programme of 1 April 2003.

1.4 Two evidence gathering meetings were held in August 2002. Witnesses were from Kent County Council (the Contracts Manager from the Implementation Team), Gravesend Churches Housing Association and Cubfield Accommodation Ltd. The Commissioning Manager of the Implementation Team gave a presentation to the Committee at its scheduled meeting on 1 August 2002 and the Housing Operations Manager from GBC was also present to provide input from a Gravesham perspective.

1.5 The recommendations to the Cabinet are:-

1.5.1 to ensure that the benefits office has supplied a full list of claimants and awards to the KCC Supporting People Implementation Team in order to determine support service costs.

1.5.2 to establish what contingency plan is in place for people receiving support that are eligible to be transferred to Supporting People but have not been identified in time to meet the 1 April 2003 deadline.

1.5.3 to establish whether landlords and support provider staff are sufficiently prepared to answer queries and complaints from tenants about changes to their benefit.

1.5.4 to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that any support service costs currently funded through Social Services but identified as accommodation related support eligible for funding through Supporting People be transferred to Transitional Housing Benefit.

1.5.5 to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that sufficient future provision is made available for vulnerable people to have their accommodation related support needs met through Supporting People by the establishment of robust floating support schemes. Such schemes will help the Borough fulfil its responsibilities under government legislation such as the Homelessness Act July 2002.