

CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 20 th February 2018
Report Subject	Flintshire Supporting People Programme Grant Local Spend Plan and Regional Strategic Plan
Cabinet Member	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Housing
Report Author	Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the Supporting People Programme Grant Local Spend Plan for 2018/19 which has been developed to align with the priorities laid out within the North Wales Supporting People Regional Strategic Plan.

Following a strong case being made by local government, the grant has been protected in 2018/19.

This report provides an overview of the progress made by the North Wales Regional Collaborative Committee across the priority areas outlined in last year's plan and an overview of emerging risks to the programme.

This report provides a summary of the range of challenges that are creating a pressure on the homeless service and the risk of a growing financial burden for the Council. Supporting People Services play a key role in contributing to homeless prevention. Targeting funding at services that prevent homelessness remains a strategic priority for the Council.

The Local Spend Plan proposes to progress planned reductions of services where efficiencies have been identified or where services are not deemed a priority to fund. Released funding will be invested in services that can demonstrate they contribute to local strategic objectives or regional priorities as presented in the Regional Strategic Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Cabinet approves the Local Spend Plan for 2018/2019 and the North Wales Regional Strategic Plan.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE CONTENT OF THE REPORT
	Background
1.01	<p>The Supporting People Programme is a Welsh Government funded programme that provides housing related support to vulnerable people. The programme aims to support vulnerable people to maximise, maintain and sustain their independence through the provision of a range of innovative housing related support services.</p> <p>Housing related support aims to prevent the problems that can cause vulnerable people to become homeless. The principle of housing related support is to support a person to access, maintain and manage accommodation by assisting in developing or maintaining the necessary skills and confidence to live as independently as possible.</p> <p>The grant faced significant reductions between 2013 and 2016 which totalled £1,311,339 in Flintshire and equated to an 18.4% reduction over the 3 years. The reductions were of concern, as the council recognises the important role of prevention in reducing costs to other statutory services. It is pleasing to note that the grant has been protected in 2018/19.</p>
	Regional Strategic Plan
1.02	<p>The North Wales Regional Collaborative Committee includes representation from support providers, landlords, Local Authority Cabinet Members, BCUHB and Wales Probation Trust and is in place to provide a strategic context for the funding and delivery decisions of local authorities and other local stakeholders, principally through the development of its Regional Strategic Plan. This plan informs the strategic direction for the Supporting People Programme for North Wales.</p> <p>This plan is the annual update of the 2017-20 Regional Strategic Plan. The plan highlights emerging risks to the programme and the services that provide support to vulnerable groups. RCC partners have raised concerns about the potential impact of the proposed changes to funding housing costs in supported housing.</p> <p>In addition, the RCC has sought further clarity around the proposal to implement Full Funding Flexibilities across a number of grants. Although the budget has been protected for the Supporting People Programme for the next two years, the detailed budget proposal for 2019/20 shows the Supporting People budget line is reduced to £0 and instead the funding that would usually be allocated to Supporting People has moved to a new budget line called 'Early Intervention – Prevention and Support Grant' which merges the budgets for Flying Start, Families First, Communities First Legacy Fund and a new Employability Grant, making the new budget a total of £252million across Wales. However, this is £13million less than the combined total of these grants in 2018/19.</p> <p>The 'extended flexibility' is expected to enable the Council to plan more strategically, align programmes and deliver more responsive services to</p>

	<p>meet the needs of their customers. However, as the Council are dealing with increasing budget pressures, the reduction in overall budget and the removal of the ring-fence presents a significant risk for these preventative services.</p> <p>Supporting People services are working in an ever more challenging climate and with this the plan recognises there are emerging priorities and gaps in provision across the region. The standstill budget in 2017/18 provided the RCC with the opportunity to further consider collaboration opportunities across two priority areas; domestic abuse and the resettlement of prison leavers.</p> <p>This year, regional work and joint commissioning for domestic abuse services has been developed through collaboration with the North Wales Violence against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Board (VAWDASV) Board. The RCC commissioned an important piece of work which provided clear recommendations for a more consistent and effective service for prison leavers across the region. The findings of the report have been progressed within Local Commissioning Plans. The RCC has committed to a regional budget for a second year in recognition that this will be the most efficient way to meet the emerging need in some areas.</p>
	<p>Local Priorities for Supporting People Programme Grant</p>
<p>1.03</p>	<p>The Council continues to focus its Supporting People commissioning function on ensuring that services funded by Supporting People Programme Grant are contributing to homeless prevention. Targeting funding at those services that can demonstrate the contribution and evidence of homeless prevention outcomes is a core aspect of the local monitoring and review process.</p> <p>The Support Gateway which handles housing support referrals handled 1,420 referrals in 2016/17. This represents a higher number than the cases at immediate risk of homelessness forwarded to the homeless service and demonstrates the key role Supporting People services play in easing pressure on the statutory service by delivering early support, advice and assistance.</p> <p>There has been an increase in the numbers of households seeking assistance and the homeless service is forecasting additional pressures due to a combination of factors. The roll out of Universal Credit means more families are facing financial hardship and needing assistance and the LHA cap will limit the availability of affordable accommodation in the private sector particularly for single people under 35.</p> <p>Homeless prevention funding, which was ring fenced, is now included in the Revenue Support Grant. This presents a risk of a growing financial burden for the council as homelessness enquires are increasing and those cases requiring assistance are becoming increasingly complex to resolve. Therefore, it remains a strategic priority for the Council to invest Supporting People Programme Grant funding in services that can demonstrate a contribution to preventing or relieving homelessness.</p>

	Decommissioning		
1.04	<p>As there is no reduction in the grant funding, the changes in allocation of funding relate to the continuation of a planned withdrawal of funding from services that are not deemed a strategic priority.</p> <p>Reviews of services have identified areas where the level of funding is disproportionate to the amount of eligible housing related support activities delivered. The team are supporting these services with a planned and managed withdrawal of funding (that will not destabilise services or affect vulnerable service users.)</p>		
	Spend Plan 2018/19		
1.05	<p>The table below details the changes in expenditure within the Supporting People Programme Grant in Flintshire including any reductions to services and any new investment.</p> <p>The proposals contained within this report are in line with the Council's and the Regional Collaborative Committee's strategic priorities.</p>		
	REDUCTIONS		
	Community Based Accommodation Support Service - Housing	Reduce contract value from £970,000 - £830,000	Reduce as the current contract amount is surplus to the cost of delivery. The level of funding to this one service is disproportionately high based on the aims of the service and the client group.
	Enterprise Employment Scheme	Reduce contract from £90,000 - £40,000	Reduce contract value as this was short term funding. £40,000 maintained will support a 'food poverty' initiative.
	Regional Collaborative Committee Regional Spend	Reduce allocation from £30,000 - £20,000	All North Wales Local Authorities have committed to working together on regional priorities. The Council has committed spend in 2018/19 to support regional developments for domestic abuse services and prison leavers.
	Supporting People Team costs	Reduce allocation from £85,000 - £50,000	The SPPG guidance does not allow the grant to be spent on the commissioning function. All grant funding must be withdrawn by 2019/20. This is part of a planned withdrawal from this ineligible service.

Learning Disability Service (Social Care)	Reduce funding allocation from £1,022,460 - £910,000	Reduction is part of a planned withdrawal of funding from the service following a service review that identified limited housing related support activity within the service.
INVESTMENT		
Resettlement Officer	£41,000	A new post to respond to the report commissioned by the RCC highlighting the need for improved services for prison leavers.
Leaving Care Personal Assistant	£40,000	Fund a post in the Leaving Care Team to support positive outcomes and housing options for care leavers.
Homeless Prevention Post	£40,000	Fund a homeless prevention post to protect this function
Vulnerability Project – Preventing Evictions	£140,000	Invest in a new service working cross tenure providing targeted intensive interventions to those at risk of eviction.
Full cost recovery for projects	£79,500	<p>Reviews of services have identified that across a number of eligible service areas the grant does not cover the full cost of the service creating a risk to the resilience and sustainability of the service. The following services have had their contracts amended to ensure full cost recovery</p> <p>Homeless Prevention Workers</p> <p>Clwyd Alyn Floating Support</p> <p>Substance Misuse FCC Social Care</p> <p>Disability Outreach FCC Social Care</p> <p>Integrated Young Persons Team FCC Social Care</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	The Supporting People Programme Grant is a ring fenced grant to fund housing related support services. The Council is responsible for targeting the funding at effective preventative services that alleviate pressure on more costly statutory service budgets.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Service providers have been consulted upon how the support services that they are currently delivering will be impacted by the efficiencies being made within the 2018/19 Supporting People Programme Grant.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	<p>The services provided through the Supporting People Programme aim to improve the quality of life of vulnerable people by supporting them to live independently in the community. These include the provision of services that help people to maximise their household income and manage their financial commitments. The successful outcomes from such services play an important role in helping to tackle poverty and prevent homelessness within the County.</p> <p>Whilst the Flintshire Supporting People Team will attempt to identify efficiencies that will generate the least impact upon service users, it has to be recognised that any future reduction in service provision may result in some vulnerable people not having ease of access to the support services that they require in order to avoid their household from falling into poverty and/or becoming at risk of homelessness.</p>

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	<p>Appendix 1 – Flintshire Supporting People Programme Grant Spend Plan</p> <p>Appendix 2 – The North Wales Regional Strategic Plan</p>

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>None.</p> <p>Contact Officer: Katie Clubb Telephone: 01352 703518 E-mail: katie.clubb@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	None.