

Health & Adult Social Care Select Committee

12 June 2019

Housing Related Support

Report by Executive Director People Services and Director of Adults' Services

Summary

As part of the council's 2018 budget proposals consideration was given to aims and responsibilities underpinning the councils' expenditure on housing related support services (HRS). Funding for HRS was originally provided through the ring fenced "Supporting People" grant from 2003. This was subject to annual reductions until 2011 when the ring fence was removed. Funding for these services is now met from the core council budget. Some of the procured services enable the council to fulfil statutory responsibilities and others are discretionary in nature.

Following an intensive and complex consultation process, the decision was made to reduce expenditure on HRS from £6.3million in 2018/19 to £2.3million by 2020/21. The spending reduction of £4million will be implemented over the financial year 2019/20, allowing time to remodel services and explore impact mitigation with the providers and others. This work is being supported by a task and finish group of partners from the districts and borough councils.

The Cabinet Member for Adults and Health agreed that an update on progress would be brought to the June 2019 Health and Social Care Select Committee (HASC) meeting for consideration.

HRS services are delivered by multiple providers in a variety of forms across the. All contracts are due to end on the 30th September 2019.

The focus for scrutiny

The Health and Social Care Select Committee is asked to consider the approach to prioritising the County Council's remaining investment in housing related support, including the work of the officer task and finish group, and provide any comment to the Cabinet Member for Adults and Health, Executive Director for People and Director of Adults Services prior to a planned further key decision in July 2019 regarding the future procurement of HRS contracts.

Proposal

1. Background and Context

1.1. The purpose of this report is to set out the work and progress that has been made in the recommissioning and remodelling of existing and future housing related support contracts in the context of the budget for HRS.

1.2. This report is accompanied by the RAG rating of the existing HRS contracts (appendix one).

Housing Related Support

1.3. The purpose of HRS is to reduce the risk of tenancy breakdown and homelessness for individuals who, for a variety of reasons, may struggle to maintain independence without these inputs. Services are a mixture of 'accommodation based' support linked to specific properties, and 'floating' support for individuals in a variety of different types of accommodations.

1.4. In West Sussex these services support the delivery of a range of statutory duties and discretionary responsibilities on behalf of the county council and the district and boroughs. The primary statutory responsibility for addressing or preventing homelessness falls to the districts and boroughs as housing authorities. Council social care responsibilities may be discharged through housing support and homelessness prevention services. These services also support the prevention of demand on other services.

1.5. Funding for these services was historically funded by central government through a range of sources. In 2003 a review of funding streams resulted in the creation of a 'Supporting People' Grant, a reducing ring fence grant which was administered by the council. In 2011 the ring fence was removed.

1.6. HRS services are now funded from the Adults and Health budget as part of the council's base budget.

2. Proposal

2.1. As part of the Cabinet Member decision of 18th December 2019 it was agreed that all existing provider contracts would be extended until 30th September 2019 to allow time for an in-depth piece of work to be undertaken to look at future commissioning intentions and opportunities. Subject to a key decision in July 2019 the council will undertake a procurement exercise to re-commission services based on the outcome of this work.

2.2. To aid this process the council has rated the service using a RAG rating indicated the strategic fit with statutory duties and prevention. This RAG rating can be seen at appendix one.

2.3. Services rated as green are a high priority for continued funding, albeit with efficiencies. The proposed approach for these services is a single tender re-procurement. Services rated red are unlikely to attract on-going funding and work is underway to end this provision. Services rated amber will be subject to the outcome of a joint piece of work. The proposal is for these services will be extended until March 2020 and a re-procurement to commence from September 2019.

The amber rated services.

2.4. Amber services are those services the council could consider some on-going funding for, however they fit the council's prevention rather than statutory duties.

In order to continue these services at a similar level there would need to be investment in services and or property from other parts of the system. Alternatively, these services could be commissioned differently through a partnership arrangement.

2.5. It was agreed that a piece of work to agree a partnership commissioning approach to these services would be informed by a the task and finish group chaired by Natalie Brahma-Pearl, Chief Executive of Crawley Borough Council.

2.6. To facilitate this work in a timely manner the task and finish group appointed a consultancy firm, Snook, with a brief to;

- Utilise a design led approach to understand the needs of homeless people across West Sussex accessing supported housing and preventing homeless services now, and
- Understand what is needed for the future.

2.7. A series of stakeholder workshops held throughout April and May 2019 with partners, stakeholders, providers and service users has informed a senior executive workshop held on 30th May 2019 to decide on future commissioning intentions, the outcome of which will be published in June 2019.

2.8. The detailed work of the task & finish group will be presented in a separate update by the Chair of the group at the meeting on 12th June 2019.

2.9. Following consideration of the outcomes of the senior executive workshop the council will produce service specifications for the new contracts to be commissioned and commence tendering processes as required. It is anticipated that these services will be in place by 1st April 2020.

3. Resources

3.1 The current budget for services provided through the housing related support contracts is £4.6 million and supports services across the county. This is funded from the base council budget rather than through any dedicated or general grant. Council wide pressures across the entire range of services means that all financial commitments have to be tested and challenged.

3.2 Opportunities to close the budget gap that the council faces are limited due to the requirements to fulfil its statutory duties and demand pressure in children and adults' services. The council also recognises that districts and boroughs also face significant financial pressures and that it is unlikely that other parts of the system will be able to bridge the gap if this funding is removed.

3.3 It was agreed that the council allocates a budget to meet its statutory obligations and contribute to the wider prevention agenda;

- To meet statutory duties a commitment of £1m per year is considered appropriate. This is based on a review of services currently considered as meeting or contributing to council statutory duties,
- It is proposed that, in addition, the council continues to invest up to up to £1.3m per annum in services which support the prevention agenda.

Provision at that level will enable a continued contribution to commissioning for youth homelessness and services covering rough sleeping and domestic violence refuges, however it recognises that this may require providers to access alternative revenue streams or reduce the overall offer.

- The contracts will continue in their current form until September 2019. The remodelled contracts will commence from September 2019 onwards based on the recurrent £2.3m financial envelope.

3.4 A breakdown of the investment for 2019/20 is in the table below:

	Current Year 2019/20 £m	Year 1 2020/21 £m	Year 2 2021/22 £m
Current spend	3.15	0	0
Spend on new contracts	1.15	2.3	2.3
Contingency	0.3	0	0
Total	4.6	2.3	2.3

Factors taken into account

4. Issues for consideration by the Select Committee

4.1 It was agreed at the December 2018 meeting of the Health and Adults Social Care Select Committee that members would have the opportunity to consider developments regarding the housing related support contracts at its June 2019 meeting, and further to any decision approved by the Cabinet Member for Adults and Health.

4.2 Issues which the committee may wish to explore include;

- a) The work and progress to date of the partnership task and finish group,
- b) Revised timetable for delivery of proposals,
- c) Plans to monitor the impact of the proposals to include service users, their families and carers and current service providers, especially for those contracts rated either red or amber and,
- d) Plans for continued partnership working with strategic partners

5. Consultation

5.1. A significant programme of work has been undertaken on the future commissioning intentions led by the task and finish group and involving partners, stakeholders, providers and people who use services.

5.2. The outcomes of this work is expected by the end of June and will be used to develop the contract specifications throughout June and July 2019.

6. Legal Implications

6.1. A summary of statutory duties can be seen in appendix three. There is a complex set of overlapping statutory duties and associated powers, most usefully exercised to prevent or reduce the potential emergence of greater needs and their

demands on other services. All of the duties considered together illustrate the need for cooperation and joint working across agencies to identify a shared strategy and set of objectives and to reach a common set of aims and commissioning plans to meet them. The appendix also provides, for illustrative purposes the implications of current HRS arrangements for the various statutory functions.

7. Risk Management Implications

7.1. Reductions in funding create a risk that services will be forced to close leaving individuals and families who may require support unable to access this. The impact could be an increase in homelessness, or an increase in request for assessment and support from adult or children's social care. The proposed approach provides some stability by clearly profiling the financial constraints and allowing flexibility on how the changes are delivered.

7.2. There is a risk that services may become destabilised whilst the remodelling work is undertaken. This is being mitigated through early engagement and clarity of purpose amongst all the partner agencies. It is important that this is seen as a collective set of responsibilities where the beneficial outcomes for those in need in our community are shared and the need to maintain a coherent system of support and intervention is planned jointly within the financial constraints which exist.

7.3. There is a risk that, in remodelling these services insufficient additional resources can be identified across the system to fully meet the responsibilities shared by the agencies. Careful attention will be given to the impact of particular proposals for change and the need to adapt or modify those proposals as such impact and available mitigation are identified.

7.4. The timescale for remodelling the services is challenging. This situation will be kept under review during the implementation period.

8. Other Options Considered

8.1. In view of the scale of the financial challenge facing the council, it cannot rule any areas out of consideration. Clarity of purpose and priority of outcome for all contractual arrangements must be achieved to make the most effective use of resources. To do nothing is therefore not an option.

8.2. The option to withdraw the full HRS budget would not achieve the aims of ensuring these services meet the responsibilities of the council in a planned and measured way. This would have a significant impact across the county at both a strategic level and potentially on an individual level if services were to close with insufficient planning or impact assessment. Since it would also leave the council at risk of not being able to fulfil some of its statutory responsibilities, this has never been treated as a viable option to pursue.

8.3. The option to retain a core element of investment linked to the delivery of statutory functions and supporting prevention with the remaining reductions staged in two parts is therefore the agreed position.

9. Equality Duty

9.1. A detailed impact assessment was undertaken as part of the budget consultation. The work planned to develop future service priorities and how they can best be met will continue the approach which takes fully into account the council's duty to have regard to its public sector equality duties.

10. Social Value

10.1. The proposal to jointly review and remodel the commissioned services will take into account the social value that these deliver for the people of West Sussex. The particular elements of the Council's Social Value Policy which have been considered or will be included in the implementation of the proposals are set out as part of the impact assessment in appendix one.

11. Crime and Disorder Implications

11.1. Several commissioned services contribute to the council's role in reducing crime and anti-social behaviour. Stakeholders from the criminal justice sector will be encouraged to participate in this process so that this is properly recognised. The relevant statutory duties are included in the summary of responsibilities provided in appendix two.

12. Human Rights Implications

12.1. A number of the Articles of the Convention on Human Rights are engaged by proposals to alter service support to those with needs linked to their accommodation and wellbeing. The rights enshrined in Article 8 (private family life and home) will be the focus of the impact assessment and future service plans together with other fundamental rights identified as relevant as the process of service redevelopment is implemented.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Consultation feedback and Equality Assessment
Appendix 2 - Summary of legal duties and responsibilities

Background Papers - None