

**Report To:** Cabinet

**Date of Meeting:** 25<sup>th</sup> November 2014

**Lead Member / Officer:** Councillor Bobby Feeley  
Lead Member for Social Care and Children's Services

**Report Author:** Sophie Haworth-Booth  
Commissioning and Tendering Officer

**Title:** Denbighshire Supporting People Local  
Commissioning Plan 2015-18

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**1. What is the report about?**

The three year Local Commissioning Plan (LCP) for the Supporting People (SP) programme in Denbighshire.

**2. What is the reason for making this report?**

A decision is required on approving the LCP for 2015-18 prior to submission to the North Wales Regional Collaborative Committee (RCC) in January 2015.

**3. What are the Recommendations?**

To approve the Supporting People Local Commissioning Plan 2015-18, prior to the plan being submitted to the RCC in January 2015.

**4. Report details.**

Supporting People is a policy framework and funding stream to provide housing related support to vulnerable people, including; young people, older people, people fleeing domestic violence, homeless people, people with mental health needs, people with a learning disability, people with substance misuse needs, ex-offenders and others.

Housing related support aims to enable people to maintain their housing tenure, often a tenancy, by developing and maintaining their confidence and skills to live as independently as possible. The Supporting People Programme has been evaluated at national level and shown to deliver very positive financial and other benefits.

Supporting People teams across Wales are required to submit an LCP to their Regional Collaborative Committee in January of each year detailing their priorities and actions over the next 3 years, as well as a 3 year spend plan.

Current Position

Changes to the funding distribution formula for Supporting People in 2012 resulted in cuts to Denbighshire Supporting People of 20% over 5 years between 2012-13 and 2016-17. Additional cuts to all public services in Wales have resulted in further cuts to Supporting People, which are indicated to continue into 2017-18. These cuts were managed in 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2014-15 without significantly impacting on service levels, with the current grant allocation being £6.1 million for 2014-15. In a letter from Welsh Government dated 7<sup>th</sup> November 2014, the indicative budget for 2015-16 is

reduced by 10.4% at £5.5m. It is anticipated we will have a similar level of cuts in 2016-17 with a further 5% in 2017-18.

The LCP 2015-18 is focused on managing the redistribution reduction of 5.8% indicated by WG in June 2014, whilst also being in a position to respond to additional budget cuts in a way that minimises the impact on service users. This involves negotiating efficiency savings and remodelling existing projects with service providers, abandoning projects that have not yet been commissioned, and decommissioning projects that are no longer fit for purpose. Additional budget cuts potentially means decommissioning projects that are still strategically relevant, however, these decisions will only be made following a full service review and through using our Strategic Priority to Fund matrix which categorises projects as high, medium or low priority to fund. Denbighshire Supporting People are currently in the process of drafting a decommissioning strategy that will outline the approach we will take.

With an indicative reduction of 10.4% in 2015-16, followed by further cuts in subsequent years, Denbighshire Supporting People is facing a substantial loss of funding. These cuts will impact on Supporting People services delivered internally by the Council through Housing Services, Adult and Business Services and Children and Family Services; as well as those delivered externally, often by charitable organisations.

Details of the proposed actions in 2015-18 are detailed on pages 21-36 of the attached Local Commissioning Plan.

Given the uncertainty around the cuts for the next 3 years, it has not been possible to produce a 3 year spend plan. Until we are given some degree of certainty around likely funding levels, we are not in a position to plan this far ahead. Appendix 1 gives indicative reductions by provider based on indicated cuts of 10.4% for 2015-16.

## **5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

The projects and proposed actions within the LCP will contribute to supporting Denbighshire's Corporate Plan 2012-17 in the following areas:

- Developing the local economy
- Vulnerable people are protected and are able to live as independently as possible
- Ensuring access to good quality housing
- Modernising the Council to deliver efficiencies and improve services for our customers

Regional collaboration across North Wales and a regional strategy for commissioning and delivering services will contribute towards managing the downsizing of the grant and the protection of frontline services for vulnerable groups.

## **6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

The indicated budget for 2015-16 is £5,489,693, a reduction of £637,608 (10.4%). It is anticipated we will have a similar level of cuts in 2016-17 with a further 5% in 2017-18.

These cuts will inevitably have an impact on internal services funded by Denbighshire Supporting People, including; Housing, Adult and Business Services,

and Children and Family Services, as well as those delivered externally, often by charitable organisations.

The projects and changes identified will be managed within the Supporting People budget allocated to Denbighshire by the Welsh Government.

**7. What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision? The completed EqIA template should be attached as an appendix to the report.**

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed as part of the Local Commissioning Plan 2015-18, which:

- Details the consultation carried out to develop the LCP and identify any unanticipated negative impact;
- Highlights the data collected and analysed via the needs mapping process, including anonymised data on protected characteristics;
- Acknowledges the challenges faced in implementing the cuts to services provided for vulnerable people;
- Confirms that Supporting People services are accessed by all protected characteristic groups;
- Confirms that every reasonable effort has been made to eliminate or reduce any potential disproportionate negative impact on those with protected characteristics, and that Supporting People will continue to monitor the impact of any changes made.

The full EqIA can be found on pages 37-41 of the attached LCP.

**8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?**

The Denbighshire Supporting People Planning Group (SPPG) held three meetings during the development of this report and considered needs mapping data, supply map information and feedback from stakeholders and consultation meetings.

A ten week consultation process was held from July to September, during which five meetings were attended with Service Users, and a number of stakeholder meetings were attended to present the LCP. The plan was also presented to the Supporting People Provider Forum in July. Views, comments and suggestions from the process were reported back to the SP Planning Group to inform the development of this plan.

The final document was signed off by SPPG in September 2014 and sent to all County Councillors for information. The report has been updated following receipt of the indicative grant allocation from Welsh Government on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2014. Following approval from Cabinet, the LCP will be submitted for the consideration of the North Wales Supporting People Regional Collaborative Committee in January 2015.

The final document will be published on the Supporting People pages of the Denbighshire County Council website and circulated to all existing planning groups and forums linked to Supporting People in Denbighshire.

**9. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

The reductions in grant funding and the implications on the Supporting People programme - and the wider impact on other social care budgets will continue to be carefully managed.

Whilst the level of cuts to the grant are particularly challenging, this is something that was envisaged several years ago and the reason why the Council agreed to establish a reserve to help mitigate the impact of cuts, particularly in Adult Services where the greatest impact is likely to be felt.

#### **10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

The proposals to manage the reduction in grant funding in 2015-16 are reasonable based on the 5.8% indicated figure.

Further cuts above 5.8% could pose significant risks to services and service users:

- The sheer scale and short notice of such cuts makes it difficult to make decisions about how to administer these cuts in a strategic and transparent way.
- Cuts must be considered regionally – not only are there potentially differing views around regional priorities to fund, but the level of cuts could destabilise entire providers/charities who work across the region.
- This can have a knock on effect of damaging provider confidence and the good relationships we have with them – this can be managed to some extent by keeping them informed, sharing information as and when we receive it, which we have done.
- It will not be possible to manage cuts of this scale by simply remodelling services to find efficiency savings, but will necessitate the decommissioning of entire services which are providing quality support. This will directly impact upon front line services and will reduce much-needed support for some of our most vulnerable residents in Denbighshire.
- Supporting People relieves the burden on already overstretched statutory services such as Social Services, Health and Police, by preventing people declining and entering into a crisis situation. Further cuts to Supporting People will place even greater pressure on these statutory services at a time when there are already significant budget cuts resulting in significant changes to public services.
- As above, the reserve will be used to mitigate cuts in Adult Services whilst alternative support arrangements are developed for adults with learning disabilities.

Grant reductions will be managed in a strategic way. The cuts will not be managed through simply “salami-slicing” budgets. Supporting People are committed to making these difficult decisions in a consultative and transparent manner which will include considering the views of affected providers, Service Users and stakeholders. Supporting People will strive to deliver more for less, but it is acknowledged that demand often outstrips provision. Supporting People will remain committed to ensuring housing related support services are maintained for the most vulnerable people across all service delivery groups. Supporting People will ensure that the support projects we continue to commission are delivering safe, high quality, innovative and person centred housing related support.

#### **11. Power to make the Decision**

Section 111 Local Government Act (1972).