

HASC

Homelessness Support Services: Outcome of the Transformation to 2019 Review

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Background

- **Housing Related Support Services** for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- Previously funded through the Supporting People Programme
- **Transformation to 2019:** £2m reduction in budget for Social Inclusion services as part of the overall £55.9m required from the Adults' Health and Care department
- Not a statutory requirement for the County Council
- Contribute to the District and Borough Council's Homelessness Prevention and Relief offer

Proposed changes

- **£2.4million investment in housing related support services** for the most vulnerable homeless people who are rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping
- Savings of £1.8m achieved through reducing services for those with less critical needs who would be supported to identify and access alternative sources of support
- New arrangements would commence on 1st August 2019 allowing 8 months for transition
- Proposed changes would be implemented through the modification and extension of existing contracts to reduce disruption

Review process

- Proposals for changes to services co-produced with the District and Borough Councils to align with the services that these councils provide for the prevention and relief of homelessness and target the most vulnerable homeless people
- Multi agency approach supported the identification of current challenges, opportunities for working differently and supported a wider understanding of the range of resources available to support the prevention of homelessness
- Public consultation and targeted engagement with service users

Consultation: Headlines

- 380 responses. 228 from current or previous service users
- Over half of respondents (58%) disagreed with the Council's proposed changes to services and there was general opposition to any cuts to this type of service
- 31% agreed with the proposals and 11% gave a neutral response, regretting the need to make any cuts but recognising the importance of focussing on the most vulnerable

Consultation: Feedback summary

- Current service users spoke of how mental or physical health issues prevented them from dealing with their tenancy issues personally
- Current service users also told us about the type of support they receive and how they saw this support as crucial to managing finances and accessing benefits
- 186 respondents put forward alternative suggestions. These included a review of alternative funding streams, investigating ways of delivering services more efficiently and more effective partnership working

Key risks

- A reduction in services may result in an increase in homelessness and associated issues
- The EIA identified a disproportionate negative impact on people with age, disability and gender as a protected characteristics
- The cost to the County Council of meeting the eligible care and support needs of people no longer able to access services could exceed the savings achieved

Mitigation: Extended homelessness prevention duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act, Care Act duties, stronger partnerships, targeting services at the most vulnerable, promoting access to alternative services across key stakeholders, engagement with voluntary sector.

HASC Task and Finish Group Outcomes Report

The Group endorses the recommendations and proposed service changes that would achieve £1.8m savings whilst ensuring that services supporting the most vulnerable homeless people are maintained.

Additional recommendations:

That the County Council;

- Actively participates in partnerships to reduce homelessness and end rough sleeping
- Actively engages with all partners to support early intervention and collectively prevent the need to more intensive services
- Partners with District and Borough Councils for bids for additional funding to support shared objectives

Thank you

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