

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee:	Health and Adult Social Care Select (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee
Date:	20 November 2018
Title:	Social Inclusion Task and Finish Group: Outcomes Report
Report From:	Social Inclusion Task and Finish Group

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1. Recommendations

- 1.1. As a result of their deliberations, the Task & Finish Group arrived at the following recommendations. The Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee is invited to endorse these recommendations and to submit them to the Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Health for consideration.
 - a) That the recommendations in the report '*Homelessness Support Services: Outcome of the Social Inclusion Transformation to 2019 Review*' under section 1 are endorsed to the Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Health for decision.
 - b) That the County Council actively participates in partnerships, at a district and county level, to reduce homelessness and end rough sleeping.
 - c) That the County Council actively engages with all partners to explore how the varying needs of individuals and families can be met earlier and before they may need more intensive services.
 - d) That the County Council continues to offer expertise to and partners with any District or Borough Council choosing to put in bids for additional funding opportunities, where the objectives of this funding aligns with the objectives of the Social Inclusion Services.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. In September 2017 the Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee initiated a Task & Finish Group to support a review of Social Inclusion services.
- 2.2. The objective of this review was to realise savings that could contribute to the £56 million required by the Adults' Health and Care department and necessary to support the County Council to achieve a balanced budget by 2019, whilst safeguarding support for the most vulnerable.

- 2.3. This report outlines the work of the Social Inclusion Task and Finish Group, including their final conclusions and recommendations, and follows on from the interim report presented to the Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee in May 2018.
- 2.4. The Group has met 6 times over the last 12 months and each meeting has given Members the opportunity to question and scrutinise the approach being taken to the review of Social Inclusion services, hear the views expressed by a range of stakeholders, including district and borough councils, and provide input to support the development of final proposals.
- 2.5. The final proposals for changes to services are outlined in section 5 of the report *'Homelessness Support Services: Outcome of the Social Inclusion Transformation to 2019 Review'*.

3. Membership

- 3.1. The Task and Finish Group was a cross party group and initially included the following Members:
Cllr David Keast (chair)
Cllr Ann Briggs
Cllr Alan Dowden
Cllr Marge Harvey
Cllr Barbara Hurst
- 3.2. Cllr Barbara Hurst subsequently resigned from the group in February 2018 following her resignation from the Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee.

4. Contextual Information

- 4.1. Social Inclusion services are accommodation-based and community support services for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, including hostel accommodation for people sleeping rough and preventative services to help people keep their accommodation.
- 4.2. Service users include rough sleepers, people with mental health problems, people with substance misuse issues and people with a history of offending.
- 4.3. To support understanding of the purpose of Social Inclusion services during the review period, services are now referred to as Homelessness Support Services.
- 4.4. The County Council currently spends £4.2 million on Social Inclusion services. A proposal to reduce the budget attached to these services by £2 million was included in the Adults' Health and Care Transformation to 2019 Revenue Savings Report and approved by full council in November 2017.

5. Considerations of the Task & Finish Group

- 5.1. At the first meeting in November 2017, the group considered their remit as set out in the Terms of Reference and heard about the objectives of the review. Officers shared information about current services and what it was hoped would be achieved through reviewing these services in partnership with the District and Borough Councils.
- 5.2. The Group were made aware of the membership and objectives of the multi-agency Social Inclusion Advisory group that had been set up to support the review process and development of proposals for changes to services that could achieve the identified savings. It was agreed that the HASC Task and Finish group would meet following each advisory group meeting to hear feedback from this group and scrutinise the progress of the partnership approach to the development of proposals.
- 5.3. Over subsequent meetings, discussions were had regarding the complex landscape in which the reduction in budget and review of services was taking place and it was noted that whilst the County Council has no statutory duty to provide these services, they do contribute to demand and prevention management and support a vulnerable client group.
- 5.4. It was also noted that some people who use Homelessness Support services may have eligible support needs which, under the Care Act 2014, the County Council has a duty to ensure are met.
- 5.5. The Group were also made aware of the significant changes to homelessness legislation introduced in April 2018 under the *Homelessness Reduction Act 2017*. This new legislation extends the statutory duties of the District and Borough Councils regarding the prevention and relief of homelessness. It was noted that funding is available to the District and Borough Councils for the prevention and relief of homelessness and that the ring fenced funding that was available to the County Council for housing related support services for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness ended in 2012 .
- 5.6. Discussions were had regarding the range of existing community services that are available, the use of these resources and the need for early intervention to reduce demand on crisis services. All present felt that raising the profile of the range of community resources that are available to support people at an earlier stage would be beneficial and that this was key to reducing the impact of any proposed changes to services. Members said that the general public often want to help homeless people and considered that more could be done to ensure that donations go to voluntary sector services helping this group.
- 5.7. At each meeting, the Group heard about how the County Council was engaging with partners regarding the potential for joint investment in services and how the review was being used as an opportunity to improve partnership arrangements in the future.

- 5.8. The Group considered the detail of the proposed changes to services as they were being developed with the District and Borough Council homelessness leads.
- 5.9. Information about the funding available to the District and Borough Councils to deliver Homelessness prevention and relief services was shared on request, specifically the new burdens funding allocated to these Councils for implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act and the ring-fenced Flexible Homelessness Grants. It was noted that these funding streams have only been confirmed until 2021. Members heard how some District and Borough Councils are considering (subject to their own cabinet approval) how they could jointly fund services with the County Council using some of their Flexible Homelessness Grant.
- 5.10. Members also asked about the additional central government funding available to support rough sleepers following the publication of the Rough Sleepers Strategy in August and information about the opportunities that may be available was shared. It was noted that any additional funding for homelessness would go to the District and Borough Councils as the local housing authorities responsible for the prevention and relief of homelessness. However, the County Council is keen to be involved in relevant partnership bids.
- 5.11. Officers shared information regarding how the proposed changes to County Council funded Homelessness Support Services would dovetail with the services available from the District and Borough Councils and the wider voluntary sector.
- 5.12. Members were interested in the role of other agencies in supporting the client group and the need for partnerships was stressed at several meetings. It was recognised that the multi- agency meetings had resulted in stronger partnerships and it was hoped that this momentum would continue.
- 5.13. A concern was expressed regarding the proposed reduction in lower level support services and the potential impact on people affected by the changes in welfare benefits, specifically the roll out of Universal Credit. Officers confirmed that the DWP had been a partner in the development of proposals and are providing information and support to manage the roll out of Universal Credit in partnership with the District and Borough Councils and voluntary sector.
- 5.14. Concerns were also expressed regarding the impact on Care Leavers. Officers confirmed that Children's Services were involved in the review process and invited to the multi-agency meetings.
- 5.15. In May the draft consultation documents were shared with the Group and Members were given the opportunity to scrutinise the planned approach to the consultation.
- 5.16. The importance of engaging with and seeking feedback from service users during the consultation was stressed and Members were satisfied that appropriate plans were in place to secure this engagement. A request was

also made for communications to the District and Borough Council Chief Executives and Portfolio Holders.

- 5.17. Prior to the start of the consultation, a decision was made by senior officers to reduce the savings target attached to this group of services to £1.8 million. This decision was a direct result of input from key partners and the Task and Finish Group and was made to ensure that community support would still be available to those with complex needs who may find it difficult to engage with more mainstream services without assistance.
- 5.18. In October, feedback from the consultation was shared and considered by the Group. The Group heard how this had been shared with District and Borough Councils and used to develop final proposals. It was noted that the consultation highlighted the need for stronger partnerships and more joined up solutions.
- 5.19. The Group considered the final proposals for changes to services and how the proposed changes could be implemented. Members agreed that the proposed recommendations were pragmatic given the complexity of the review and would ensure that disruption to service users was minimised.
- 5.20. In addition to the proposals for changes to County Council funded services, Members were also provided with information about the proposed joint funding arrangements with some District and Borough Councils and information about how others are intending to provide more support to people at risk of homelessness in house.
- 5.21. At the final meeting held in early November, the Group discussed high level plans for the implementation of the proposed changes should they be approved by the Executive Member on 5 December 2018. A full 8 months would be available to support the transition to the proposed new arrangements and anyone affected by the changes would be provided with information and help to access alternative services. Work would also be undertaken to ensure that access to alternative services is promoted across key stakeholders.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1. Members considered the information they had received over the course of the Social Inclusion Task and Finish Group. The following was of particular note;
 - The statutory responsibilities of the District and Borough Councils to prevent and relieve homelessness.
 - How services contribute to the Adults' Health and Care Demand and Prevention management approach.
 - The support needs of people using services and those who may have eligible care and support needs as defined by the *Care Act 2014*.
 - Other sources of support that are available for those with less critical support needs.

- The importance of strong and effective partnerships to ensure the best use of collective resources for the delivery of homelessness support in the future.
- The financial challenges facing the County Council and the need to target services to meet the needs of the most vulnerable.
- The potential funding opportunities available to the District and Borough Councils to support the delivery of support services for rough sleepers.
- The importance of the voluntary sector and ensuring that people receive support early.
- The key role of the multi-agency Social Inclusion Advisory Group in the development of proposals for changes to services.

6.2. As a result of the information received and discussed, the Task & Finish Group agreed the recommendations in section 1 to submit to the full Select Committee.

6.3. These recommendations include the endorsement of the recommendations put forward in the report *'Homelessness Support Services: Outcome of the Social Inclusion Transformation to 2019 Review'* under section 1 for decision by the Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Health on 5 December 2018.