COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Wednesday, 10th February 2016
Report Subject	Flintshire Supporting People Commissioning Plan
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Housing
Report Author	Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the Supporting People Local Commissioning Plan 2016-18. The programme has been subject to significant reductions over the past three years. It is pleasing to note that the grant has been protected in 2016/17. This provides the team some time to work with providers to identify different ways of working which can deliver savings whilst protecting service delivery. This report does propose to move ahead with planned reductions of services that are not deemed a priority to fund. Any savings will be used to provide short term support to meet emerging pressures as a result of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 and Social Services & Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

RECOMMENDATIONS	
1	Committee supports the Local Commissioning Plan 2016-18 for the Supporting People Programme Grant.
2	Committee supports the spend plan for 2016-17.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	**EXPLAINGING THE FLINTSHIRE SUPPORTING PEOPLE COMMISSIONING PLAN**
1.01	In 2012, the Welsh Government merged together the Supporting People Grant and Supporting People Revenue Grant and created the Supporting People Programme Grant. This grant funds the provision of services that enable vulnerable people to gain and retain independence by remaining in their own home and prevents people from needing to access health, social care and homelessness services, etc.
1.02	Members will be aware that the Flintshire Supporting People Programme Grant has suffered significant reductions as a result of the austerity measures that have seen some of the deepest public sector cuts for a generation being implemented by the government to reduce the budget deficit. Table 1 below, shows the year on year reduction in the grant since April 2013 in Flintshire. **Table 1** *(table below)* This represents a total budget cut of 18.4% over 3 years.
1.03	**Strategic Priorities** Meeting the requirements of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 and Social Services & Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 The implementation of these two acts are likely to have a substantial impact on Supporting People. Both have a heavy focus on early intervention where people need support to live independently, which aligns well with Supporting People's key aim of preventing homelessness through early intervention, therefore it is anticipated there will be increased demand on services.
1.04	In 2014, Flintshire Supporting People Team and the Support Gateway are embedded in the Housing Solutions Service. There is a joined up approach between the Housing Support Workers and the Homeless Officers. This has provided a lean approach to managing the increasing levels of people at risk of homelessness. The Flintshire Supporting People Planning Group is chaired by a Senior Manager from Social Services creating a key link at a strategic level.

Table contained within section 1.02:

Financial Year	Total SPRG	Reduction in SPPG (compared to previous years' SPRG)	% Reduction
2013/14	£6,824,035	£296,221	4.1%
2014/15	£6,468,843	£356,092	5.2%
2015/16	£5,809,813	£659,026	10.4%

| 1.05 | Contributing to the Tackling Poverty Agenda

Supporting People along with Housing and Homelessness was incorporated into the Communities and Tackling Poverty Ministerial portfolio. Welsh Government have highlighted the opportunities for greater links to be forged between Supporting People and the Tackling Poverty programmes; Communities First, Families First and Flying Start. |
|---|---|
| 1.06 | Flintshire has started work to map how these programmes can be more closely aligned. There is some practical join up between Families First and Supporting People with links between the boards, sharing of commissioning tools and expect that alignment to become closer over the next twelve months through some joint commissioning of projects. |
| 1.07 | Managing the Reductions
The continued reduction to the Supporting People Programme Grant has been a significant and growing concern for the authority. The services funded by the grant prevent some residents from accessing more costly social and health care and homelessness services and positively support the authority in its attempts to mitigate the extreme financial pressures that are being generated by other reductions in public expenditure, such as the welfare reforms. Therefore, it has been essential for the Flintshire Supporting People Team to adopt a proactive and strategic approach in their management of the year on year reduction in the Supporting People Programme Grant and, in doing so, lessen the negative impacts upon service delivery to customers. |
| 1.08 | It is pleasing that the Supporting People Programme Grant has been protected from reductions in 2016/17. This provides some much needed time for the Supporting People Team to work with providers to identify efficiencies that as far as possible protect vulnerable service users. |
| 1.09 | There are some ongoing projects to remodel services that will continue through 2016/17 in partnership with service providers. The Supporting People Team has sought agreement from the Supporting People Planning Group for changes to some services which will deliver savings in 2016/17. These are reductions where services have been deemed ineligible or not a priority for Supporting People to fund. These savings in 2016/17 will be invested in the short term to support new emerging pressures as a result of the requirements of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 and Social Services & Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. The Supporting People Planning Group has identified a gap in provision for males fleeing domestic abuse across the North Wales region. The Supporting People Planning Group will also align with the wider Tackling Poverty Programmes to identify where investment will meet emerging pressures, tackle poverty and prevent homelessness within the County. |
| 1.10 | **CONSIDERATIONS**
Cabinet are asked to approve the 2016–18 Supporting People Commissioning Plan (attached at appendix one). The proposals to reduce expenditure contained within this report are in line with the council's and the Regional Collaborative Committee's strategic priorities. |

1.11	The Supporting People Team is committed to making efficiencies through ensuring service providers are delivering their support services as efficiently and effectively as possible and have been involved in discussions about delivering services differently to achieve savings and maintain service delivery. This has included the use of volunteers, identifying where a floating support model can be more efficient than supported housing and considering changes to overnight support provision.
1.12	Services continue to be assessed in line with the model from the 2014-16 Commissioning Plan which assesses providers in terms of; i. Is the service eligible for Supporting People funding? ii. Has the service been subject to value for money assessment? iii. Does the service contribute to key strategic priorities of the Supporting People Programme? iv. Is there clear evidence of demand for the service? v. Could the same outcomes be achieved by delivering services in a different way? vi. Are there other services/funding streams in the County that could deliver the outcomes? vii. Is there opportunity for partner or regional collaboration? viii. What is the service user impact, if the service is ceased or reduced?
1.13	The outcomes of the assessment of service providers has enabled the Supporting People Team to identify potential efficiency savings of £206,500 in 2016/17 which equates to a 3.5% reduction. The plan also suggests some remodelling work to be implemented in 2017/18. The efficiencies will be achieved through the remodelling of existing services; ceasing services that are not deemed to be strategically relevant to the aims of the Supporting People Programme; maximising alternative funding streams; and, by promoting greater levels of collaboration amongst service providers.
1.14	Within the service areas where efficiencies have been identified, the Supporting People Team has closely appraised the implications for service users and, importantly, they have identified alternative options where service users may access appropriate support to lessen any negative impacts generated by a reduction in service provision.

1.15	**Table 2**	
	Service Areas	Efficiency Savings
	Domestic Abuse	No change
	Families *Achieved through a reduction within a family hostel*	£15,000
	Substance Misuse	No change
	Chronic Illness *Achieved through decommissioning a regional project for HIV/AIDS.*	£14,000
	Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment	No change
	Offenders	No change
	Young People	No change
	Mental health	No change
	Housing Support (Generic)	No change
	Housing Support (Aged over 55) *Achieved through withdrawal of support from Abbeyfield Flint with the agreement of the provider*	£14,500
	Community Care *A continuation of a planned withdrawal from services ineligible for Supporting People Programme Grant.*	£163,000
	Total	**£206,500**

1.16	The Supporting People Team are currently working with individual service providers, agreeing the measures that will need to be taken in order to achieve future efficiency savings and to ensure service users are supported through any changes in how their particular support services are to be delivered.
1.17	To ensure that the provision of a comprehensive range of quality assured housing related support services within Flintshire will be sustainable over the longer-term, the Supporting People Team are continuing their proactive engagement with all service providers, challenging and redefining the traditional models of how housing related support is delivered. The Supporting People Team remain committed to a strategic approach for identifying the savings required.
1.18	Released funding will be used to ensure Flintshire has suitable and safe arrangements for males fleeing domestic abuse; provide support posts to ensure Flintshire can meet the requirements of the new Housing and Social Services legislation and provide support for planned changes to the young people accommodation and support services. The detail and specification of any spend will be agreed through the Tackling Poverty Programmes.

2.00	**RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**
2.01	A growing body of research has demonstrated the financial benefits to the public purse that are attained due to the positive outcomes from

	interventions delivered through the Supporting People programme. The key research in Wales indicates that for every £1 spent on the provision of housing related support, £1.68 is saved across other budgets, with the health, social care, and homelessness budgets seeing the most significant savings, primarily due to the preventative nature of Supporting People services.
2.02	Thus, the year on year reduction in the Supporting People Programme Grant is a concern as it may result in the authority incurring additional expenditure in the delivery of crisis intervention services and in the fulfilment of its social care and homelessness statutory duties.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Service providers have been consulted upon how the support services that they are currently delivering will be impacted by the efficiencies being made within the 2016/17 Supporting People Programme Grant.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	The services provided through the Supporting People programme aim to improve the quality of life of vulnerable people by supporting them to live independently in the community. These include the provision of services that help people to maximise their household income and manage their financial commitments. The successful outcomes from such services play an important role in helping to tackle poverty and prevent homelessness within the County.
4.02	Whilst the Flintshire Supporting People Team will attempt to identify efficiencies that will generate the least impact upon service users, it has to be recognised that any future reduction in service provision may result in some vulnerable people not having ease of access to the support services that they require in order to avoid their household from falling into poverty and/or becoming at risk of homelessness.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix One - Local Commissioning Plan

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	**Contact Officer:** **Katie Clubb, Customer Support Manager** **Telephone:** **01352 703518** **E-mail:** **Katie.clubb@flintshire.gov.uk**

7.00	**GLOSSARY OF TERMS**
7.01	**Supporting People Team** – the team sits within the Customer Support Service area and is responsible for the contract management, reviewing and commissioning of Supporting People Services. **Supporting People Programme Grant** - In 2012, the Welsh Government merged together the Supporting People Grant and Supporting People Revenue Grant and created the Supporting People Programme Grant. This grant funds the provision of services that enable vulnerable people to gain and retain independence by remaining in their own home and prevents people from needing to access health, social care and homelessness services, etc. **Housing related support** - is provided to help vulnerable people develop or maintain the skills and confidence necessary to live as independently as possible. Housing related support can include help and advice with: • Developing life and domestic skills • Budgeting and managing money • Accessing other services and opportunities • Establishing safety and security **Supported Housing** - This is a service were the support is linked accommodation for people who have support needs as well as housing needs. Support can vary from simple information and advice on benefits to more in-depth help with independent living skills, accessing education and employment, overnight support and assistance with finding move-on accommodation. **Floating Support** – This is where support is not linked to a particular property and is flexible and can support a number of people wherever they reside. **Decommissioning Strategy** – The Supporting People Planning Group agreed a decommissioning strategy which ensures that the decision to end funding to a service has taken into consideration a number of factors including any impact on service users. **Tackling Poverty Programmes –** The Welsh Government has recognised the following programmes as contributing to the Tackling Poverty agenda: Supporting People, Flying Start, Communities First and Families First.