

**SUBJECT: SUPPORTING PEOPLE PROGRAMME GRANT – SERVICE UPDATE**

**MEETING: Adult Select Committee**

**DATE: 19 June 2018**

**DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All**

**CABINET MEMBER: County Councillor Simon Howarth**

**1. PURPOSE:**

To consider the outcomes being delivered by the Supporting People Programme Grant (SPPG), as requested by Committee on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2016 and to receive an update on the potential changes around the future funding of Supporting People (SP) with respect to regionalisation, the piloted Early Intervention, Prevention and Support Funding (EIPS), Welsh Government's commitment to extended childcare in the future and the new arrangements from the Supported Accommodation Review (SAR)

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

To approve the proposal to extend contracts due for renewal on 1 April 2019 for a year whilst the implications of Welsh Government's decisions on future funding, to be made later in this financial year, are worked through and implemented.

**3. KEY ISSUES:**

**3.1 Current Performance**

Supporting People is a service providing housing-based to support to people in Monmouthshire. SP was first introduced in 2003 and was radically reconfigured in 2012 into its current format – Supporting People Programme Grant. The purpose of the support is to help vulnerable people to either live independently or to achieve the greatest degree of independence that their personal challenges will allow, with a significant focus on the prevention of homelessness.

In 2017, the services supported 2,550 people (Appendix 2) and contributed to the costs of circa 2,000 community based alarms (as in sheltered housing). SP services are defined in terms of whether being delivered as part of a tenancy expectation or via floating support and whether the expectation for the service duration is "short" – either 6 months or under 24 months – or long-term as in, say, some learning disability or mental health cases

Whilst the funding for Monmouthshire's SP services represents approximately only 10% of the Gwent regional provision (£2.04m of £21m), Welsh Government has identified that, overall, it delivers services to a greater proportion of the supported regional cohort. This, to a greater extent, is due to our SP services' development that is based on service user need and not either their accommodation/tenure type or age which were features of the legacy based services incorporated in 2003 and to some extent continued in the reconfigured 2012 services. The SP service also has two best practice elements – a Gateway brokerage service and services delivered within our place-based delivery model.

Our service funding is approximately broken down into 14% accommodation based services (e.g. refuge, hostels and alarms), 10% Gateway assessment and brokerage service and 76% floating support. (Appendix 3)

The MCC – SP programme comprises 33 contracts and/or service level agreements with 12 providers. These contracts are due for renewal and/or extension on 1 April 2019, with the exception of 3 small contracts with a total value of circa £70k. Of these contracts, 3 are regional contracts managed by other Authorities on behalf of MCC and 2 are regional managed by MCC on behalf of other Gwent Authorities.

SP outcomes are measured across a range of 11 outcomes, each of which can be assessed as relevant to the individual and assessed on a scale of 1-5 where 5 means the individual has achieved their potential for independence in this outcome.

People receiving support make progress that's assessed and recorded on a 5 step model. On average, over a year individuals make 5 positive steps of progress or the equivalent of achieving one outcome to full independence. The average cost of achieving this progress is circa £1,500, or £300 per positive step. The £1,500 is equivalent to 1.54 hours of weekly support. Unfortunately other Local Authorities have not, or have not published, these value for money figures and we therefore have to rely on Welsh Government's overview that suggests that the majority of our services offer good value for money.

SP provides support across the full range of outcomes, however, incidence of support relating to mental health demonstrates the complex nature of the vulnerabilities supported (44% of service users achieve positive progress in this area). Of the support issues that are traditionally considered housing support issues, 36% of service users achieve positive progress in respect of managing their money, 34% in respect of managing their accommodation and 30% in feeling safer (details are in Appendix 4)

In terms of basic demographics, 12.8% of those supported are "Younger" (<25yrs), 36.4% are "Older" (>55 yrs.), 47% (between 25 and 55yrs) and 3.8% not recorded. 58.2% are women, 41.3% are men and 0.5% not recorded. The details are shown in Appendix 5

### **3.2 The future operating environment options**

SP has historically been an annually funded grant, even though Authorities, and Welsh Government in the past, distribute this by contract. Over recent years there has been pressure on the SP fund but despite this services within Monmouthshire have been, by and large, maintained as value for money assessments and savings have been implemented.

During 2017 fears of further reductions in SPPG funding were alleviated when there were agreements made between political parties that assured SP that funding would be maintained at current levels for 2018/19 and 2019/20, with permission being granted to allow Authorities to apply flexible funding principles across SP, Flying Start, and Families First to a maximum of 15% (in Monmouthshire's case).

Following these assurances, the funding environment has been made less certain. For 2018/19, Welsh Government has implemented piloted funding arrangements with 7 Local

Authorities (Pathfinders) that enable the Authorities to vary funding between 10 funding streams which include the current 3 flexible funds mentioned above plus Communities for Work Plus, Promoting Positive Engagement for Young People, Childcare & Play, Homelessness Prevention, Rent Smart Wales, St David's Day fund and Legacy Funding. This flexible fund has been called the Early, Intervention, Prevention and Support fund (EIPS) - <https://gov.wales/docs/dsjlg/publications/180413-flexible-funding-leaflet-en.pdf>

Monmouthshire's potential fund comprises the details shown in Appendix 6 – totalling nearly £4.925m should Welsh Government implement the proposals in 2019/20 with the current levels of funding.

At this time evaluations are being undertaken to assess the impacts achieved by the Pathfinder organisations. Welsh Government has stressed that no decisions have been made as to whether this degree of flexibility will be rolled out to the other Authorities and they have suggested that announcements will be made towards the end of 2018.

There are further uncertainties in that the total EIPS may itself be subjected to budgetary pressure and increased provisions have to be made to meet the requirements of the increased childcare provisions that are also being piloted at the moment (circa £20m). - <https://gov.wales/newsroom/people-and-communities/2018/new-areas-to-pilot-welsh-government-free-childcare-offer/?lang=en>

A further complication has resulted from the Public Accounts Committee's review of SP following the Welsh Audit Office's review of SP. In their report (<http://www.assembly.wales/laid%20documents/cr-ld11557/cr-ld11557-e.pdf>), the committee challenges the robustness and inappropriate speed of the decision making processes associated with EIPS and challenges whether SP's basic purpose is supported by the flexible arrangements as piloted.

At a recent workshop reviewing the progress of the Pathfinder organisations in respect of EIPS and the other Authorities with respect to the 15% flexibility provision, it was clear that the Pathfinders progress is inconsistent. From struggling to achieve accountability and governance through to making strides towards a "one-stop" approach to support services which will greatly benefit the service user. Of the other Authorities, some have been able to use the flexibility to reinforce their objectives, whilst others, as in MCC, have yet to be able to agree and implement any flexible changes, apart from an agreement being currently developed between housing and SP. In this Housing will be using some of its flexibility funding to fund via SP a pilot scheme to improve our Supported Lodging services.

Where Authorities have not made use of the flexibility provision, the common reasons appear to be that they do not yet have the appropriate accountability and governance structures in place and/or still suffer from a "silo mentality" between the funding streams.

Also yet to be resolved is a fundamental difference between SP and the other EIPS funding streams. In 2003 when SP was introduced, Welsh Government included in Authorities' Revenue Grant an allowance for the administration and management of SP. These on-going costs are ineligible for SP funding that's distributed annually. With the other EIPS funds the administration and management costs associated with those funds are eligible for payment from

the fund's allocation. Being able to determine potential business efficiencies is challenging until Welsh Government clarifies the situation.

Whilst Welsh Government has implemented the Pathfinder pilots, and the National Audit Committee has been raising its concerns, the Regional Partnership Board has commissioned an option appraisal into the opportunities etc. associated with the possibility of a more regionalised approach to SP delivery. The outcome of which has yet to be reported back to the Board.

#### **4. REASONS:**

Until such time as the future funding arrangements are confirmed by Welsh Government, the recommendation is that the SP contracts, due to end on 31 March 2019, are extended for a year to allow whatever arrangements need to be implemented to take effect.

The reasons are:

1. Re-contracting the SP services from 1 April 2019 might not represent best value when taken into consideration with the whole EIPS fund and its diverse objectives and priorities.
2. A possible outcome from the current pilots and National Public Accounts Committee could result in one fund Tackling Poverty and one fund being associated with Housing and homelessness. In this case the focus of SP is likely to change/alter and re-contracting in the short-term to the current SP priorities might, in future hindsight, appear to have been ineffective effort.
3. Should the Regional Partnership Board decide to take a more regionalised approach to SP, this might have fundamental impacts on SP's priorities and the administration and management of services. Again, there is the possibility of taking short-term actions that prove short-sighted in the future.

Further, learning from the experiences of other Authorities, if the use of future funding is to be optimised, a more collaborative way of working within these initiatives needs to be developed and this will have possible governance and accountability implications.

The reason for developing these arrangements is the avoidance of the barriers to effective use of the flexibility that some other Authorities have already demonstrated.

#### **5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

At the present time, with the assurances that have been given, SP will remain funded at its current levels for at least 2019/20. Under the current 15% flexibility arrangements, Welsh Government has explained that it is the expectation that funds from Flying Start and Families First could be used by SP to support common aims. However, should it be decided that funds from SP should be used to supplement one, or all, of the other 15% flexible funds, then separate approval has to be sought from Welsh Government.

Should Welsh government decide to implement the full EIPS proposal, then SP's ££2.09m will be a part of a £4.9m flexible fund within Monmouthshire. The Authority will have the ability to allocate as appropriate to its priorities in achieving best value

**6. WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS IMPLICATIONS (INCORPORATING EQUALITIES, SUSTAINABILITY, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):**

The significant equality impacts identified in the assessment (Appendix 1) are summarised below for members' consideration:

Extending contracts for a year would effectively maintain the impacts submitted with the Local Supporting People Plan 2017 – 2020. This extension would provide the opportunities to optimise the use of EIPS funding which would have positive impact for protected characteristics.

When approvals for proposals relating to any funding associated with the EIPS portfolio are sought, they will have the appropriate assessments for Members due consideration.

The actual impacts from this report's recommendations will be reviewed every year, or in line with the future funding cycles should that change. The main criteria for consideration will be how outcomes impact the relevant protected characteristics in terms of outcome progression and the volume of people supported.

**7. CONSULTEES:**

**Regional Collaborative Committee, Regional SP Officers Group, SP and Housing Planning Group, Provider Forum**

**8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

**Links to external information included in the report**

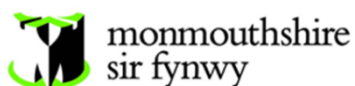
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**SCHEDULE 12A LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972  
EXEMPTION FROM DISCLOSURE OF DOCUMENTS**

**MEETING AND DATE OF MEETING:**

**TITLE OF REPORT:**

**AUTHOR:**

I have considered grounds for exemption of information contained in the report referred to above and make the following recommendation to the Proper Officer:-

**EXEMPTIONS APPLYING TO THE REPORT:**

**FACTORS IN FAVOUR OF DISCLOSURE:**

**PREJUDICE WHICH WOULD RESULT IF THE INFORMATION WERE DISCLOSED:**

**MY VIEW ON THE PUBLIC INTEREST TEST IS AS FOLLOWS:**

**RECOMMENDED DECISION ON EXEMPTION FROM DISCLOSURE:**

Date:

Signed:

Post:

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I accept/do not accept the recommendation made above

Proper Officer: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_