

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

DECISION REPORT

Committee	Executive Member for Adult Services and Public Health
Date:	16 June 2022
Title:	Adult Social Care: Outcome of the Savings Programme to 2023 Public Consultation
Report From:	Deputy Director of Adults' Health and Care

Contact name: Stephen White, Peter Stokes

Tel: 0370 779 3186

0370 779 1037

Email: Stephen.White@hants.gov.uk

Peter.Stokes@hants.gov.uk

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Executive Member for Adult Services and Public Health with:
 - the outcomes of the public consultation
 - recommendations that take into account work over the past 7 months, including the conclusion of the public consultation and outcomes of the Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee deliberation of the process and the savings proposals

Recommendations

2. That the Executive Member for Adult Services and Public Health:

For Adult Social Care Grants

3. Approves the ceasing of the following Adult Social Care Grant Schemes, thereby contributing £320,000 of savings towards (SP23) the savings programme to 2023:
 - a. the Neighbourhood Care and Support grant scheme;
 - b. the Community based Support Grant scheme; and
 - c. the Rural Connections grant scheme
4. That the Executive Member for Adult Services and Public Health notes that robust monitoring of the impact of any or all of the proposed changes will be established and enacted so that officers and providers can respond with any appropriate mitigation(s) as required.

For Social Inclusion

5. Approves the strategy for delivering homelessness services in Hampshire as detailed in this report and the reduction in Hampshire's funding of £360,000 for homelessness services from April 2023.
6. Subject to recommendation 5 being approved, gives approval to spend up to £6.3million for a period of up to 3 years on the delivery of homelessness services as set out in this report from April 2023.
7. Delegates authority to the Director for Adults' Health and Care to finalise spend for contracts up to the amount outlined above following any decisions made by Districts and Boroughs with regards to possible contributions towards homelessness services.
8. Notes that the above proposed spend is based on anticipated District/ Borough contributions and is subject to decisions by District/ Borough Councils.
9. Gives approval to awarding grants to Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, New Forest District Council and Winchester City Council subject to their decision-making processes, up to a maximum annual value of:
 - Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council £376,000
 - New Forest District Council £36,000
 - Winchester City Council £24,500
10. Delegates authority to the Director for Adults' Health and Care to finalise the amount of the grants up to the value outlined above subject to agreement by the aforementioned District and Borough Councils.
11. Notes that the County Council will continue its positive relationship with District, Borough and City Councils to identify additional sources of funding to help enhance the county wide offer in line with their statutory duties in this space.
12. Notes that the County Council will continue to work with all relevant organisations and service areas including Public Health, Adults Health and Care service areas, and District and Borough Council's to ensure that wider service areas help to minimise the likelihood of people becoming homeless.

Executive Summary

13. This report provides the Executive Member for Adult Services and Public Health with the outcomes of the public consultation into proposed changes to Adult Social Care Grants and the Social Inclusion (Homelessness) services commissioned by the County Council. This report also provides recommendations and seeks approval for how these proposals will be implemented. If agreed, the proposals set out in this report would result in a combined funding reduction of £680,000 per annum. This funding reduction being part of the overall SP23 requirement on Adults' Health and Care.
14. This report sets out the proposals to cease three Adults' Health and Care grant schemes which directly fund grants to voluntary, community and social

enterprise (VCSE) organisations in order to deliver identified savings of £320,000 from April 2023. It also sets out proposals for changes to the continued delivery of homelessness services which would still mean continued funding of some £2m per annum, despite delivery of identified savings amounting to £360,000 from April 2023 onwards.

15. The report outlines and gives consideration to the responses received following a 6-week public consultation earlier this year on the proposals.
16. The report also provides details of the Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) that have been produced in respect of the proposals and delivered in full consideration of the consultation responses.
17. The report highlights the potential impacts of the proposals where applicable, especially in relation to those protected characteristics that may be affected and outlines potential mitigations for these.

Contextual information

18. Hampshire County Council will have to reduce its spending by at least £80 million by 31 March 2023 to deliver a balanced budget. This is due to reductions in Government funding, increasing demand for services, rising costs and inflation. With less money available and growing demand for council services, especially statutory services, tough decisions continue to need to be made about what the County Council can and cannot do in the future.
19. The County Council is required by law to deliver a balanced budget, and therefore cannot plan to spend more than is available. A combination of measures will be needed to address the budget shortfall, including increases in Council Tax and delivering savings from services. The public were consulted on the County Council's financial strategy in the Serving Hampshire – Balancing the Budget Consultation in Summer 2021, details of which can be found at:
www.hants.gov.uk/aboutthecouncil/haveyoursay/consultations/balancing-the-budget
20. The County Council's Adults' Health and Care Department has savings targets of £40.6m by 31 March 2023. Informed by feedback from the Balancing the Budget Consultation, proposals on how these savings could be achieved were developed by the Department. These were presented to the Executive Member for Adult Services and Public Health in September 2021 and were agreed by the Cabinet in October 2021 and then by the County Council in early November 2021.

The Public Consultation

21. The purpose of the public consultation was to gather views on the proposals being put forward to meet the budget reductions already agreed as part of the Balancing the Budget decisions taken by Full Council in November 2021. Permission to consult for the proposals on how to meet the budget reduction targets, was given by the Director of Adults' Health and Care in January 2022. A 6-week public consultation on the proposals was then carried out

from 7 February 2022 to 21 March 2022. This was considered an appropriate period for consultation given the cohorts and the number of people potentially impacted by the proposed changes, and taking into account other known factors such as public holidays. During this period, a range of stakeholders and partners were informed and engaged, including, but not limited to, service providers and grant funded organisations, individuals using the grant funded and Social Inclusion (Homelessness) services, Public Health, Health, and Local Authorities.

22. For each proposal the consultation sought to understand:
 - a. The extent to which residents and other stakeholders support the County Council's proposals for changes to services;
 - b. The potential impact of the proposed changes; and
 - c. Any alternative options that could achieve savings
23. 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. Paper copies of the information pack and response form were made available alongside easy read versions, with packs being distributed proactively via providers and in response to requests for access to the consultation in this format. Unstructured responses sent through other means such as email, letter or telephone calls were also accepted and analysed as feedback. Postal responses received after 21 March and up to 28 March were accepted and included in the consultation response, to account for any delays with the postal service.
24. The consultation was promoted through a range of channels, including but not limited to:
 - emails to local voluntary and community sector partners, District and Borough councils, MPs, NHS trusts, local carer networks, VCSE organisations, and Police and Fire service partners.
 - social media posts on Twitter and Facebook.
 - press release information for the local media; and on the County Council website
 - internal communications with staff at the County Council
25. The Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee established a Working Group to review and discuss each of the proposals and develop a series of recommendations. This working group met before, during and after the six-week public consultation period.
26. The findings of the public consultation exercise are attached at appendix C.

Adults Health and Care Grants

Service Background

27. As set out in the Care Act 2014, Hampshire County Council has a responsibility to prevent or delay people developing care and support needs.

The Adult Social Care grant programme is one of the ways that the County Council currently meets these responsibilities.

28. The grants budget is currently comprised of three grant schemes:
 - The Neighbourhood Care and Support grant.
 - The Community Based Support grant.
 - The Rural Connections grant.
29. Voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations which deliver services in Hampshire are able to apply for a grant to support Adults across Hampshire to continue to live independently in the community and delay, or prevent, the deterioration of their health and wellbeing. Currently, the grants are offered on a one to two-year cycle. The grants are awarded with no guarantee that the organisations currently holding the grants would be awarded them again, in subsequent cycles. Indeed, there is a stated onus receiving organisations not to rely on future awards and to look to find ways to operate sustainably beyond the grant period.
30. The grant schemes affected by this proposal all provide contributions to the funded organisations and do not cover the entire cost of the activity, with the contributions ranging from around a quarter to just over two thirds of the cost of the stated activity, depending on the grant scheme.
31. Other ways that the County Council meets the Care Act 2014 responsibilities, which are unaffected by this proposal, include:
 - Connect to Support Hampshire (the County Council's online information and advice service)
 - supporting unpaid carers;
 - supporting the Hampshire Social Prescriber Network; and
 - working with partners to increase volunteering capacity in voluntary preventative services.
 - working increasingly closely and collaboratively with the NHS, Public Health and other partners who share the same aims or responsibilities for minimising care and support needs.

Neighbourhood Care and Support grant scheme

32. The Neighbourhood Care and Support Grant scheme funds support and advice for neighbourhood-level organisations which focus on meeting the needs of socially isolated and/or frail adults, to help them live healthily and independently in their own homes. For 2022/23, £60,000 was awarded for this scheme.
33. In 2020, the current grant holder supported 118 community groups which, in turn, supported 25,835 individuals. This was slightly lower than usual due to Covid. In 2019, 27,444 individuals were supported.
34. Service users of these neighbourhood-level organisations are predominantly older people and include those:

- needing transport to attend health appointments (e.g. at a hospital or GP). (This is a key 'ask' for many community groups);
 - using befriending services or attending the groups' social clubs;
 - seeking transport for social reasons;
 - seeking shopping support and prescription collection (particularly during Covid); and
 - wanting assistance with DIY and other practical tasks.
35. The transport provided by the Neighbourhood Care and Support Grant, is separate to the Community Transport provision, that is funded by both the Economy Transport and Environment Department of the County Council, and the District and Borough Councils. In addition, there is also a separate volunteer driver scheme organised by the County Council to assist some adults to attend paid-for social care provision, which will remain unaffected.

Community Based Support grant scheme

36. The Community Based Support Grant scheme supports people aged 65 or over who are at risk of social isolation and diminished independence, by supporting them to live healthily and independently in their own homes. This is primarily achieved through organising opportunities to meet with others socially and/or take part in group physical exercise. For 2022/23, £240,000 was awarded from this scheme.
37. Between December 2020 and November 2021, the current grant holder supported 2,365 people aged 65 and over. An average of 2,119 individuals were supported each month.
38. Service users were predominantly people aged 65 and over, particularly those at risk of loneliness and reduced independence, including;
- older people with long term conditions (over 1,200);
 - older people with mental health needs (over 600);
 - older people with sensory impairment/loss (over 400);
 - older people who are unpaid carers (approximately 200).
39. Opportunities available include exercise classes, group walks, social clubs, befriending and group lunches, with transport arranged where necessary. Where additional user needs are identified, they are supported to access other services as required.

Rural Connections grant scheme

40. The Rural Connections grant scheme provides information and support for adults at risk of experiencing loneliness and social isolation in rural and semi-rural settings, connecting them to services, help and support needed, to enable them to live healthily and independently. For 2022/23, £20,000 was awarded from this scheme.
41. Between April 2021– December 2021, the current grant holder supported 297 people. Service users are typically older people:

- requiring support to complete benefit and concession forms, such as Attendance Allowance and Blue Badge applications;
- seeking community activities, groups and support, which promote wellbeing and reduce social isolation and loneliness;
- needing assistance with finding services, trades, help and support to remain independent, safe, well and healthy at home.

The Consultation Proposal

42. The County Council is proposing to stop the funding for the three Adult Social Care grant schemes (referenced above) which support VCSE organisations:
- Neighbourhood Care and Support grant scheme;
 - Community Based Support grant scheme; and
 - Rural Connections grant scheme.
43. Stopping these grant schemes would allow the County Council to reduce its grant budget by £320,000, which would be a contribution to the savings required by the County Council's (SP23) Savings Programme to 2023.
44. If this proposal is agreed, the funding for the Adult Social Care grants in question would not be available beyond March 2023.

Public Consultation Response Summary

45. For Adult Social Care Grants, 1663 responses were received to the consultation of which:
- 1565 were individual responses
 - 76 were organisational responses
 - 8 were from elected Members
 - 928 individual responses were from current service users
 - 91 individual responses were from former service users
46. Included within the consultation responses was a petition signed by 332 eligible signatories. The purpose as stated by the petitioner was, 'to keep Hampshire's Community Grants funding alive, ensuring that thousands of older people across Hampshire can still access vital services and receive the support they need. The petition objected to the proposal by Hampshire County Council to stop funding three Adult Social Care grant schemes. These responses were included in the number of respondents that disagree with the proposal.
47. 97% of respondents disagreed with the proposal to stop the funding for three Adult Social Care grant schemes, with 88% strongly disagreeing. This disagreement was across all subgroups.

Potential Impacts and Mitigations

48. The Public Consultation responses highlighted impacts to the intended beneficiaries of the affected grant funded services. Specific impacts were felt to be increased isolation/reduced social contact, reduced quality of life, reduced mobility and reduced independence. These potential impacts were also identified in the assessment of the proposal by officers prior to the consultation.
49. There are many other services provided by the VCSE sector, that also support people in similar ways to those supported by funded services. The increased awareness and use of 'Connect to Support Hampshire' the web-based tool that lists significant numbers of services by geography, can help signpost individuals, their families and carers to other similar services, if/where required. This will enable individuals to still attend provision designed to reduce isolation and increase social contact, such as other activity classes, social groups and befriending services. Connect to Support Hampshire will also help people find the other separately funded community transport provision in their area so they can still get to where they want to go.
50. The County Council intends, where possible, to utilise funding from other sources to support likely beneficiaries who may be impacted by the proposal to cease the three grant schemes. As an example, recently the County Council has begun to support adults most in need of help with increased living costs through the Government's Household Support Fund. For Hampshire, just over £7m is available to support individuals with at least a third of the Household Support Fund (approximately £2.7m) to be spent on people of pensionable age. Due to the purposes of the grant schemes affected by the proposal it is expected that there will be a strong association between the beneficiaries of the current grant schemes and the Household Support Fund with the latter being some 9 times the combined value of the former.
51. Another impact reported in the Consultation is on the funded organisations, volunteer groups and other services, who may struggle to provide their current service offer with greater financial costs and impact on the workforce and volunteers. Prior to the consultation, officers identified the risk to VCSE organisations that the funding provided via these grants may not be secured from alternative sources and that should these organisations wish to continue their services, then they would need to consider alternative options to meet any funding shortfall, such as:
 - securing alternative funding from a different grant or organisation;
 - asking service users to pay towards the service(s) they receive;
 - adjusting the service so it is less costly to provide.
52. Should the recommended proposal be approved, the County Council would continue to actively work with the current grant holders to explore ways that the services could continue to be sustained after the current grant award has ceased. One of the ways this could be done is by the County Council

signposting or applying and utilising funding from other sources and then making this available to Hampshire's VCSE organisations. A recent example of this is the 'Get Going Again' grant, where the County Council chose to use a portion of Government funding linked to Covid to grant fund activity provided by the VCSE sector to support those classified as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable, including people aged 70 and over. Through the Get Going Again fund £949,000 was distributed. This is some 3 times the value of the existing revenue funded grant schemes.

53. The County Council will continue to fund Infrastructure grants. These provide funding for the Council for Voluntary Services and Citizens Advice services in Hampshire to support the VCSE organisations working in Hampshire, e.g. with fundraising, training, support of volunteers (includes DBS checking), the operation of volunteer centres and ensuring policies are appropriate. These infrastructure grants will not be used for direct delivery of services, but may support voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations affected by the proposed stopping of the grant schemes.
54. Volunteering to support older adults will still continue and this will be supported by the CVS Network, and by the County Council. These bodies, alongside other partners including VCSE organisations, the NHS Integrated Care Systems and the University of Winchester, are also founding members of a recently formed Volunteer Research and Knowledge Hub, which will gather and share intelligence to help recruit and sustain volunteering in Hampshire.
55. Should the proposal be approved, this may increase demand on grants available from other parts of the County Council (e.g. Members' and Leaders' grants) or other funding agencies (e.g. Public Health, the NHS, District and Borough Councils and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner) as organisations seek alternative sources of funding. The County Council will continue to work with partner agencies to maximise, coordinate and align funding and associated processes across the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector to ensure funding is allocated where it is most needed, whilst also seeking to align and streamline the associated administration and monitoring to ensure that as much funding can be spent on delivery and not on administration.

Adult Social Care Grants Recommendation

56. It is recommended that in relation to the proposal to stop the following grant schemes:
 - a. the Neighbourhood Care and Support grant scheme;
 - b. the Community based Support Grant scheme; and
 - c. the Rural Connections grant scheme
57. That the Executive Member for Adult Services and Public Health notes that robust monitoring of the impact of any change will be established and enacted so that officers and providers can respond with any appropriate mitigation as required.

Social Inclusion (Homelessness) Services

Service Background

58. Services supporting people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness are commissioned and delivered across a range of stakeholders, including District, Borough and City Councils, health, charitable and voluntary organisations, and upper tier local authorities. Services currently commissioned, or funded, by the County Council sit as part of a network of services and have been developed in partnership with other statutory bodies. The responsibility for the elimination of homelessness sits with the eleven District, Borough and City Councils, while the County Council is responsible for ensuring eligible Adult Social Care needs can be met.
59. Hampshire County Council's homelessness services are funded through the County Council's Adult's Health and Care budget, with additional funding from District, Borough and City Council contributions in some areas enhancing the local service offer. The current Hampshire County Council annual budget for 2022/23 for these services is £2.4m.
60. The County Council currently funds two types of homelessness services:
 - Accommodation-based support;
 - Outreach and community-based support
61. Homelessness accommodation-based services are available to single people aged 18 or over who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Priority may be given to those who have an eligible need under the Care Act 2014. People using these services may have mental health or substance misuse issues and are referred into the service through their Local Housing Authority.
62. Accommodation-based services are delivered through a two-stage model. Stage 1 which has staff available on site 24/7 and provides more intensive support to individuals, and stage 2 promoting more independence with less intensive support.
63. The community support services are available to individuals, couples or families, regardless of tenure, who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and may have additional needs that are exacerbating or preventing them from addressing their housing situation without support.
64. Homelessness Support services help people to access their full entitlement of benefits, attend appointments for benefit assessments and resolve issues with benefit claims. They also help people budget on a low income, access debt advice and prioritise rent payments. For those recovering from homelessness, support to access training courses, voluntary work, education and employment is available. Pre-employment activities are provided to support vulnerable people who are not yet ready to engage with more mainstream employment support. These services also help to ensure those recovering from homelessness are accessing their appointments with other agencies such as accessing help with addictions through the inclusion team and attending appointments with their social work team should they have one.

65. During the financial year 2020-21 throughout Hampshire, approximately 460 people were supported in accommodation-based services and 734 through a community support or outreach service. While most services are commissioned by Hampshire County Council, services in Basingstoke and Deane are commissioned and managed by the Borough Council using a grant provided by Hampshire County Council from within the current £2.4m homelessness services budget.

The Consultation Proposal

66. Hampshire County Council is proposing to continue to invest over £2m per annum in the delivery of Social Inclusion services, which would represent a reduction to the annual budget of £360,000, whilst still ensuring the strategic objectives of the County Council can be maintained.
67. In partnership with key stakeholders, the County Council developed a set of principles which aimed to take into account; service risks, the variety of other services available, and the duties of the County Council. A series of options for how these priorities could be delivered within a reduced budget were developed and assessed, and a model that was felt to best meet these principles was selected for consultation.
68. The model consulted on proposes that this is accomplished by:
- Enabling investment that prioritises the needs of the most vulnerable service users
 - Protecting and prioritising accommodation-based services
 - Balancing local need against available resources
 - Delivering a range of services, within a reduced budget, helping to ensure that Hampshire County Council budgets are utilised in a way which best meets the need of people with eligible care needs
 - Enabling any District, Borough or City Council that wishes, to still maintain the ability to be deliver services themselves by way of a grant
 - Recognising that a vast range of other specific services continue to exist District by District, commissioned by a range of partners and that closer collaboration across these services will reduce the risks presented by the proposed funding reduction
69. Accommodation based services would be prioritised, however by ensuring that community support is available in those locations where access to a stage 1 service would mean travel out of area, we are ensuring a county wide provision of service. Through this we will be protecting those services which each area considers most valuable and enabling the County Council to continue to work across the sector and with partners to ensure that service users are directed to the most appropriate alternative services for their needs. This will be achieved by improving connections, joint working, co-location and signposting between services.

70. The following table outlines the proposed breakdown of changes for consideration.

District	Current County Council Spend	Proposed services to be delivered	Proposed Remaining funding
Basingstoke and Deane	£428,509	Maintain Stage One and funding towards maintaining Stage Two accommodation	£376,000
Eastleigh Borough Council	£50,923	Funding towards maintaining Stage Two accommodation	£36,000
Fareham and Gosport Borough Councils	£436,651	Maintain Stage One accommodation and some outreach/ community support	£370,620
Havant Borough and East Hants District Councils	£285,427	Funding towards maintaining Stage Two accommodation in each area and reduced community support in each area	£202,984
Hart District Council and Rushmoor Borough Council	£355,285	Maintain Stage One accommodation	£334,620
New Forest District Council	£46,167	Reduced Community support provision	£36,000
Test Valley Borough Council	£374,610	Funding towards maintaining Stage One accommodation	£334,620
Winchester City council	£410,483	Maintain Stage One accommodation and reduce funding for Winchester Beacon	£337,211
Total	£2,388,055		£2,028,055

71. Please note, the numbers in the above table are based on 2021/22 values, and do not reflect any uplifts or inflationary pressures applied before April 2023. Similarly, the numbers reflected here would be subject to a tender process.

72. This proposal would refocus County Council funding away from community support, reducing these services in some areas or see it stop all together in others. Community support services are those that help people to resettle into their own accommodation following a stay in stage one or stage two accommodation. Community support may also be used as a preventative measure when someone is at risk of homelessness. It is anticipated that this

reduction/ cessation would impact on approximately 350 people, with the majority of these being in the Havant and East Hampshire District areas.

73. This proposal would also see the County Council's funding for outreach services in some areas reduced or stopped. Outreach services are those which work with individuals who are street homeless.
74. Those people who need to access support may not be able to access as much support or may not be able to access support in the same locations.

Public Consultation Response Summary

75. For Social Inclusion services, 509 responses were received to the consultation of which
 - 473 were individual responses
 - 27 were organisational responses
 - 6 were from elected Members
 - 33 individual responses were from current service users
 - 16 individual responses were from former service users
76. 90% of responses disagreed with the November 2021 Balancing the Budget decision to reduce the funding by £360,000, with 75% of responses strongly disagreeing. This disagreement was across all subgroups.
77. While the majority disagreed with the decision to reduce the funding, highlighting a preference for increasing, rather than decreasing funding; the majority of respondents did not challenge the principles or proposals put forward, upon which those reductions could be made.
78. 83% of responses highlighted an impact on the protected characteristics of poverty, with a further 58% and 54% highlighting impacts on disability and age respectively.
79. Concerns were raised about the impact the changes may have if implemented. The key risks and impacts highlighted by the consultation on the proposals for how the budget reductions could be implemented were:
 - That the focus was on those most vulnerable and only on accommodation-based services. This could lead to more people falling into the vulnerable category and therefore see an increased demand for services (21%) but with decreased capacity (26%) to meet this demand. Some highlighted the fact that this could increase the risk of people falling between services.
 - 60% of respondents highlighted the need for services stating this is especially relevant when looking at the increased cost of living, impact of Covid-19 and the effects of austerity measures.
80. Of the responses received 50% expressed a concern regarding an impact on service users including:
 - Increased mental health issues
 - Increased substance misuse/ addiction
 - Increased suffering/ stress/ fear/ insecurity

- Increased violence/ crime
81. Impacts highlighted by the unstructured responses concur with those impacts outlined above.
 82. A full detailed report on the consultation responses is available in Appendix C.

Potential Impacts and Mitigations

83. The continued investment of £2m per annum, focused on areas which support the most vulnerable, and those which support the County Councils statutory duties to ensure people's eligible care needs are met, will allow the County Council to continue to play a valuable role in this multi-agency area, whilst continuing to meet its budgetary responsibilities.
84. The consultation responses highlighted the impacts the changes may have on individuals with multiple needs, such as Mental Health and/or Substance Misuse problems; possibly with additional issues such as learning or physical disabilities and offending behaviour. The proposed changes to services may mean that this group find it more challenging to access and maintain accommodation.
85. The proposal is designed to prioritise Stage One and Stage Two accommodation-based support; only delivering outreach and community-based support in those areas where Stage One or Stage Two accommodation-based support is not available.
86. Although there will be individuals with complex and multiple needs accessing community support, those most vulnerable and at-risk individuals are usually resident within accommodation-based services. In addition, it is these residents who tend to have care and support needs which their accommodation-based support is helping to meet.
87. Individuals accessing community-based support are often those with a housing support need which should be met by the District and Borough Councils.
88. The model proposed is designed to:
 - Enable investment that prioritises the needs of the most vulnerable service users
 - prioritise accommodation-based services as part of a wider network of services commissioned and delivered by a range of organisations, and provide community support services in areas with reduced access to accommodation-based facilities
 - deliver a range of services, within a reduced budget and ensure Hampshire County Council budgets are utilised in a way which best meets the need of people with eligible care needs
89. During the process a range of services working in this space were identified, including, but not limited to, Mental Health and Substance Misuse services, as well as services delivered and commissioned by Health or District Housing Departments in line with their statutory duties.

90. Work is already underway to improve links and working between these services, building on arrangements built up over the pandemic, including local forums, changes to other services and co-location of service delivery. By continuing to improve joint-working arrangements, improve awareness and visibility between services, services will be able to work more effectively together to successfully support individuals to avoid homelessness.
91. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) was undertaken prior to the Balancing the Budget Consultation and has been reviewed multiple times throughout the process including after the results of the balancing the budget consultation, prior to the consultation on the proposals and following the analysis of the results of the consultation on the proposals. The EIA identified a number of potential impacts on protected characteristics, specifically in relation to disability, poverty and rurality. These same impacts were identified during the public consultation on the proposals.
92. However, with Hampshire County Council playing its part in the delivery of accommodation-based services for the most vulnerable and improving coordination and joint working between services stepping into this space; the challenges identified through this consultation in terms of pressure on other parts of the system and changes in demand as well as the impacts on those protected characteristics as highlighted above, could be mitigated.
93. Hampshire County Council will continue its positive relationship with the District, Borough and City Councils in this space to identify any potential for alternative sources of funding or provision, either to run alongside these services, or to add to them as they have previously. The County Council will also continue to work with District, Borough and City Councils who wish to deliver, or commission services themselves by way of a grant. Work will also continue to closely monitor any impact these reductions may have on other County Council services.
94. In addition, Hampshire County Council will look to develop multi-agency partnerships within District and Borough localities to discuss and develop action plans for key at risk individuals helping to ensure that as appropriate Hampshire is meeting its statutory duty to assess individuals social care needs.

Social Inclusion (Homelessness) Recommendations

95. Approves the strategy for delivering homelessness services in Hampshire as detailed in this report and the reduction in Hampshire's funding of £360,000 for homelessness services from April 2023.
96. Subject to the recommendation above being approved, gives approval to spend up to £6.3million for a period of up to 3 years on the delivery of homelessness services as set out in this report from April 2023.
97. Delegates authority to the Director for Adults' Health and Care to finalise spend for contracts up to the amount outlined above following any decisions made by Districts and Boroughs with regards to possible contributions towards homelessness services

98. Notes that the above proposed spend is based on anticipated District/ Borough contributions and is subject to decisions by District/ Borough Councils.
99. Gives approval to awarding grants to Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, New Forest District Council and Winchester City Council subject to their decision-making processes, up to a maximum annual value of:
- Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council £376,000
 - New Forest District Council £36,000
 - Winchester City Council £24,500
100. Delegates authority to the Director for Adults' Health and Care to finalise the amount of the grants up to the value outlined above subject to agreement by the aforementioned District and Borough Councils.
101. Notes that the County Council will continue its positive relationship with District, Borough and City Councils to identify additional sources of funding to help enhance the county wide offer in line with their statutory duties in this space.

Finance

102. The net savings from these proposals, that have been included in the County Council's Savings Programme to 2023 would be £680,000.
103. The savings would take effect from April 2023.

Legal Implications

104. Local authorities have a duty under the Equality Act 2010 section 149 to have due regard to the need to: eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it; and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
105. Local Authorities also have a duty under the Care Act (2014) to ensure that people's eligible Adult Social Care needs can be met.

Equalities Impact Assessment

106. A full equalities Impact Assessment of these proposals has been carried out and can be found at Appendices A and B of this document.
107. In relation to the recommendation to stop the three adults' health and care schemes, if the proposal is approved, County Council staff will work to support organisations find and secure funding from other sources, while continuing to ensure that VCSE sector and partners (Health and Local Councils) are provided with insight and data (such as demographics, risk factors to social care) to ensure that support continues to be targeted to those most at risk of needing social care (this in particular includes the following characteristics and groups: Age, Disability, Poverty and Rurality).

108. In relation to the proposal to stop the three Adults' Health and Care grant schemes the four protected characteristics and groups of Age, Disability, Poverty and Rurality have the negative impact rated as medium (not high) because the services affected are not fully funded by AHC grants. These same impacts were identified during the public consultation on the proposals.
109. In summary, the EIA for the Social Inclusion (homelessness) identified a number of impacts on protected characteristics that may arise as a result of the proposals, specifically in relation to disability, as well as potential impacts on the characteristics of poverty and rurality. These same impacts were identified during the public consultation on the proposals. The impacts were classified as high.
110. However, with Hampshire County Council playing its part in the delivery of accommodation-based services for the most vulnerable and improving coordination and joint working between services stepping into this space; as well as Hampshire County Council's continued positive relationships with the District, Borough and City Councils and intention to develop multi-agency partnerships within localities to discuss and develop action plans for key at risk individuals; it is believed the challenges identified through this consultation in terms of pressure on other parts of the system and changes in demand as well as the impacts on those protected characteristics as highlighted above, could be mitigated.

Climate Change Impact

111. Hampshire County Council uses two decision-making tools to assess the carbon emissions and resilience impacts of its projects and decisions. These tools provide a clear, robust, and transparent way of assessing how projects, policies and initiatives contribute towards the County Council's climate change targets of being carbon neutral and resilient to the impacts of a 2C temperature rise by 2050. This process ensures that climate change considerations are built into everything the Authority does.
112. Having reviewed the proposals against the decision-making tools, no key vulnerabilities have been identified with respect to climate change. In respect of the Adult Social Care grant recommendations, the removal of funding is not expected to have a direct impact on climate change, as the grant funding is a contribution to the running costs of funded initiatives and do not cover the total operational costs of the funded services. As part of the mitigating actions of the Adult Social Care grant recommendations, relationships will be maintained with funded organisations and if vulnerabilities in respect of climate change are identified in the future, they will be reported with appropriate mitigations sought.

Conclusions

113. This report has outlined the proposal to stop three Adults' Health and Care grant schemes saving £320,000 and the proposal to continue to invest £2m per annum into Homelessness services, representing a reduction to the

County Council's funding of £360,000 from April 2023 onwards to help meet the Adult's Health and Care's SP23 savings target.

114. The report has considered the responses to the public consultation on the proposals when developing its recommendation.
115. The report has also provided details of the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) that has been produced in respect of the proposals and reviewed in light of the consultation responses.
116. The report highlights the potential impacts where applicable of the proposal, especially in relation to those protected characteristics that may be affected and outlines potential mitigations for these.

DRAFT

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND 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> Medium Term Financial Strategy Update and Savings Programme to 2023 Savings Proposals Agenda for County Council on Thursday, 4th November, 2021, 10.20 am About the Council Hampshire County Council (hants.gov.uk)	<u>Date</u> 4 November 2021
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents	
<p>The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)</p>	
<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

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 by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) 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 protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are 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 in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

Please see appendices A and B.

Appendix A – Adult Social Care Grants EIA

Title: SP23 To stop the funding for three Hampshire County Council adult social care grant schemes

Service affected: Adult Social Care Grants

Description of the service/policy/project/project phase:

Adults' Health and Care (AHC) currently has an Adult Social Care Grants programme which provides grant funding each year to the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector in Hampshire to help deliver services that are targeted to adults most at risk of needing social care. Responsibility for managing this grant programme sits with the Demand Management and Prevention Change Unit (DMPCU).

New/changed service/policy/project:

As part of the Savings Programme 2023, the proposal is to stop three Adult Social Care Grant Schemes:

1. Neighbourhood Care and Support Grant
2. Community Based Support Grant
3. Rural Connections Grant

The above grants are funded through revenue funding and so the funding is available every year unless a decision is made to remove the budget (as per the consultation). The proposal does not relate to other grants currently awarded by DMPCU. Some of these remaining grants may have also stopped by April 2023 as they are funded from finite funding and when the budgets are fully used, the awards will stop.

Engagement:

In addition to the engagement work set out in EIA 195 (published in February 2022), the following consultation and engagement work has been undertaken.

When we first contacted the current grant holders re supporting engagement with service users, the initial response was that the organisations were in the best position to highlight the consultation with their service users / members. Subsequently, MHA Communities asked for support to capture the feedback of members from 4 service settings. We attended these settings and completed the online consultation with each member that wanted to participate, ensuring their views were captured as part of the consultation.

To support all service users interested in participating to access and respond to the consultation, the consultation was produced in a variety of formats:

- Standard online consultation
- Easy Read online

- Paper copies of the standard consultation
- Paper copies in Easy Read
- Paper copies in large print
- Hard copy leaflets highlighting the consultation

These were available on request to the public and batches were also sent as requested directly to the 3 current grant holders and Hampshire CVSs. Braille and audio formats were offered but none were requested.

Email and phone contact was available throughout the consultation to support engagement.

Midway through the consultation, the opportunity was highlighted again via direct communications to stakeholders, newsletters, media and social media and promotion through the library network and Home Library Service.

1,663 responses to the consultation were received, with 97% disagreeing with the proposal and 88% strongly disagreeing. However, the impacts reported, particularly in relation to Protected Characteristics were in line with those already identified in EIA 195. When reporting the impacts the proposed changes to HCC's Adult Social Care grants might have on them, of the 1,207 responses, 40% mentioned a Protected Characteristic.

When specifically asked about the impacts on Protected Characteristics, of the 1,169 responses:

- 92% referred to Age (often linked in combination with other Protected Characteristics)
- 69% referred to Disability
- 42% referred to Poverty
- 36% referred to Rurality

The next Protected Characteristic mentioned was Race at 6%.

The consultation responses on Protected Characteristics potentially impacted by this proposal match those already planned for. Therefore, the proposed mitigation actions remain as per EIA 195. We take any possible impact on a Protected Characteristic seriously and for this reason the mitigation actions previously identified will be put in place should the proposal be approved.

Equalities considerations- Impact Assessment

Age

Impact on public: Negative - Medium

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale:

All 3 grant streams involved in this proposal support individuals with this protected characteristic because they support older adults. Over 23,000 older adults have

been directly supported by the funding in the past year. AHC has grant funded some of these services for a number of years. Older Adults are also a key client group in terms of the current Adult Social Care grant priorities. Without mitigating action, the proposed changes could affect:

- Older people at risk of loneliness and / or frailty
- Older people who would benefit from support to live safely and independently at home, engaged with the community
- Older people living in rural and semi-rural settings, who are at risk of social isolation
- Older people living in rural and semi-rural settings, who would benefit from information and advice to support them to live safely and independently at home, engaged with the community
- Older people who need transport to attend health appointments
- Older people seeking transport for social reasons
- Older people seeking shopping support and prescription collection
- Older people wanting assistance with gardening or DIY
- Older people with long term conditions
- Older people with mental health needs
- Older people with sensory impairment/loss
- Older people who are unpaid carers
- Older people requiring support to complete Attendance Allowance applications
- Older people requiring support to complete Blue Badge applications

The potential impact is rated as medium(not high) because the services affected are not fully funded by AHC grants. AHC funding accounts for approximately:

- 55% of the service funded by the Neighbourhood Care and Support Grant
- 25% of the service funded by the Community Based Support Grant 60% of the service funded by the Rural Connections Grant
- In addition, there are over 300,000 people aged 65 and over in Hampshire.[1] Therefore these services do not serve the majority of older people Hampshire, although they do contribute to the wellbeing of those that use them.

In the Public Consultation 92% of the responses highlighted the impact on Age and did not identify any further impacts beyond those detailed in EIA195.

[1] [AgeingProfile-FinalDraft-March15.pdf \(hants.gov.uk\)](#)

Mitigation:

- Continuing to fund the Infrastructure grants. These provide funding for the Council for Voluntary Services and Citizens Advice Hampshire to support the community and voluntary organisations working in Hampshire.
- Proposed to provide fundraising support to voluntary and community organisations supporting adults at risk of declining health and wellbeing (particularly organisations supporting adults with protected characteristics)

to continue to live healthily and independently in their Hampshire communities.

- Promoting use of potential funding from other parts of the County Council e.g. members' grants and leaders' grants
- Continuing to work closely with partners, including the District and Borough Councils, the NHS and the Voluntary and Community Sector. Together we can look at funding available and services already in place that could support any users that are affected by the proposal.
- Providing free training support for voluntary and community organisation staff whose focus is working adults at risk of declining health and wellbeing (particularly organisations supporting adults with protected characteristics), e.g. online training for volunteers on how to identify any risks faced by service users and how they could be addressed, advice on how to best use a Strength Based Approach (support a person to use all the strengths and resources they already have) and guides on how to support clients who raise mental health concerns.
- Running sessions with social care teams, voluntary and community groups to increase understanding of how to access AHC support and services, how technology can support people to live safely at home and how to access IT and equipment that supports wellbeing at home.
- Signposting users to alternative provision where possible. For example, if any social groups stop, it may be possible to redirect users to an alternative social group. Where volunteer drivers are required, alternative options could include any existing CVS volunteer driver services/ HCC's volunteer drivers.
- Continuing to use our Connect to Support Hampshire website to provide information about local community services available to residents.
- Continuing to support people to successfully carry out tasks online. This will support individuals to use online support, such as Connect to Support Hampshire, to find out about local services, including social groups and group exercise opportunities.
- Continuing to work with voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations that support older people, to increase the number of volunteers in Hampshire. This can be through research, marketing and the sharing of ideas.

Disability

Impact on public: Negative - Medium

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale:

A proportion of service users supported by all 3 grant schemes included in this proposal have this protected characteristic. The impairments faced by disabled service users vary. However, the physical and / or mental impairments have a substantial and long-term adverse effect on service users' ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. All 3 currently funded services support users holistically and not all specifically record whether a user is disabled. We do know that last year, the Community Based Support Grant supported over:

- 1,200 older adults with long term conditions

- 600 older adults with mental health needs
- 400 older adults with sensory impairment/loss

The Rural Connections Grant supports individuals to obtain Attendance Allowance. In the past 6 months, 19 individuals were supported to claim. To be eligible, the applicant must have a long-term physical or mental illness or disability. The negative impact is rated as medium (not high) because the services affected are not fully funded by AHC grants. AHC funding accounts for approximately:

- 55% of the service funded by the Neighbourhood Care and Support Grant
- 25% of the service funded by the Community Based Support Grant
- 60% of the service funded by the Rural Connections Grant

In addition, there are approximately 88,000 people in Hampshire with a long-term health problem or disability which greatly limits their day-to-day activities [1]. Therefore, these services do not serve the majority of disabled people Hampshire, although they do contribute to the wellbeing of those that use them.

In the Public Consultation 69% of the responses highlighted the impact on Disability and did not identify any further impacts beyond those detailed in EIA195.

[1] [Living well 2016 to 2019 | Health and social care | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://www.hants.gov.uk/living-well-2016-to-2019-health-and-social-care)

Mitigation:

These are the same as those detailed in the Mitigation/Actions section for Age.

Gender Reassignment

Impact on public: Neutral

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale:

The three Adult Social Care Grant Schemes affected by the proposal don't specifically support individuals with this protected characteristic. It is also not specifically included as one of the target characteristics in terms of current Adult Social Care grant programme priorities.

The Public Consultation highlighted no further impacts beyond those detailed in EIA195.

Mitigation: N/A

Pregnancy and Maternity

Impact on public: Neutral

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale:

The three Adult Social Care Grant Schemes affected by the proposal don't specifically support individuals with this protected characteristic. It is also not specifically included as one of the target characteristics in terms of current Adult Social Care grant programme priorities.

The Public Consultation highlighted no further impacts beyond those detailed in EIA195.

Mitigation: N/A

Race

Impact on public: Neutral

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale:

The three Adult Social Care Grant Schemes affected by the proposal don't specifically support individuals with this protected characteristic. It is also not specifically included as one of the target characteristics in terms of current Adult Social Care grant programme priorities.

The Public Consultation highlighted no further impacts beyond those detailed in EIA195.

Mitigation: N/A

Religion or Belief

Impact on public: Neutral

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale:

The three Adult Social Care Grant Schemes affected by the proposal don't specifically support individuals with this protected characteristic. It is also not specifically included as one of the target characteristics in terms of current Adult Social Care grant programme priorities.

The Public Consultation highlighted no further impacts beyond those detailed in EIA195.

Mitigation: N/A

Sex

Impact on public: Neutral

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale:

The three Adult Social Care Grant Schemes affected by the proposal don't specifically support individuals with this protected characteristic. It is also not specifically included as one of the target characteristics in terms of current Adult Social Care grant programme priorities.

The Public Consultation highlighted no further impacts beyond those detailed in EIA195.

Mitigation: N/A

Sexual Orientation

Impact on public: Neutral

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale:

The three Adult Social Care Grant Schemes affected by the proposal don't specifically support individuals with this protected characteristic. It is also not specifically included as one of the target characteristics in terms of current Adult Social Care grant programme priorities.

The Public Consultation highlighted no further impacts beyond those detailed in EIA195.

Mitigation: N/A

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Impact on public: Neutral

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale:

The three Adult Social Care Grant Schemes affected by the proposal don't specifically support individuals with this protected characteristic. It is also not specifically included as one of the target characteristics in terms of current Adult Social Care grant programme priorities.

The Public Consultation highlighted no further impacts beyond those detailed in EIA195.

Mitigation: N/A

Poverty

Impact on public: Negative - Medium

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale:

The 3 grant schemes included in the proposal do not specifically support people with this protected characteristic. However, a number of adults living in poverty will be supported by the grant funded services.

In addition, those in poverty could be more affected if services close or reduce due to removal of the grant funding. Although members that cannot afford to pay don't pay for the services, at least one service does charge a small amount for services. If organisations have to stop less economically viable parts of the service, they may stop in areas of higher deprivation where service users are less able to make a contribution towards service costs.

A potential impact on those in poverty is that one grant support individuals to claim attendance allowance. Between October 2020 to September 2021, Rural Connections grant funding supported individuals to obtain annual benefits worth £229,000. Attendance Allowance is not means tested and so the benefits have not only supported those in poverty and are likely to have had some impact on reducing poverty.

Those in living in poverty could be more affected if services close or reduce due to removal of the grant revenue budget. If organisations have to stop less economically viable parts of the service, they may stop in areas of higher deprivation where service users are less able to make a contribution towards service costs.

The negative impact of the proposed change is rated as medium (not high) because the services affected are not fully funded by AHC grants. AHC funding accounts for approximately:

- 55% of the service funded by the Neighbourhood Care and Support Grant
- 25% of the service funded by the Community Based Support Grant
- 60% of the service funded by the Rural Connections Grant

In addition, the projects are not specifically targeting individuals living in poverty.

In the Public Consultation 42% of the responses highlighted the impact on Poverty and did not identify any further impacts beyond those detailed in EIA195.

Mitigation:

These are the same as those detailed in the Mitigation/Actions section for Age.

Rurality

Impact on public: Negative - Medium

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale:

All 3 grants included in this proposal support individuals living in rural areas. The Community Information Service (which supported 188 people from April – September 2021) specifically supports older people living in rural and semi-rural areas and AHC has grant funded this service for a number of years.

The impact is rated as medium (not high) because the services affected are not fully funded by AHC grants. AHC funding accounts for approximately:

- 55% of the service funded by the Neighbourhood Care and Support Grant
- 25% of the service funded by the Community Based Support Grant
- 60% of the service funded by the Rural Connections Grant

There are close to 300,000 people living in Hampshire's rural areas [1]. Therefore, these services do not serve the majority of people living in rural Hampshire, although they do contribute to the wellbeing of those that do use them.

Those in rural Hampshire could be more affected than urban counterparts if services close or reduce due to removal of the grant budget. If organisations have to stop less economically viable parts of the service, they may stop in rural areas where service users are more dispersed and so service provision can be more expensive.

In the Public Consultation 36% of the responses highlighted the impact on Rurality and did not identify any further impacts beyond those detailed in EIA195.

[1] [Socio-economic profile of rural Hampshire 2016 \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://www.hants.gov.uk/socio-economic-profile-of-rural-hampshire-2016)

Mitigation:

These are the same as those detailed in the Mitigation/Actions section for Age.

Equality Statement

Additional information:

While the consultation responses indicate a high level of disagreement with the proposal, no further impacts have been identified beyond what was identified in the initial EIA (EIA-AHC-DMPCUGRANTS-2022/01/10, published in February 2022).

Overview Statement: Assessment to show that due regard has been given and that there is no requirement for a full EIA:

DRAFT

Appendix B – Reduction in funding for Homelessness services EIA

Title: SP23 reduction in funding for Social inclusion services (homelessness support services)

Service affected: Social inclusion services (homelessness support services)

Description of the service/policy/project/project phase:

Social inclusion services provide housing related support for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Services support people with mental health support needs, substance misuse issues and those with a history of offending.

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.

Hampshire County Council currently funds support services for 190 homeless people living in accommodation based (supported housing) schemes.

The Council also funds community support for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness who have complex and multiple needs and require support to access or maintain accommodation. Approximately 200 people use community support services at any one time

New/changed service/policy/project:

The proposed reduction in the Adults' Health and Care budget available for these services resulting in fewer people being able to access support and an increased demand for homelessness services provided by district and borough councils.

The statutory responsibility to prevent and relieve homelessness sits with the district and borough councils, however Adults Health and Care currently commission a range of accommodation based and community support services for people who are homeless.

Whilst fewer people would be able to access the specialist services funded by Adults' Health and Care, these services would continue to be available for people who are homeless and may have eligible care and support needs as a result of mental health and/or substance misuse or other complex needs.

Engagement:

The County Council ran a consultation exercise over the Summer 2021 on a range of options for finding further budget savings including increasing Council Tax, using reserves and making changes to the way services are delivered, which may mean reducing or withdrawing certain services. The outcome of this consultation was presented to the County Council's Cabinet in October 2021 and

Full Council in November 2021. This included agreement to pursue the option to reduce the Social Inclusion budget by £360,000.

The respondents to this consultation were not felt to be representative of the people affected by changes to services with fewer responses from those in lower income groups or who recognise that they use Adults Health and Care services. In addition, it was not possible to identify respondents to the consultation who may be homeless or at risk of homelessness. Following publication of the initial findings from the County Council's Serving Hampshire, Balancing the Budget consultation (2021-2023) there has been extensive engagement with district and borough councils, Public Health and health partners to review the future provision of these services and explore opportunities for pooled funding arrangements in recognition that these services cut across housing, social care and health needs. Engagement has also taken place with other key stakeholders including Hampshire Constabulary. This engagement resulted in partners agreeing a preferred way forward for the reduction of the funding. This included prioritising support in accommodation-based settings, and into those services that help the most vulnerable; and delivering outreach and community-based support in those areas where accommodation-based settings may not be available.

This proposal was subject to a 6 week public consultation period from 7th February 2022 to 21st March 2022. The consultation was widely promoted through a range of communication channels including emails to stakeholders, newsletters, social media posts, and press releases. The consultation Information Pack and Response Form were made available both digitally and in hard copy in standard and Easy Read formats, with other formats available on request. Unstructured responses could be submitted via email or letter.

509 responses were received to the consultation of which

- 473 were individual responses
- 27 were organisational responses
- 6 were from elected Members
- 33 individual responses were from current service users

- 16 individual responses were from former service users
- 90% of responses disagree with the proposal to reduce funding with 75% of responses strongly disagreeing. This disagreement was across all subgroups.

83% of responses highlighted an impact on those facing or experiencing poverty with a further 58% and 54% highlighting impacts on the protected characteristics of disability and age respectively.

Equalities considerations- Impact Assessment

Age

Impact on public: Neutral

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale:

Services support people aged between 18 and 64 and above where this is the most appropriate service to meet their needs. 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 services. 54% of responses to the consultation highlighted a potential impact on people related to age.

Access to services following the proposed reduction in budget would not be prevented on the basis of age.

Disability

Impact on public: Negative - High

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale:

In an analysis of client need completed in April 2020, it was found that over 60% of clients have mental health issues and more than 80% have substance misuse issues. A significant number also have poor physical health resulting from long term substance misuse and unmet health needs due to issues accessing services.

A significant number of client's receive Employment Support Allowance (ESA) because of illness or disability.

Mitigations:

There has been and will continue to be extensive engagement with district council and health partners to review the future provision of these services and explore opportunities for pooled funding arrangements in recognition that these services cut across housing, social care and health needs.

Any changes to services would ensure that provision focuses on meeting the needs of the most vulnerable clients with multiple and complex needs.

The County Council would ensure that anybody affected by the proposals that may have eligible care and support needs as defined by the Care Act 2014 can have their needs assessed by the County Council. Following assessment, they would be offered services to meet eligible needs or signposted to other community services.

People with substance misuse issues can access support through the specialist substance misuse services commissioned by the County Council. Services can offer support through outreach and in partnership with other organisations to increase the uptake of the service offer by harder to reach client groups

Where people seek homelessness prevention or relief support from district and borough councils, housing advisors can refer those with additional support needs to other County Council funded support services, including drug and alcohol services, Wellbeing Centres, and for assessment under the Care Act 2014.

Lastly, the County Council will be looking to work in partnership with the district and Borough Councils to establish local partnership groups to identify, prioritise and establish action plans for those most vulnerable within their districts.

Gender Reassignment

Impact on public: Neutral

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale:

Access to services following the proposed reduction in budget would not be prevented on the basis of gender reassignment and available data regarding use of services does not indicate that this group will be impacted by changes in this provision.

Pregnancy/Maternity

Impact on public: Neutral

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale:

Access to services following the proposed reduction in budget would not be prevented on the basis of pregnancy or maternity and available data regarding use of services does not indicate that this group will be impacted by changes in this provision. Equalities data from 20/21 will be used to further understand the current use of services.

Race

Impact on public: Neutral

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale:

Access to services following the proposed reduction in budget would not be prevented on the basis of race. Equalities data from 20/21 will be used to further understand the current use of services

Religion/Belief

Impact on public: Neutral

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale:

Access to services following the proposed reduction in budget would not be prevented on the basis of religion or belief. Equalities data from 20/21 will be used to further understand the current use of services.

Sex

Impact on public: Neutral

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale:

All Homelessness Support services commissioned by the county council 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, however service providers have noticed an increase in females accessing accommodation-based support.

Whilst access to services following the proposed reduction in budget would not be prevented on the basis of age, an impact may be identified if one element of service provision is reduced more than another

Sexual Orientation

Impact on public: Neutral

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale:

Access to services following the proposed reduction in budget would not be prevented on the basis of sexual orientation. Equalities data from 20/21 will be used to further understand the current use of services

Marriage/Civil Partnership

Impact on public: Neutral

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale:

Access to services following the proposed reduction in budget would not be prevented on the basis of marriage/civil partnership. Equalities data from 20/21 will be used to further understand the current use of services

Poverty

Impact on public: Negative - High

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale:

Available data shows that the majority of people using Homelessness Support services are in receipt of welfare benefits. Many clients come to the attention of services when they are facing eviction due to rent arrears.

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 and increased sanctions. Services also help people budget on a low income, access debt advice and prioritise rent payments. Whilst alternative services are available, clients with complex needs often need support to engage with more mainstream

service offers or are excluded from these services due to behaviour or substance misuse.

For those recovering from homelessness, support to access training courses, voluntary work, education and employment is available. 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 the services available and may result in more people being unable to navigate the benefits system without support or being sanctioned. Subsequently, more people may become homeless as a result of non-payment of rent.

The public consultation saw poverty as the highest area of concern for impact with 83% of respondents alluding to the impact a reduction in services would have to those living in poverty.

Mitigation:

Any changes to services would ensure that provision focuses on meeting the needs of the most vulnerable clients with multiple and complex needs

Rurality

Impact on public: Negative - medium

Impact on staff: Neutral

Rationale:

Any reduction in community support may mean that people living in more rural areas could find it harder to access the support they need as most alternative services are in larger towns or cities. People who currently receive a visiting community support service may need to travel to get support from other services which they may not be able to do due to affordability or accessibility of public transport.

26% of respondents to the consultation voiced concern that the proposed reduction in services would impact on those living rurally.

Mitigation:

Any changes to services would ensure that provision focuses on meeting the needs of the most vulnerable clients with multiple and complex needs. These will usually be within an accommodation-based setting where they will be able to access the support they require. District and Borough authorities will be supported to establish locally based housing action groups to look at local services and support individuals to access services as appropriate.

Additional Information

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 lead to an increase in homelessness, street homelessness, and anti-social behaviour

with a subsequent increase in the number of people who require services from the District and Borough Councils.

In addition, the Governments stay on evictions during the pandemic ended in October 2021. District and Borough partners are already reporting a rise in evictions and enquiries, which may see increased demand for services meaning there is the potential for a higher number of people to be impacted by any changes to services.

However, lessons learned from changes to working practices as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic represent an opportunity for many organisations to collaborate and work more closely together. Alongside this, changes to substance misuse services now looking to co-locate within homelessness services, health clinics running from hostels and a tender for Mental Health Wellbeing hubs, present further opportunities for improved joint working

A housing and homelessness sub-group of the Hampshire safeguarding adults board has been established along with a homelessness workstream providing a key point of contact for partners involved with work on homelessness. Hampshire intends to continue to build on these strong relationships to help ensure the risks highlighted above are mitigated through appropriate and timely signposting and support to access services for individuals and continued collaboration with other services.