

SUBJECT: SUPPORTING PEOPLE PROGRAMME GRANT – SERVICE UPDATE

MEETING: Children and Young People Select Committee

DATE: 6 September 2018

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

CABINET MEMBER: Councillor Martyn Groucutt

1. PURPOSE:

Whilst the Supporting People (SP) programme is predominately focused on adults, a significant number of younger people (16-25 yrs) are also supported. For consideration are:

1. The proposal to extend Supporting People contracts for a year from 1 April 2019 whilst whatever future funding arrangements Welsh Government makes are implemented.
2. Whether sufficient positive action is being taken in consideration of this protected characteristic (young age) through the age-specific services described by the providers in Appendix 8

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.

To agree that the positive action in terms of funding and people supported reflects the Authority's objectives sufficiently.

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1 Current Programme

SP is a service providing housing-based to support to people in Monmouthshire. 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).

Monmouthshire's SP funding is £2.039m per annum, approximately 10% of the Gwent provision of £21m. Our service funding is approximately broken down into 14% accommodation based services (e.g. refuge, hostels and alarms), 10% Gateway assessment, intervention and brokerage service and 76% floating support. (Appendix 3)

The 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 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. Welsh Government feedback confirms this to be a value for money provision, with at least two examples of best practice – the Gateway intervention, assessment and brokerage service and the place-based service delivery model.

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.

The age specific services for younger people, including the hostels, the CHYPS and Emphasis programmes, Young Person’s accommodation officer and the Youth Transition worker and account for £280,000 of the £2.04m SPPG funding ie 13.7%. {Descriptions by providers in Appendix 8}

Thus the effective positive action in respect of this client group is +32% based on population (16-24 yrs old are 9.7% of Monmouthshire population) and +41% based on the funding allocation. (Appendix 6)

3.2 The future operating environment options

During 2017 inter political party agreements assured SPPG funding at current levels until March 2020, 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 piloted flexible 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>

If this piloted funding is extended to Monmouthshire, the potential fund comprises the details shown in Appendix 7 – totalling nearly £4.925m.

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 with increased provisions having 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.

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.

As discussions have developed over the summer, the possibility that Welsh Government will create 2 funds has become a realistic option – one housing related to include, Supporting People, Homelessness Prevention and Rent Smart and another, Tackling Poverty, to incorporate the other funds identified in the EIPS pilot. Presumably with local authorities having the ability to vary the allocations within each fund and also have the ability to move 15% between funds.

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 Prevention. 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 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 on 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, potentially, governance and accountability implications. This changing culture would take time to implement.

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 £2.039m 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.

In this financial year there are already jointly funded services being implemented. In particular, with Housing and Children's Services, SP is providing a Young Person's Accommodation Officer, a new Supported Lodging pilot scheme and some additional support for those on Universal Credit.

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, or the alternative dual funding, which would have an overall 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, Adult Select

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Links to external information included in the report

9. AUTHOR:

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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:

I accept/do not accept the recommendation made above

Proper Officer: _____

Date: _____