How housing-related support services provided in Cambridgeshire link to the delivery of Health and Well-being in East Cambridgeshire

Purpose
The Housing Related Support Team is based at Cambridgeshire County Council and works across the county. The team contracts and commissions housing related support services aimed at helping people to develop or maintain their independence. This covers young people leaving care right through to elderly people in Extra Care housing and many other groups in between.

By focussing on the areas people need help with to develop greater independence, housing support makes a significant contribution to the health and well-being agenda in East Cambridgeshire. This paper evidences how housing support is making a contribution.

Work is progressing to align housing-related support services into existing contracting and commissioning structures in Cambridgeshire County Council. This will be taking place over the next few months following an internal restructure. As alignment takes place it is important to demonstrate the value of housing-related support interventions in delivering the broader health and well-being agenda. Housing-related support helps people at difficult times of their life and/or towards the end of their life. Without support people may suffer poorer health, life-chances or die prematurely. Good health and well-being will help the residents of East Cambridgeshire to play a greater role in their local communities.

Linking housing-related support to the priorities in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy – A focus on East Cambridgeshire.

Cambridgeshire’s Health and Well-being (HWB) Strategy stresses the importance of supporting the physical and mental health of all residents particularly for children and young people, the elderly and vulnerable individuals. Given the number of vulnerable people supported by housing-related support and the particular focus on vulnerable groups it is an important resource to improve health and well-being. There are six key priorities in Cambridgeshire’s HWB strategy and the following sections show the contribution made by housing-related support with specific regard to the East Cambridgeshire area. Links are also made where appropriate to local priorities for Health and Wellbeing in East Cambridgeshire.

Housing related support is tackled strategically across the county and takes an outcomes focussed approach helping people from 16 years right through to people at the end of their lives working to the following outcomes:

**Achieving economic wellbeing** – Maximising income, reducing overall debt and obtaining paid work
**Enjoy and Achieve** – Training/education plus leisure, culture and faith plus informal learning
**Be healthy** – Physical health, mental health and substance misuse
**Stay Safe** – Maintain accommodation/avoid eviction, improve compliance with statutory orders, reduce risk of harm to or from others
**Making a positive contribution** – Giving more choice/involvement and control
The majority of Housing Related Support services in East Cambridgeshire are for the elderly and focus on keeping people in their own homes rather than residential care and reducing the risk of hospitalisation. This links in with the key local priority of older people and falls prevention. There are a few services that deal with the wider age groups. Specific examples are given below setting out some of the outcomes achieved in the East Cambridgeshire area.

**Priority 1 - Ensure a positive start to life for children and young people and their families.**

This priority includes a focus on creating positive opportunities for young people to contribute to their community and raise their self esteem. Housing-related support services help young people who may have experienced homelessness and/or relationship breakdown often with their parents or carers. At any one time 12 places are available to young people in one service funded via housing-related support in East Cambridgeshire. The service, 1 Wheatsheaf Close in Ely, helps people to find new housing, placing a particular focus on accessing training, education or employment and maintaining their tenancies.

**Priority 2 – Support older people to be independent, safe and well**

This area is focused on promoting interventions which reduce unnecessary hospital admittance and enabling older people to live at home, or in a community setting, where appropriate.

At any one time 1013 older people are housed in sheltered and extra care schemes across East Cambridgeshire. Housing-related support funds vital staff time to support people and safe and accessible housing is provided to residents. Support staff help people to maintain their independence for as long as possible. Plans are underway to extend this support to older people living in the community, so that this valuable support is accessible to all those that need it, not just those living in sheltered housing. Extra Care schemes also help older people with significant health problems who would otherwise need to be in more expensive residential care or hospital.

As well as housing schemes for older people housing related support contributes to Home Improvement Agencies which help older people or people with physical disabilities to remain in their own homes. Between April and December 2012 a total of 60 major jobs were completed by the East Cambridgeshire Home Improvement Agency. Major jobs included installing level access showers and or bathrooms downstairs for example. A further 357 more minor jobs were completed via the handypersons service. These included putting in grab rails, small ramps moving beds and furniture downstairs, and installing key safes for example. All these interventions help people to maintain people’s independence and contribute to their health and wellbeing by preventing falls, reducing the number of hospital admissions, making homes safe and secure, and allowing earlier discharge from hospital. The work of the HIAs link with Occupational Therapy and the National Health Service

**Priority 3 - Encourage healthy lifestyles and behaviours in all actions and activities while respecting people’s personal choices**
This is about encouraging individuals to take more responsibility for their health and wellbeing. The ethos of housing-related support is about encouraging personal responsibility and independence.

East Cambridgeshire is covered by a Floating Support Service. Between April 2012 and December 2012 a total of 16 out of 31 individuals referred to the service reported that their physical health had been improved whilst using the service.

Priority 4 - Create a safe environment and help build strong communities, wellbeing and mental health

In the area of addressing domestic abuse housing-related support is a key intervention both in terms of prevention and helping victims if they have been subject to abuse. This is carried out via an outreach/浮动 support service covering East Cambridgeshire and Fenland, delivered by Refuge. This service helps people who are still housed but might be at risk of abuse in some way, meaning that individuals do not have to move home in order to access support. Between April and December 2012, 49 clients were successfully helped and discharged from this service. All minimised harm or risk of harm from others, 45 established contact with external groups and services and 12 services users were helped to secure settled accommodation. This is a particularly important intervention, especially for helping those people who are experiencing domestic abuse and may be at risk of homelessness.

In addition to the Specialist Domestic Abuse service we offer a separate multi-disciplinary floating support service which supports a wide range of people who may be homeless or at risk of homelessness across East Cambs. This is operated by the CHS Group (PIP). These services help people to manage their homes and maintain their tenancies, setting up utilities, preventing rent arrears and helping people to improve their wellbeing.

At any one time around 50 - 60 individuals who may have been identified as at risk of homelessness, received help from a multi-disciplinary floating support service across East Cambridgeshire helping them maintain their tenancies. This service helps people manage their homes and maintain their tenancies, setting up utilities, preventing rent arrears and helps people to improve their wellbeing. Without this support being in place it is likely that a number of individuals may become homeless again and their support needs and other associated costs may have increased as a result.

Priority 5 Create a sustainable environment in which communities can flourish & Priority 6 – Work together effectively

This is about seeking the views of the local voluntary sector and the communities of Cambridgeshire as well and recognising their importance. The strategy is also concerned with promoting social inclusion of marginalised groups and individuals.

Housing-related support is channelled through 8 organisations and businesses in East Cambridgeshire. Many of these are in the voluntary sector and include local charities and enterprises working with a range of marginalised groups.

Issues
The Health and Wellbeing Strategy is a new document and has only recently been agreed. This document aims to put a particular spot light on health and well-being in East Cambridgeshire. Evidencing outcomes against another document is not always easy given
the wider context of health and wellbeing compared to housing-related support forming only one component. Outcomes can also be hard to demonstrate and individual measures don’t always tell the whole story. A person may secure a job but may still end up homeless. Outcomes attributable to housing-related support in many cases would not have been possible without multi-agency working.

Feedback following the plans to integrate HRS into mainstream commissioning is that there are concerns these benefits will be lost if the emphasis on HRS as a key contributor to HWB and the prevention agenda is not maintained

**Recommendations**
Note the work to link housing-related support to the Health and Wellbeing agenda in East Cambridgeshire.