

Report to: Partnerships Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 24th November 2016

Lead Member / Officer: Lead Member for Social Care & Children's Services/Supporting People Team Manager

Report Author: Commissioning and Tendering Officer

Title: Denbighshire Supporting People Local Commissioning Plan 2017-18

1. What is the report about?

Denbighshire Supporting People's (SP) Local Commissioning Plan (LCP) for 2017-18; this updates on SP's commissioning intentions for the next financial year, following on from the three year 2016-19 plan, published earlier this year.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

To consult on the LCP, including proposals to manage ongoing reductions to the SP Grant. The grant is ring-fenced by Welsh Government for SP; however, the allocation of the grant and the cuts anticipated will have an impact upon other Council services.

3. What are the Recommendations?

To review the LCP and feedback any comments to SP, prior to its submission to Cabinet in December 2016 (followed by the Regional Collaborative Committee (RCC) in January 2017).

4. Report details

SP is a Welsh Government funding stream that provides housing related support to people at risk of homelessness, including: young people; older people; people fleeing domestic abuse; offenders; people with drug or alcohol issues; people with physical or mental health issues, and people with learning disabilities/difficulties. Housing related support aims to enable people to develop and maintain the confidence and skills to live as independently as possible. The SP Programme is spend-to-save, and has been shown to deliver both financial and non-financial benefits.

SP teams across Wales are required to submit an LCP to their RCC in January of each year, detailing their priorities and actions for the next financial year.

Denbighshire SP has faced in excess of 20% cuts (£1.5 million) between 2012 and 2016. These cuts were managed from 2012 to 2015 without significantly impacting on service levels; 2015-16 was the first year in which Denbighshire SP had to decommission services which were assessed to be strategically relevant. SP and the services funded by the Programme have therefore faced significant pressure on already limited budgets, to help those in Denbighshire who are most in need of support. These services are delivered internally by Community Support Services and Children and Family Services, and externally by several third sector organisations.

It is expected that SP will continue to face additional cuts as a result of reduced public spending nationally, despite a welcome reprieve in 2016/17, when the SP budget was protected and maintained at 2015-16 level across Wales. Given the uncertainty around budgets for the next year, it has not been possible to produce a final spend plan. Until we are given a degree of certainty around likely funding levels, we are not in a position to plan this far ahead. The draft budget has indicated that the overall Supporting People Grant will remain the same for 2017/18; however, this is yet to be agreed by Welsh Government, and it is not clear whether individual Local Authority allocations will remain the same. In the event that the Supporting People Grant remains the same, contingency plans are being drawn up to ensure that the savings already identified are re-invested back into front line services.

Denbighshire SP are however, currently modelling their 2017-18 budget on anticipated cuts of at least 5%. Savings in excess of 5% had been found in anticipation of a 10% cut in 2016-17, which were then reinvested in short-term in-year projects when no cuts were made. Therefore, it is anticipated large portion of these savings at this level will be found through the natural end of these in-year projects.

The plans within the 2017-18 LCP are based on managing cuts – at whatever level materialises - in a way that minimises the impact on service users. This involves continuing to negotiate efficiency savings and reconfiguration of existing projects with service providers, and decommissioning projects which are no longer fit for purpose. As in 2016-17, Supporting People may have to consider decommissioning projects which are still strategically relevant; however, these decisions will only be made following a full service review and following completion of a Decommissioning Report, in line with the Denbighshire SP Decommissioning Strategy. Denbighshire SP will continue to seek to mitigate these cuts as far as possible through careful planning and negotiation with service providers and other stakeholders locally and regionally.

Details of the proposed actions can be found on pages 19-31 of the LCP (Appendix 1).

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
- People with support needs 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 people in need of support.

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

The indicative minimum reduction for 2017-18 is approximately £274,485 (based on 5%). This is in addition to the £1.2 million cut in the last 5 years (however, as above, we will not know for sure until this is confirmed by Welsh Government).

Cuts inevitably impact on internal services funded by Denbighshire SP, including Community Support Services, and Children and Family Services. The projects and changes identified will be managed within the SP budget allocated to Denbighshire by the Welsh Government.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

A Wellbeing Impact Assessment (WIA) was completed 5th October 2016 (this was the first one undertaken for the LCP) – Appendix 2. This identified that the Plan had a positive impact on five out of the seven wellbeing goals; the remaining two being neutral. In terms of sustainability, the Plan scored 15/24 – this may in part be influenced by the uncertainty surrounding SP Grant funding; however, the WIA will be revisited following any revisions made from Partnerships Scrutiny members/SPPG/Cabinet feedback.

As part of the Denbighshire SP Decommissioning Strategy, a WIA will be completed for each project being considered for decommissioning. Service reviews/contract management throughout the year additionally ensure that any negative impacts can be identified and addressed.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) had additionally already been completed for the LCP in July 2016. This confirmed that SP services are accessed by all protected characteristic groups; that every reasonable effort has been made to eliminate or reduce any potential disproportionate negative impact on those with protected characteristics, and that SP will continue to monitor the impact of any changes made. The EqIA did not identify any detrimental impact brought about by the Plan on any protected characteristics.

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

During the development of the LCP, the Denbighshire SP Planning Group (SPPG) has considered its strategic priorities, needs mapping data, and service gaps.

The LCP was also out for consultation with service users, service providers, and other stakeholders, for a period of 8 weeks from 4th August-30th September 2016. During the period of consultation, feedback was encouraged via a variety of platforms: the LCP was circulated to a wide range of SP stakeholders, including all SP commissioned projects, referrers, colleagues throughout Denbighshire Council, our Tackling Poverty Partners, and other health and social care agencies in the area; various meetings were attended by SP, where feedback was sought, e.g. the Children, Young People, and Families Partnership, and Mental Health Planning Group; a Local Commissioning Plan/SP Day was held in Rhyl Town Hall on 12th September 2016, with attendees including service users and staff from a variety of stakeholder agencies. The Plan was also added to the DCC website, under 'Current Consultations'.

Following feedback from Partnerships Scrutiny members, any changes will be signed off by Supporting People Planning Group members, and the final document will be submitted to full Cabinet for approval in December 2016. It will then be submitted to the North Wales RCC in January 2016, to inform the development of the North Wales Regional Commissioning Plan. The final document will be published on the SP pages of the DCC website, and circulated to stakeholders.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

The Council's policy is to pass on directly any cuts to specific grant funding streams therefore any further reductions will have to be managed within the resources available.

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 2017-18 are reasonably based on an assumed 5% figure. Further cuts above 5% 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. The scale of cuts may have a disproportionate impact on some smaller providers who have very little room for efficiency savings.
- 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 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 continuing to share relevant information with providers.
- It may not be possible to manage more substantial cuts by simply remodelling services to find efficiency savings; this will necessitate the decommissioning of entire services which are providing quality support. This will directly impact upon frontline services, and will reduce much-needed support for some residents in Denbighshire. Denbighshire SP have developed a Decommissioning Strategy in order to manage this process fairly and transparently.
- SP relieves the burden on already overstretched statutory services such as Social Services, Health, and Police, by working to prevent crisis situations. Further cuts to SP will place even greater pressure on these statutory services, at a time when there are already significant budget cuts affecting public services.
- SP is also key in supporting the delivery of the Housing Act (Wales) Act 2014 and Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.
- In September 2015, DCC full Council voted unanimously in favour of a motion to protect the SP budget, and support the national 'Let's Keep on Supporting People' campaign, run by Cymorth Cymru and Community Housing Cymru.
- Denbighshire SP will be presenting a contingency plan to SPPG in preparation of cuts being higher than 5%.
- In previous years, we have been afforded a safety net in the form of the SP reserve; this will not however be available for this year or next, as these funds will be used by DCC Community Support Services to mitigate the impact of cuts to internal services - both as a result of Supporting People Grant cuts, and wider cuts applied to the Social Services budget.

11. Power to make the Decision

To determine the content of any plan, strategy or other policy document requires approval by the Lead Cabinet Member, in accordance with Statutory Instrument 2001 No. 2291 (W,179) Regulation 4 (3)(c) + (d)

Scrutiny's powers in relation to matters detailed in this report are outlined Section 7.2.3 of the Council's Constitution.

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