

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Health
Date:	5 December 2018
Title:	Homelessness Support Services: Outcome of the Social Inclusion Transformation to 2019 Review
Report From:	Director of Adults' Health and Care

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1. Recommendations

- 1.1. That the Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Health agrees to a reduction in spend on County Council funded Homelessness Support Services of £1.8m per annum from 1 August 2019 through the modification of current County Council contracts for Social Inclusion services and a new grant agreement with Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council.
- 1.2. That the Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Health approves modifications to the Social Inclusion contracts that include a change in eligibility and an additional optional extension to March 2022, as set out in this report.
- 1.3. That the Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Health grants permission to modify the contract for Winchester Night Shelter to include the option to extend this contract to March 2022 and approves an increase in spend of £61,680, increasing the aggregate value of this contract from £308,400 to £370,080, should the additional option to extend be exercised.
- 1.4. That the Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Health gives delegated authority to the Director of Adults' Health and Care in consultation with the Executive Member to exercise the option to extend the contracts referred to in 1.2 and 1.3 above to March 2022.
- 1.5. That approval is given by the Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Health to award a grant of up to £1,143,473 from 1 August 2019, for up to 32 months as outlined in 8.6, to Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council to enable them to commission Homelessness Support Services for their area in line with the grant conditions outlined in 8.3.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. This report outlines proposed changes to Homelessness Support Services that would achieve £1.8m savings per annum whilst maintaining services that provide support for the most vulnerable homeless people who are sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough.

- 2.2. The proposed changes would mean that people with less critical support needs would need to seek help from alternative services. This report outlines the potential impact of the proposed changes and the alternative support available.
- 2.3. These changes are being proposed against the backdrop of unprecedented financial challenges. The County Council must meet a funding shortfall of £140 million by April 2019, and of this, £56 million is planned to be met from the Adults' Health and Care budget. Savings of this scale mean that the County Council must challenge the way it currently provides services and looks at different ways to meet people's needs.
- 2.4. The proposals for changes to the way Homelessness Support Services would be commissioned and delivered in the future take into account key changes to homelessness legislation, the statutory duties of the District and Borough Councils and the County Council's duties under the Care Act 2014.
- 2.5. Whilst the County Council does not have a statutory responsibility to fund specialist Homelessness Support Services, a continued investment of £2.4 million is being proposed for services that meet the housing related support needs of the most vulnerable homeless people, some of whom may have eligible care and support needs or could develop eligible care and support needs in the future.
- 2.6. If approved, the proposed changes to services would take effect on 1 August 2019 through modifications to reduce the value and extensions to existing County Council Homelessness Support contracts together with a new grant agreement with BDBC. These new arrangements would be put in place for an initial term of 20 months, until the end of March 2021.
- 2.7. The option to extend both the County Council contracts and the BDBC grant agreement for an additional 12 months, to March 2022, is being requested.
- 2.8. This report details the extensive engagement that has taken place both with District and Borough Councils and other key stakeholders in order to establish the priorities for future investment, develop the proposals for changes to services and ensure a collaborative approach to the delivery of Homelessness Support Services in the future.
- 2.9. This report also outlines the feedback received following a public consultation on the proposed changes to services carried out between 15 June 2018 and 10 August 2018.

3. Contextual information

- 3.1. Homelessness Support Services (the collective name for Social Inclusion Services and the Winchester Night Shelter) are housing related support services for people over the age of 18 who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- 3.2. Housing related support is defined as help that develops or sustains an individual's capacity to live independently in accommodation. This includes support to understand and manage the rights and responsibilities of their tenancy, manage debt and budget effectively, better manage physical health, mental health and substance misuse, and access healthcare, specialist services and Education, Training and Employment (ETE) opportunities.

- 3.3. The need for changes to the way housing related support services are provided is due to national austerity measures as well as combined demographic and inflationary pressures. With less money available and growing demand for council services we need to ensure these more limited resources are targeted at the most in need and the most vulnerable.
- 3.4. The *Serving Hampshire – Balancing the Budget* consultation carried out in 2017 sought the views of Hampshire residents on ways the County Council could balance its budget in response to continuing pressures on local government funding, and still deliver core public services.
- 3.5. The Adults' Health and Care Department is now pursuing a savings target of £56million by April 2019 through proposals which are in line with the approach preferred by residents; targeting limited resources to meet the needs of the most vulnerable, reviewing all commissioned services and exploring whether there are different ways support could be provided; for example, by working more closely with partners and by providing better information and support for people to access a range of existing services.
- 3.6. Proposals to reduce the budget attached to Homelessness Support (Social Inclusion) Services were published in the Transformation to 2019 Revenue Savings Report which was approved by Full Council in November 2017. In this report the County Council committed to working in partnership with the District and Borough Councils to ensure a more joined up approach to the commissioning and delivery of these services in the future.

Current services

- 3.7. The County Council currently spends £4.2m per annum on Homelessness Support Services and funds support for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness within three main types of service:
 - I. Intensive 24/7 supported housing and night shelter services:
 - These schemes provide short-term housing and support for people who are sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough.
 - Schemes have staff on site 24 hours a day and help people who have a high level of support needs.
 - The County Council also funds support services in one emergency night shelter which is based in Winchester but can be accessed by any individual with a connection to the Hampshire County Council area.
 - Only the housing related support within these schemes is paid for by the County Council. The housing costs are paid for by rent, which for most people is covered by housing benefit.
 - II. 'Lower' level and/or 'move on' supported housing
 - These schemes provide accommodation and support for individuals who are homeless and have less critical needs or are ready to move on from a more intensive supported housing service.
 - Whilst some services do have a 24 hour staff presence, most people living in these schemes receive help from a visiting support service.
 - As with the intensive 24/7 services, only the housing related support within these schemes is paid for by the County Council, the housing

costs are paid for by rent, which for most people is covered by housing benefit.

III. Community support (including homelessness outreach for people sleeping rough)

- These support services are available to any individual or family requiring housing related support to access accommodation or to maintain their current accommodation.
- Unlike the types of service described above, this support service is not 'attached' to accommodation and any person who is homeless or at risk of homelessness can receive help from this service regardless of their current housing status.

- 3.8. The County Council directly commissions services in Eastleigh, East Hampshire, Fareham, Gosport, Hart, Havant, New Forest, Rushmoor, Test Valley and Winchester and gives a grant to Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council to enable them to commission and procure their own local model of Homelessness Support Services.
- 3.9. Housing related support services for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness have always been commissioned in partnership with the District and Borough Councils and support these authorities to meet their statutory responsibilities to prevent and relieve homelessness. These duties were extended in April 2018, under the commencement of the *Homelessness Reduction Act 2017*.

Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

- 3.10. From April 2018, the Homelessness Reduction Act placed significant new homelessness duties on the District and Borough Councils, as the local housing authorities, to prevent homelessness. This included a new responsibility to ensure that detailed personalised housing plans are produced and implemented for all homeless or potentially homeless people who approach these authorities for help.
- 3.11. In October 2018, the Act also introduced a new "Duty to Refer" which means that named public services including social services authorities, will need to identify and refer people who may be at risk of homelessness to the District and Borough Councils.
- 3.12. The Government anticipates that this legislation will have a positive impact by supporting early intervention to prevent homelessness.

4. Transformation to 2019 Social Inclusion services review

- 4.1. The Adults' Health and Care Transformation to 2019 revenue savings proposals were approved by Full Council in November 2017. Proposals included a £2m reduction in the budget available for Social Inclusion services (Homelessness Support services).
- 4.2. The proposals in the consultation on the proposed changes to services that took place between 15 June 2018 and 10 August 2018 followed extensive engagement with key stakeholders.

- 4.3. This engagement commenced in October 2017 and a multi agency advisory group was set up to support a partnership approach to the development of proposals that would deliver the identified savings. This group included representatives from all 11 District and Borough Councils, the Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), Probation, Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC), Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and representatives from other Hampshire County Council departments with an interest in the outcomes achieved by these services, specifically Childrens Services, Public Health and operational Mental Health services.
- 4.4. This Advisory Group has met 7 times over the last 12 months to explore priorities for the County Council investment, alternative sources of support and partnership opportunities, and to develop the proposed changes to services outlined in this report.
- 4.5. One to one meetings with stakeholders have also been held to discuss concerns, challenges and potential solutions. One to one meetings have taken place with the CCG Mental Health commissioners, OPCC, CRC and the District and Borough Council housing leads
- 4.6. District level meetings have been an essential part of the review process due to the particular significance that these services have in terms of the delivery of local homelessness strategies.
- 4.7. The Chief Executives of the Hampshire Districts have been briefed in writing at key points during the review process and given the opportunity to ask questions and raise concerns with the Director of Adults' Health and Care.
- 4.8. Whilst stakeholder engagement has been essential in terms of developing the proposals for changes to services, the review has also determined that there is a positive opportunity to work more collaboratively to make the best use of collective resources, mitigate the negative impacts of spending reductions across the public sector and reduce the need for more costly statutory interventions.
- 4.9. Officers from Adults' Health and Care have also met regularly with a 'Task and Finish Working Group' comprising cross-party members of the Health & Adult Social Care Select Committee and briefed them on the progress of the review and emerging proposals. This group has met 6 times since November 2017 and each meeting has given members the opportunity to question and scrutinise the approach being taken and hear the views expressed by District and Borough Councils and other stakeholders over the course of the review.
- 4.10. The stakeholder engagement carried out between September 2017 and April 2018, alongside analysis of service data and impact assessments, and feedback from current service providers, showed that a more prudent approach to the savings required was to reduce the budget by £1.8m (from £2m) in order to safeguard services for people who have support needs whilst moving on from more intensive services. The shortfall of £200k has been accounted for within the overall T19 programme. It is considered that this additional investment would maintain support services for those most at risk and with limited alternative sources of support.
- 4.11. The final proposals have been developed in partnership with the District and Borough Councils to dovetail with the other services that these Councils provide to support the prevention and relief of homelessness.

5. Summary of Proposed Changes to Services

- 5.1. The proposed changes to services prioritise the investment agreed by the County Council to directly meet the needs of the most vulnerable homeless people.
- 5.2. Under these proposals the support services in the intensive 24/7 supported accommodation and night shelter services that are used by people sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough would be retained.
- 5.3. In order to achieve this, the County Council would reduce the amount of money spent on lower level supported accommodation, move on accommodation and community support. This would mean that, in addition to the intensive 24/7 supported housing services, the County Council would fund community support for people:
 - who are moving on from intensive 24/7 supported housing,
 - living in lower level or 'move on' supported housing or moving on from these schemes and
 - sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough and have complex support needs which mean that they are unable to access support from other sources.
- 5.4. People who do not fall into these categories who currently use community support services for help to prevent homelessness would need to seek support from other services.

Other services include:

- Homelessness prevention and relief services provided by the District and Borough Councils
 - Hampshire County Council Family Support Services
 - Universal support services funded by the DWP to support the roll out of universal credit
 - Citizens Advice
 - Hampshire County Council commissioned Wellbeing Centres
 - Housing Authority and Registered Social Landlord tenancy support services
 - Other local voluntary sector partners who are working with the District and Borough Councils to provide services for this group
- 5.5. In districts where the County Council funds services in intensive 24/7 supported housing schemes, funding would cease for the support services 'attached' to lower level and 'move on' supported accommodation. However, people living in these schemes would still be able to access the community support service if they require additional support to engage with more mainstream services.
 - 5.6. The County Council would continue to fund support services 'attached' to some current 'lower level' supported housing in Hampshire districts that do not have 24/7 services and develop these services to ensure that they are able to support people with more complex needs. This proposal would

support the provision of supported accommodation for single homeless people in Havant, East Hampshire and Eastleigh.

- 5.7. The County Council would work with the District and Borough Councils and current service providers to plan the transition to any new arrangements and ensure that people who may be affected by any changes are provided with clear information regarding alternative support services and how to get help to prevent homelessness in the future.
- 5.8. Furthermore, under the Care Act 2014, the County Council has a duty to assess where it appears that there may be a need for care and support. Following assessment, where eligible care and support needs are identified, the County Council has a duty to ensure that these identified needs are met.
- 5.9. In the future, and in line with the changes made under the Homelessness Reduction Act, any individual or family who is homeless or at risk of homelessness would need to seek assistance from their local District or Borough Council. This would be the first point of contact for advice and support. Where appropriate, following initial assessment, people would be referred to the County Council for a needs assessment or signposted to other community services for additional support, including organisations offering welfare benefit and debt advice.
- 5.10. Families identified as requiring support in addition to their housing needs, could be referred to, or refer themselves to, the Hampshire Family Support Service. Following assessment, a family may be offered specialist family support or signposted to other community services including those provided by health professionals.

6. Consultation

- 6.1. The County Council carried out a public consultation on the proposed changes to Homelessness Support Services between the 15 June 2018 and 11 August 2018. This was considered to be an appropriate period for consultation given the number of people that use each service. It also allowed other stakeholders, including District and Borough Councils, service providers and other interested parties to participate.
- 6.2. The consultation sought to understand:
 - The extent to which residents and other stakeholders support the County Council's proposals for changes to services;
 - the potential impact of the proposed changes and
 - any alternative options that could achieve savings through changes to Homelessness Support Services.
- 6.3. An information pack and response form were published on the County Council's website and the response form was also available as an online survey. Unstructured responses sent through other means, such as email, were also accepted as feedback.
- 6.4. The consultation was promoted through a media release and corporate social media channels. Emails were sent to key stakeholders, including local government councillors and constituency Members of Parliament. District and Borough Council partners were asked to forward details of the consultation to local partners.

- 6.5. Fliers advertising the consultation were placed in District and Borough Council offices and distributed to other homelessness sector partners to raise awareness of the consultation.
- 6.6. 17 consultation drop in events were held across the county to give service users the opportunity to talk one to one with a manager from Adults' Health and Care about the proposals, their experience of current services and alternative sources of support.
- 6.7. In addition, printed copies of the information pack and response form were sent by post to all current services users, along with a covering letter detailing dates and times of the consultation drop in events and a pre-paid envelope for the return of response forms.

7. Responses to Consultation

- 7.1. 380 people submitted a consultation questionnaire, either via a paper questionnaire or online. 228 respondents were current or previous service users. The report detailing the full findings from the consultation is in appendix 1.
- 7.2. Just under a third of respondents (31%) supported the County Council's proposal to maintain funding for intensive 24/7 homelessness support services and reduce funding for 'lower' level and/or 'move-on' support housing services and community support services. 11% gave a neutral response.
- 7.3. The majority view was that services should be maintained – with over half (58%) of respondents saying they either disagree or strongly disagree with the County Council's proposal.
- 7.4. Those who agreed with the County Council's proposals regretted the need to make any cuts but recognised the importance of a focus on the most intensive support. Other respondents said that whilst the intensive 24/7 services were important, the lower level accommodation based and community support services were also vital within the overall model of support.

Impact of proposed changes

- 7.5. 321 respondents felt that the proposed changes would have an impact on themselves, their organisation or people who are homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless in the future.
- 7.6. Respondents felt that the impact of the proposals would be felt most keenly amongst current and future users of existing services, but that the proposed reduction in funding for 'lower' level and/or 'move-on' supported housing services and community support services would also affect related processes and services.
- 7.7. Of the 22 comments received from organisations, nine related to the impact on other services, and in particular concerns about their capacity to manage increased demand and to provide a comparable support service within existing resources.
- 7.8. The wider public perception centred on more general opposition to cuts, originating from concerns that a reduction in Homelessness Support Services would see levels of homelessness increase.

- 7.9. Current users of community support services were most vocal regarding the impact of reductions in this type of service, seeing this support as crucial to managing their finances, accessing benefits and negotiating with landlords so they can continue to retain their home.
- 7.10. Respondents also spoke of mental or physical health issues which prevented them from dealing with their tenancy issues personally. They were unclear of where else they would be able to seek this support.
- 7.11. Many current service users spoke of the way that service providers understood their needs. There was concern that they would not get this kind of empathy from other support services, or that one to one support would be lost as a result of increased demand should funding be cut.

Alternative suggestions

- 7.12. 186 respondents put forward alternative suggestions as to how the County Council could achieve savings through changes to Homelessness Support Services. These included a review of alternative funding streams, investigating ways of delivering services more efficiently, more effective partnership working and improving options for affordable housing.
- 7.13. The most prominent theme was that, due to its role in supporting some of the most vulnerable members of society, Homelessness Support Services should retain their funding (24% 42 comments).
- 7.14. Based on their direct experience, current service users were proponents of both reducing organisational costs and finding efficiencies in existing homelessness services, and put forward a number of practical suggestions as to how this might be achieved.
- 7.15. Responding organisations were less certain that savings could be found but made some suggestions as to how services could work better together to maximise opportunities and reduce duplication.
- 7.16. Individual respondents were also keen on further exploration of partnerships to deliver services (26 comments) and suggested a range of ways in which the County Council could better engage with local charities and public sector partners to provide a more holistic service.

8. Developing Recommendations

- 8.1. The recommendations in this report are being made following consideration of the financial challenges faced by the County Council and thorough analysis of both the responses to the consultation and the impact assessments carried out during the review process.
- 8.2. Having carefully considered all of these factors, this report seeks permission to implement the proposed changes to services outlined in section 5 through the modification of the current County Council contracts for Homelessness Support Services in Eastleigh, East Hampshire, Fareham, Gosport, Hart, Havant, New Forest, Rushmoor, Test Valley and Winchester.
- 8.3. Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (BDBC) currently commission and procure their own local model of Homelessness Support Services. Following a report on the positive outcomes achieved through this arrangement, BDBC have submitted a request to continue with this devolved commissioning arrangement. If approved, the grant agreement offered to BDBC would

include a condition to deliver a 24/7 intensive accommodation-based service and a targeted community support service to align with the priorities agreed for the County Council investment in partnership with key stakeholders, including all of the District and Borough Councils.

- 8.4. The County Council commissioned Homelessness Support services would be extended to 31 March 2021. Permission is also being sought for the proposed modification to include the option to extend these contracts for a further 12 months. The level of demand for statutory services and the pressure on County Council budgets is anticipated to continue over the medium term and the option to extend the Homelessness Support Service contracts to March 2022, is being requested and would be exercised, if it is considered that further time is required to fully explore all the potential options for recommissioning these services.
- 8.5. It is judged that modifying and extending current contracts would cause the minimum amount of disruption to partners and service users given the reduction in budget attached to services.
- 8.6. It is proposed that the new grant offer to BDBC would commence on 1 August 2019 and would be for an initial term of 20 months. The proposed agreement would include the option to extend to March 2022 in line with the proposals for the County Council contracts.
- 8.7. One of the objectives of the Transformation to 2019 review was to explore opportunities for joint investment in services. Discussions are ongoing with District and Borough Councils regarding the option of investing in Homelessness Support Services additional to those that would be funded by the County Council and that are outlined in section 5. Whilst some of the District and Borough Councils have confirmed investment in services, others have given an in principle agreement and would seek approval through their own governance procedures early in 2019.
- 8.8. Proposed changes to services would be made on 1 August 2019, allowing 8 months for the County Council to work with service providers, district and borough housing options teams and voluntary sector partners to implement the changes, support service users with the transition and to ensure that modified services both dovetail with the extended services offered by the District and Borough Councils under the Homelessness Reduction Act and complement the wider voluntary sector offer.
- 8.9. During the transition period, the County Council would assess individuals who may be affected by the proposed changes and who it appears to the County Council may have care and support needs. The County Council has a duty under the Care Act 2014 to ensure that any eligible care and support needs are met.
- 8.10. In response to consultation feedback the County Council would continue to engage with all partners to explore joint funding opportunities and improved partnerships for the delivery of housing related support and wider preventative services.

9. Key Risks

- 9.1. There is a risk that, due to the vulnerability of some of the people who use community support services, they may not seek or access the help they need

to prevent homelessness. This could result in an increase in homelessness and street homelessness, and an increase in the number of people who subsequently require more intensive support services. This highlights the importance of effective partnerships between the County Council and District and Borough Councils in this area. It is believed that, by targeting services at the most vulnerable, improving partnership working, and ensuring access to alternative services is promoted across key stakeholders, this risk can be minimised.

- 9.2. There is also a risk that following Care Act assessments, alternative services for people with eligible care and support needs have to be provided by the County Council and that the cost of meeting identified needs exceeds the savings delivered through the proposed changes. Anonymised data provided by current service providers indicates that a significant number of people with mental health support needs are currently using services. The outcome of Care Act assessments will support the development of future mental health commissioning plans.

10. Financial context

- 10.1. The proposals outlined in this report are designed to achieve savings of £1.8m per annum, which would contribute to the overall savings target of £56 million allocated to the Adults' Health and Care budget.
- 10.2. The County Council currently spends £ 4,225,146 per annum on Social Inclusion services across the county. Of this £3,478,678 is spent on contracts with organisations to deliver services in Eastleigh, East Hampshire, Fareham, Gosport, Hart, Havant, New Forest, Rushmoor, Test Valley and Winchester, and £746,468 on a grant agreement with Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (BDBC) that enables them to commission and procure their own services locally.
- 10.3. The proposed reduction in County Council spend by area is shown in the table 1 below.
- 10.4. The proposed budgets for each area from 1 August 2019 do not represent an equivalent percentage reduction in existing spend. The review identified a need to maintain the 24/7 intensive supported accommodation and the proposed spend in each area reflects the higher cost of this provision.

Table 1: Current and proposed Hampshire County Council annual spend on Social Inclusion (Homelessness Support) Services

Area	Current annual spend	Proposed annual spend from 1 August 2019 – 31 March 2021	Difference from current spend
Havant, East Hants, Fareham and Gosport	£1,409,350	£712,108	£697,242
Winchester, Test Valley, Eastleigh and New Forest	£1,402,937	£807,323	£595,614
Hart and Rushmoor	£604,711	£390,380	£214,331
Winchester Night Shelter (county resource)	£61,680	£61,680	£0
Basingstoke and Deane	£746,468	£428,509	£317,959
TOTAL	£4,225,146	£2,400,000	£1,825,146

- 10.5. In order to ensure that sufficient time is available to implement the proposed changes, it is proposed that these changes do not take place until after July 2019. This has been taken into account in the Adults' Health and Care Transformation to 2019 delivery plan and the savings contribution from Social Inclusion services for 2019/2020 under these proposals would be £1.2 million. The full saving of £1.8 million would be released from 2020/2021.
- 10.6 Discussions are ongoing with District and Borough Councils regarding the option of investment in Homelessness Support services additional to those that would be funded by the County Council (outlined in section 5). These additional services would include street outreach, move on accommodation based services and community support and would therefore be most efficiently delivered through the existing County Council contracts.
- 10.7 Once the level of District and Borough Council investment has been confirmed, Service Level Agreements would be drawn up between each District Council and the County Council to enable jointly funded services to be delivered through the modified County Council contracts.

11. Equality Impact Assessment

- 11.1. Integral appendix B contains the full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) that has been completed on the proposed changes to Homelessness Support

Services. This EIA is an updated version of the assessment that was published alongside the consultation information pack in June 2018.

- 11.2. The EIA has identified that the proposed changes may have a high or medium negative impact on people with the following protected characteristics: age, gender and disability.
- 11.3. This negative impact is mitigated by District and Borough Council duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, County Council's duties under the Care Act 2014, stronger partnerships, a more integrated approach to the delivery of services and access to other existing services as detailed in integral appendix B.

12. Legal Implications

- 12.1. Under the Care Act 2014, the County Council has a duty to carry out a needs assessment where it appears to the County Council that the person may have a need for care and support services.
- 12.2. When an adult is found to have care and support needs following a needs assessment under section 9 of the Act, the local authority must determine whether those needs meet the "eligibility criteria" set out in the legislation.
- 12.3. It is for the Executive Member as decision maker to have due regard to the need to: eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act and advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 12.4. Legal advice in respect to the modification of the contracts is set out in exempt appendix 1.

13. Conclusion

- 13.1. Social Inclusion (Homelessness Support) Services have been reviewed together with the District and Borough Councils and other key stakeholders as part of the County Council's Transformation to 2019 programme.
- 13.2. The proposed changes to Homelessness Support Services would achieve £1.8m savings whilst maintaining services that provide support for the most vulnerable homeless people who are sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough.
- 13.3. The proposed changes to services and the recommendations within this report have been developed in partnership with the District and Borough Councils to ensure that services align with the services that these Councils provide to prevent and relieve homelessness.
- 13.4. Whilst the consultation highlighted the potential impact of both the proposed changes and the reduced budget, there was some recognition of the need to target the County Council's limited resources to meet the needs of the most vulnerable homeless people.
- 13.5. The County Council is facing some difficult decisions in order to deliver a balanced budget by 2019 and recognises that making changes to Homelessness Support services is not without risks. Stronger partnerships are recognised as key in terms of mitigating these risks and the County Council is committed to working with the District and Borough Councils and

other partners to ensure a collaborative approach to the delivery of support services for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in the future.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	no
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	no
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	yes

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council Social Inclusion Grant	25/07/18
Transformation to 2019: Revenue Savings Proposals	21/09/17
Supporting People: Remodelling Social Inclusion Services	24/06/15
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities	June 2018
Homelessness Reduction Act 2017	
Care Act 2014	

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equality Duty

- 1.1. The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;

Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;

Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;

Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;

Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

1.2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

Statutory Considerations

Age:

Impact: Medium

Services support people aged between 18 and 64, and above where this is the most appropriate service to meet their needs. Whilst supported housing services are only available to single homeless people, community support is available to individuals and families. Available data shows that a significant majority of service users (97%) are aged between 18 and 60. Whilst there are variations around the county, the data shows a fairly even spread within the 18 and 60 age bracket. The available data does not show a marked variation in age between the users of the different types of Homelessness Support Services.

The proposal to target resources to meet the needs of the most vulnerable people who are sleeping rough or most at risk of sleeping rough would mean that families would no longer be able to receive support from this type of service. This may increase the risk of family breakdown and impact on children if families have to move due to becoming homeless. The reduction in housing related support for families may also result in increased demand for statutory Children's Services and

early help from the Family Support Service. Data available shows that approximately 350 families receive support from community support at any one time.

Mitigation: From April 2018, under the commencement of the *Homelessness Reduction Act*, people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness within the next 56 days can receive support to relieve and prevent homelessness from the District and Borough Councils. The County Council would engage with all organisations currently referring into Homelessness Support Services to support awareness of this referral pathway.

As a result of the *Homelessness Reduction Act*, the District and Borough Councils have the following duties:

- to carry out an assessment in all cases where an eligible applicant (regardless of priority need status, intentionality and whether they have a local connection) is homeless or threatened with homelessness
- to identify any support needed by the person to enable them to secure and retain accommodation and to work with them to develop a personal housing plan which will include actions to be taken by the authority and the applicant to try and prevent or relieve homelessness e.g. by helping them to stay in their current accommodation or helping them to find a new place to live before they become actually homeless
- to take reasonable steps to help the applicant to secure accommodation if the applicant is already homeless, or becomes homeless despite activity during the prevention stage

In October 2018, the Act also introduced a new “Duty to Refer” which means that named public services including Adult and Children’s Social Care will need to identify and refer people who may be at risk of homelessness to the District and Borough Councils. The government anticipates that this will have a positive impact by supporting early intervention to prevent homelessness.

Families identified as requiring support additional to their housing needs, could be referred to, or refer themselves to, the Hampshire Family Support Service. This service includes intensive family support for families whose lives may be being affected by multiple difficulties including issues such as health problems, children with poor school attendance and long term unemployment. Following assessment, a family may be offered specialist family support or signposted to other community services including those provided by health professionals. For families with lower support needs the Family Support Service offers an online local resource directory to signpost which community services are available to families within their locality. The District and Borough Councils can access this resource to support the development of Personal Housing Plans for families approaching these authorities for help to prevent homelessness.

Gender:**Impact: medium**

All Homelessness Support Services in this cluster are mixed gender. However available data shows a variation in use of the different types of service. The majority of people using accommodation-based services are male whilst the majority of people using community support are female.

Whilst the changes being proposed for lower level and 'move on' supported accommodation would affect more men than woman, the changes being proposed for community support would affect more women than men.

Mitigation: The proposed changes for single homeless people would result in a service offer for the most vulnerable homeless people sleeping rough or most at risk of sleeping rough. Proposed services would be available to both men and women.

From April 2018, under the commencement of the *Homelessness Reduction Act*, people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness within the next 56 days can receive support to relieve and prevent homelessness from the District and Borough Councils. Following initial contact and where appropriate, people would be signposted to other community services for additional support, including organisations offering debt and money management advice. Where additional support needs are identified, the District and Borough Councils can refer people to other County Council funded support services, including drug and alcohol services, the Mental Health Housing and Support pathway, Wellbeing Centres, and for assessment under the *Care Act 2014*.

Any adult affected by these proposals who may have care and support needs will be able to have their needs assessed by the County Council and would be helped to access support to meet any identified eligible needs. The County Council has a duty under the *Care Act 2014* to ensure that people's eligible care and support needs are met and would work with current service providers to ensure that clear processes are in place to support access to assessments for anyone affected by the proposed changes to services.

Disability:**Impact: High**

Data available shows that over 50% of service users experience mental health problems. Furthermore, approximately 80% of users of accommodation based services and 50% of users of community support receive Employment Support Allowance (ESA) because of illness or disability.

30% of people responding to the consultation on the proposed changes to services told us that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot because of a health

problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months. A further 22% said that their day-to-day activities are limited a little because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months.

Service providers have supplied evidence that they are working with more people with complex needs. People with complex needs have a combination of mental health and drug and alcohol problems and possibly additional issues such as a learning or physical disability and offending behaviour.

The proposed changes to services may mean that people with mental health and other health needs find it more challenging to access and maintain accommodation.

This may result in an increase in homelessness and street homelessness, and associated health problems such as substance misuse and mental health issues. This could in turn result in an increase in A&E and hospital admissions and demand for adult social care and other services.

Mitigation: Proposed changes to services would target support to meet the needs of the most vulnerable clients who are rough sleeping or most at risk of rough sleeping.

Under the Care Act 2014, the County Council has a duty to carry out a needs assessment where it appears to the Council that the person may have a need for care and support services. The County Council would work closely with the Homelessness Support service providers to ensure that people who may be affected by the proposed changes are able to access an assessment. Following assessment, they would be offered services to meet eligible needs or signposted to other community services.

People with mental health support needs are also able to access accommodation and support through the Mental Health Housing and Support pathway. Additionally, and where appropriate, individuals experiencing mental ill health can access support through the Wellbeing Centres that are also commissioned by the County Council and provide group and one to one support.

People with substance misuse issues would be able to access support through the specialist substance misuse services commissioned by the County Council. In addition to support for substance misuse, these services also help people with other issues such as problems with welfare benefits and engagement with health services. New contracts for these services started in July 2018 and services are working closely with the District and Borough Councils and a range of other organisations to support homeless people to access specialist substance misuse services.

The County Council will further consider the needs of people with complex needs through operational mechanisms, within any future review of Mental Health Housing and Support services and within the wider strategic plans for people with Mental Health support needs.

From April 2018, under the commencement of the *Homelessness Reduction Act*, people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness within the next 56 days can receive support to relieve and prevent homelessness from the District and Borough Councils. Following initial contact and where appropriate, people would be signposted to other community services for additional support, including organisations offering debt and money management advice. Where additional support needs are identified, the District and Borough Councils can refer people to other County Council funded support services, including drug and alcohol services, the Mental Health Housing and Support pathway, Wellbeing Centres, and for assessment under the *Care Act 2014*.

Poverty:

Impact: High

Available data shows that the majority of people using Homelessness Support services are in receipt of welfare benefits.

Homelessness Support services help people to access their full entitlement of benefits, attend appointments for benefit assessments and resolve issues with benefit claims. Service providers have reported an increase in the number of people requiring this type of support following the roll out of welfare reforms. Services also help people budget on a low income, access debt advice and prioritise rent payments. Support to access training courses, voluntary work, education and employment is available and pre-employment activities are provided to support vulnerable people who are not yet ready to engage with more mainstream employment support.

The proposed changes would result in a reduction in services available and may result in more people not accessing welfare benefits and less vulnerable people entering employment. Subsequently, more people may become homeless because of non payment of rent. Current service users who responded to the consultation told us that community support was crucial to managing their finances, accessing benefits and negotiating with landlords so they can continue to retain their home.

Mitigation: People who need support to claim benefits and resolve issues with existing claims would need to get this help either directly from Job Centre Plus or from other organisations offering this type of assistance.

Other organisations that offer support with benefit claims, debt and money management include the district and borough councils as part of homelessness advice. There are also a range of voluntary sector organisations that can offer support including: Citizens Advice, Money Advice Service, Income Max, Step Change, Pay Plan and Christians against Poverty.

People living in accommodation owned by district and borough councils or larger registered social landlords can access in house services for support with benefit issues.

General support to find employment is available through Job Centre Plus and specialist employment support programmes are available for people in receipt of disability benefits. People in receipt of universal credit can access this support through their work coach.

Support and information is also available through the Hampshire Local Welfare Assistance Information and Advice line. This is a Freephone number where people facing financial hardship can find out more about the options available.

Rurality

Impact: Low

The reduction in community support may mean that people living in more rural areas could find it harder to access the support they need. Accommodation based services are in urban areas and people who currently receive a visiting community support service may need to travel to get support from other services.

Mitigation: Single homeless people moving on from accommodation based services would receive short term support to help them maintain housing regardless of the location of the accommodation they move on to.

As part of the programme to prevent and/or reduce demand for formal adult care services, the County Council is currently working with voluntary and community groups in rural areas to understand the assets within rural communities. This programme will consider the needs of people who currently use community support services.

Sexual Orientation, Race, Religion or Belief, Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy and Maternity, Marriage and Civil Partnership

Impact: Neutral

Additional information

The proposed changes to Homelessness Support services would mean that some people with lower support needs who are currently using community support would need to access alternative services. People who may be affected include single homeless people, people with mental health support needs, people who misuse substances, people with a history of offending, care leavers and other people, including families, who use these of the services for support to maintain accommodation.

The County Council would work with the District and Borough Councils and current service providers to plan the transition to any new arrangements and ensure that people who may be affected by any changes are provided with clear information regarding alternative support services and how to get help to prevent homelessness in the future.

Whilst other sources of support are available, the vulnerability of some of the people who use services may mean that they do not seek or access the help they need to prevent homelessness. This could result in an increase in homelessness and street homelessness, and increased demand for health, criminal justice and social care services.

The County Council is committed to working with partners to make the best use of collective resources and will work with all partners to explore how we can collectively meet the varying needs of individuals and families earlier and before they may need more intensive services. The following actions have been identified as key to reducing the potential impact of the proposed changes:

- Developing Connect to Support Hampshire as an online resource directory for use by both organisations and individuals seeking advice, information and support.
- Strengthening referral pathways from Local Housing Authorities into other County Council services, including the services provided for people with substance misuse and mental health support needs.
- Engagement with all agencies who we anticipate may see an increase in demand for their services.
- Working closely with the District and Borough Councils to ensure that remodelled services dovetail with the statutory services provided by these councils to prevent homelessness.
- Active participation in local partnership approaches to tackling homelessness led by district councils to support the best use of County Council, District and Voluntary Sector resources. This would include partnership bids for any funding available for new initiatives to tackle rough sleeping.
- Where District and Borough Councils or other statutory partners wish to collaborate more closely and invest in housing related support services, the County Council would provide commissioning and procurement resources to buy jointly funded services. This could reduce the cost of administration, achieve economies of scale and support the delivery of joined up services for vulnerable people who currently receive support from multiple agencies.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

2.1. The proposals outlined in this report may have an impact on crime and disorder. Homelessness Support Services assist people with a history of offending to address issues that may have led to their offending behaviour and could lead to further offences. Under these proposals services would be reduced and less people would be able to receive housing related support in the future.

2.2. It has been identified through the EIA that a reduction in services could result in an increase in homelessness, street attachment and rough sleeping. Street attachment and rough sleeping is on occasions associated with anti-social behaviour and community safety issues. The County Council and contracted service providers will continue to work in partnership with the District and Borough Councils to reduce rough sleeping.

3. Climate Change:

How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

No impact identified

How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

Not applicable to this proposal