

**Report To:** Communities Scrutiny Committee

**Date of Meeting:** 10<sup>th</sup> September 2015

**Lead Officer:** Head of Community Support Services

**Lead Members:** Lead Member for Social Care (Adults and Children's Services)

**Report Author:** Supporting People Team Manager and the Housing Care & Support Manager

**Title:** Supporting Independent Living Service (SIL)

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

This report provides an update on previous reports presented to Scrutiny about the Supporting Independent Living Service (SIL) which was previously known as the Wardens' Service. The report gives an overview of key findings of the recent Supporting People led strategic evaluation of the service. The report also discusses what the future proposals are for this service.

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

The report has been requested by the Committee.

### **3. What are the Recommendations?**

That members consider the contents of the report, comment accordingly and support the approach being taken.

### **4. Report details.**

The review of the Supporting People Programme in Wales led to the following recommendation being made in relation to Older Peoples services

*"It is recommended that the eligibility criteria for older people receiving Supporting People funds should be based on need rather than age or tenure" (Aylward, 2010)*

In August 2012 Supporting People Programme Guidance was introduced to facilitate the implementation of the recommendations made by Sir Mansel Aylward in his report.

This guidance stated

- Housing related support service provision must be based on identified or assessed needs, it must also be flexible and person centred
- SP services should be enabling and develop a person's independence

- Support packages must be based on written support plans that include risk assessments and risk management measures
- A statement of criteria for admission to service is needed
- Support must be outcome focused with achievable goals and must follow All Wales Outcomes Framework
- Services that receive SP funding must report to the Regional Collaborative Committee

The last report was presented to Scrutiny in May 2014. Since this time Housing & Community Development Services have undergone significant changes. The SIL service now sits under Community Support Services.

The DCC Wardens' Service (now SIL) has been the first Wardens' service in Denbighshire that has fully transitioned to become tenure neutral. Generally DCC are ahead of other Local Authorities in the region in relation to implementation of the Aylward recommendations.

The current SIL contract is due to end 31.3.2016. Supporting People Programme Guidance (SPPG) states that new services should be subject to normal procurement practice and regulation, but provided that a robust and regular review regime is practised, it would not be anticipated that SP services would be re-tendered on a routine basis and any re-tendering exercises would normally only take place following a service review. This will have established whether a service was not strategically relevant, of low quality or did not reflect acceptable cost guidance and was not able to make the changes to address identified shortcomings. In the first instance, remodelling should be considered as a means of reconfiguring services.

In line with the SPPG, the SIL service has recently undergone a Supporting People led strategic evaluation. The report is still in draft, however key findings are

- There is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the SIL service is strategically relevant. The SIL service could be developed to become a key partner in contributing to the delivery of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act in Denbighshire.
- There is sufficient evidence that the SIL service is now an eligible tenure neutral Supporting People Service.
- It was reassuring to note that positive progress has been made in developing Support Planning and Risk Management processes. However, there is additional work required to develop policies and processes in order to meet the minimum service quality standards required by SP. The SIL Manager and SP Reviewing Officer will work together in drawing up an action plan over the coming weeks.
- There is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that the service is currently providing value for money. The service is running at significantly lower Service User numbers than it is contracted to deliver, it is also under delivering on the contracted hours. It is recognised that Service User numbers have

been difficult to manage during the transition and that SIL do have plans to generate more referrals in the future. Service User numbers, service delivery hours and contract price will need to be considered before issuing a new contract in 2016. In consideration of these findings and against a backdrop of cuts to the Supporting People Grant, the Contracts and Reviewing Officer will be making recommendations to remodel the service to address these issues. This is likely to result in a reduction of funding and contracted hours.

- The Contracts and Reviewing Officer will **not** be recommending that this service is subject to a competitive tender process. It is felt that the changes brought about by a tender process would prove to be detrimental to the good progress already made in this service. Supporting People will work with SIL in remodelling the service to address the issues highlighted and to agree an acceptable level of savings for the future.

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

This project will contribute to supporting Denbighshire's Corporate Plan 2012-2017 in the following areas:-

- Vulnerable people are protected and are able to live as independently as possible
- Ensuring access to good quality housing

This project plays a key role in contributing to the prevention of homelessness for vulnerable people.

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

For 2015-16 there is £547,962 of the Supporting People Grant allocated to the SIL project. It is felt that savings can be found without impacting on current Service User numbers or Service Delivery.

This service has the potential to make significant contributions to the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales).

## **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.**

Over successive years, the proposals to remodel the Wardens Service to a Tenure Neutral Service were included in the Supporting People Operational Plan and latterly the Supporting People Local Commissioning Plan for which an Equality Impact Assessment was completed.

Following the conclusion of the 2015 review, any remodelling decisions will be subject to an equality impact assessment.

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

These changes have been considered in the context of the Supporting People Local Commissioning Plan (previously known as Supporting People Operational Plan) since 2009. The local commissioning plan is consulted upon with stakeholders, service users and scrutiny committee.

During the review, the Contracts and Reviewing Officer interviewed Service Users, there was evidence to suggest that Service Users did not fully understand what the changes were or why they were necessary. This was highlighted to the SIL manager during the review who confirmed that the SIL service has carried out extensive consultation with Services Users and stakeholders throughout the transition. The SIL service will continue to address these concerns as they move forwards with promoting the service.

## **9. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

The proposed approach must continue to be carefully managed particularly with regards to the issue of value for money identified in section 4 and the risk of claw back identified in section 10. The programme should be kept under review to ensure expenditure does not exceed the funding allocated.

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

The service is now fully transitioned to a tenure neutral model of support. However, with this transition there have been a number of Service Users who no longer qualify or no longer want the support from SIL. Arrangements are in place so that these Service Users can re-enter the service if their circumstances change.

The service has seen a significant reduction of Service User numbers to less than half the amount of Service Users they were previously working with. New referrals remain low. There is a risk of clawback if SIL is unable to increase Service User numbers. The SIL service intend to promote the service more widely both within Sheltered Housing and the wider community. This will also be addressed when the service is remodelled in 2016.

During the recent SP review, it was evident that Service Users do not fully understand what changes have taken place and why. There is a risk that this could create reputational damage to the council. The SIL service will continue to address these concerns as they move forwards.

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

Article 6.3.3 of the Council's constitution sets out Scrutiny committee powers with respect to policy development and review, whilst Article 6.3.4(b) details scrutiny's powers with regards to performance in relation to policy objectives and service delivery.

### **Contact Officer:**

Community Support Services

Tel: 01824 706654