CARE AND WELLBEING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date: 15 September 2015

Update on the former Supporting People programme

Report of the Executive Director of Wellbeing and Community Health Services

Cabinet Member: Councillor Susan Dungworth, Adult Care and Public Health

Purpose of report

The Council’s budget for 2015/16 included a saving of £3m to be achieved by withdrawing funding for support schemes outside core statutory Council functions. The schemes affected were formerly funded through the national Supporting People grant programme. This report describes how the saving has been achieved.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to note the information in this report.

Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the Health and Well Being priority in the Corporate Plan.

Key issues

1. The Supporting People (SP) programme ceased to receive separately-identified funding from the Government from April 2011.

2. Savings were made in the programme in subsequent years, as part of a wider programme of reviews of commissioned services. Because of the scale of savings required in 2015/16, the budget adopted by the Council in February 2015 provided for most of the remaining expenditure on schemes which had been supported by SP to end.

3. The Supporting People programme was designed to fund low-level preventative support extending beyond local authority statutory duties. In most cases, therefore, ongoing funding was not required to meet the Council's core statutory responsibilities – however in all cases where it appeared possible that service users might have social care needs as a result of the ending of SP funding, assessments were arranged and social care support was provided if the assessments identified eligible needs.

4. In other cases, the removal of funding has had varying consequences. In some cases, providers have identified alternative funding streams; in others they have covered the costs of services by introducing new or increased charges to users. In a small number of cases, services have closed.
Update on the former Supporting People programme

BACKGROUND

1. Introduction

1.1 The Supporting People (SP) programme was introduced nationally in 2003 to fund “housing related support” services, replacing a number of previous funding streams, the largest of which was Housing Benefit spending on support services which had been ruled to fall outside the scope of the Housing Benefit legislation. Initially the programme was supported by ringfenced grant funding; there ceased to be separately-identified funding in the local government financial settlement for Supporting People from 2011-12.

1.2 While reports commissioned in the early years of the programme\(^1\) included estimates of large savings to other public sector budgets as a result of their preventative impact, these were based on assumptions for which there was no specific evidence. It is likely that ending funding for most Supporting People schemes will have had some adverse effects on the longer term ability of scheme users to remain independent, but it is not possible to produce a reliable estimate of the scale of this effect, and the best judgement of officers is that it will be considerably less than implied by past national estimates.

1.3 Discussions had been taking place over an extended period before the Council’s February 2015 budget decision to prepare providers for the end of SP funding, and in many cases they were already well advanced in their preparations for this by the end of 2014, at which point all providers were given formal notice of the potential end of funding on 31 March 2015, and invited to let officers know of any issues which they believed the Council should take into account before finalising a decision. Providers were also asked to distribute letters about the proposals to all users of their services, inviting their views.

1.4 Final decisions on the funding were taken under delegated powers by the Executive Director of Wellbeing and Community Health Services, taking account of consultation responses received from a number of providers. Where necessary, individual arrangements were made to support providers during the transition to new funding models.

1.5 Funding for a small number of formerly SP-supported schemes has continued:

   a) The women’s refuge, which is a key element in the Council’s response to domestic violence

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\(^1\) The most significant report was produced by Matrix Research and Consultancy in November 2004. It calculated that, for the client groups which accounted for 80% of SP expenditure, overall benefits for the exchequer exceeded spending on those elements of the programme, and suggested that there were also further benefits for service users and public spending which were not included in this calculation. However this calculation was based on assumptions for each SP-funded service discussed in the report about the proportion of users who would be using much more expensive statutory services if the SP-funded service was not available – and those assumptions themselves were not based on any specific evidence.
b) Services which form part of the Youth Accommodation Framework, which has close links to children’s social care

c) The Northumberland Telecare service, which is linked to the delivery of adult social care. However it is the intention to end for new users the current practice of providing a subsidised free service, following a review of the appropriate level of charge to recover costs. This will bring the service into line with other community alarm and telecare services operating in the County, which have already introduced charges.

2. Effects of the termination of SP funding

2.1 Appendix 1 to this report sets out in detail the outcomes for each of the schemes formerly funded from the SP budget. In most cases, the schemes continue to operate with revised funding arrangements, which in many cases have included new charges for service users and in some cases have involved remodelling of the service.

2.2 In cases where the schemes supported users who were also likely to have social care needs, all existing service users were offered assessments, and additional or new social care support arrangements were made for those whose needs were eligible under social care criteria – commissioned either from the existing provider or from providers also delivering other social care services.

2.3 Only two services have simply ceased to operate as a result of the budget decision:

a) A “floating support” service for drug and alcohol users in the Blyth area which provided support and advice to people with drug or alcohol addictions to help them to either maintain their existing tenancy or establish a new tenancy. Officers’ assessment of this service was that, while it had been appreciated by service users, the needs which it met could be partly met by other advice services, and were not core needs related to the Council’s statutory duties.

b) An support service in Blyth for ex-offenders. The provider of this service ensured that all service users at the time of closure who needed continuing support were referred to other agencies.

2.4 In some cases, reviews of the support being provided to individuals made it clear that SP schemes had been providing a level of ongoing support which was possibly undermining service users’ independence because of an over-protective service model, or a lack of focus on building service users’ own skills rather than carrying out tasks for them.

2.5 For instance in one service, work with an older person who had been making very frequent use of an on-call support service helped to address the anxiety issues that had led to this, so that she no longer required that level of support. In another case, support workers in a house where a group of people with a learning disability were living had been carrying out most day to day tasks on behalf of the service users, rather than supporting them to acquire the confidence and skills to carry out these tasks themselves. As a result of social care assessments, a plan was developed for progressively enabling each service user to take over responsibility for more elements of their daily routine, with the level of support hours reducing in stages over time.
**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Delegated decision report to the Executive Director of Wellbeing and Community Health Services.

**IMPLICATIONS ARISING OUT OF THE REPORT**

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<th>Category</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Policy</strong></td>
<td>The withdrawal of SP funding is in line with the first of the principles for the Council’s financial strategy set out in the Policy Board report of 10 December 2014: “Being clear that the Council will retrench in the medium term to providing services modelled on the statutory minimum but always being alert to opportunities to grow the tax base and reduce the burden on services”</td>
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<td><strong>Finance and value for money</strong></td>
<td>The withdrawal of SP funding was necessary to achieve the saving of £3m included in the Council’s budget for 2015/16 under the heading “Withdraw funding for support schemes outside core statutory Council functions”.</td>
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<td><strong>Legal</strong></td>
<td>The Council has no statutory obligation to provide Supporting People services. While these services were funded by a national grant programme it was a condition of the grant that services must not meet statutory duties of the Council.</td>
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<td><strong>Procurement</strong></td>
<td>In the small number of cases where services have been repurchased, this is taking place in accordance with the Council’s standard procurement procedures.</td>
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<td><strong>Human Resources</strong></td>
<td>There are no direct HR implications for the Council, though the savings will have resulted in the loss of posts in some of the organisations formerly funded through SP.</td>
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<td><strong>Property</strong></td>
<td>No implications for Council property were identified.</td>
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<td><strong>Equalities</strong></td>
<td>Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A ☐ The impact assessment produced to support the delegated decision on SP schemes is attached. Overall, the conclusion of the impact assessment was that ending this funding would have some adverse consequences for protected groups, but that steps would be taken to mitigate these, and that accepting the adverse consequences was proportionate in the context of the Council’s overall financial situation.</td>
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<td><strong>Risk Assessment</strong></td>
<td>No risk assessment is required.</td>
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Crime & Disorder
Some of the services involved work with offenders or people at risk of offending. Adverse impacts on crime and disorder cannot be ruled out, but are not expected to be substantial.

Customer Considerations
Cessation of funding has led to reduced services and/or increased charges for many service users. However any service users with care and support needs were being offered social care assessments, and are now receiving social care support if they have eligible needs.

Carbon reduction
No impact has been identified.

Wards
All

Report sign off.
Authors must ensure that relevant officers and members have agreed the content of the report.

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APPENDIX 1: Schemes for which legacy Supporting People funding has ended

Information about the services listed in this Appendix is as at a point shortly before consultation began about the potential termination of funding. In some cases, providers changed or closed services before the Council’s budget decision, anticipating that funding would be coming to an end.

Sheltered Housing

- Abbeyfield (Berwick) Society Ltd (Bankhill) - service in Berwick for older people with only 1 person receiving SP support. A charges has been introduced for this service.

- Anchor Trust (Arnison Close; Belford Court; Beresford Court; Church Lane; Grenville Court; Hollyoak House; Jubilee Lodge; King James Court; Pembroke Court 2; St Christopher's House; St Oswald’s Court; St Paul’s Court;) – services are for older adults spread across Northumberland, these are schemes with a scheme manager/warden (floating or in situ) and residents have an alarm within their accommodation. Charges have been introduced for these services.

- Berwick Borough Housing (Armstrong Court; Stone Close; Horndonside) – these services are for older adults: Armstrong Court in Scremerston, Berwick and Stone Close in Seahouses and Horndonside in Wooler are all sheltered accommodation with alarm support. They have peripatetic scheme managers/wardens. Different approaches have been adopted in different schemes, involving both service redesign and charging.

- ISOS - (Athol House; Park View; Renwick House; Cockshaw Court; Rede House; St Cuthberts Close; The Shieling; Trinity Court; Tynedale Grange/Tynedale Court; the Manors) – the sheltered accommodation units have peripatetic scheme managers/wardens and hard wired alarms fitted. The Extra Care service at the Manors is based in Prudhoe and the SP part of the service pays for hard wired alarms and part of a full time scheme manager/ warden. Charges have been introduced for these services.

- The Charlotte Straker Project - this project supports 3 of the tenants in bungalows located outside of the Charlotte Straker nursing care home in Corbridge. The service includes hard wired alarms that are connected to the nursing home whose staff will respond should a resident require assistance. The provider now funds this service.

- Hanover Friends (Howden Dene) - this is a sheltered accommodation service for older adults based just outside of Corbridge. There are 4 individuals receiving support from a resident warden. Charges have been introduced for this service.

- Helping Hands Community Care (Bob Elliot House) - Bob Elliot House is based in Blyth. It is Homes for Northumberland sheltered accommodation and Helping Hands Community Care were providing 24 hour staff support funded by SP. All residents in this scheme were offered social care assessments, and those with eligible needs are now receiving individual support.
• Homes for Northumberland (Augur Place; Dolphin Court; Kennedy Road; Rodsley Court; Bob Elliot House; Concorde House; Hartley Court; Nye Bevan House; Patterson House) – Augur Place (Alnwick), Dolphin Court (Amble), Kennedy Road (Amble) and Rodsley Court (Rothbury) are all sheltered accommodations for older adults. They all have peripatetic scheme managers/wardens. Bob Elliot House (Blyth), Concorde House (Cramlington), Hartley Court (New Hartley), Nye Bevan House (Blyth) and Patterson House (Blyth) are all sheltered accommodation units for older adults with some scheme manager/warden cover. Future arrangements for these services are under review.

• Home Housing Association (Tanners Row) – a sheltered accommodation scheme for 12 people. Charges have been introduced for this service.

• Housing 21 (Carew Court; Percy Court) – Carew Court (Cramlington) and Percy Court (Alnwick) are both sheltered accommodation units with hard wired alarm systems, with peripatetic scheme managers/wardens. Charges have been introduced for these services.

• Northern Counties Housing Association (Athlone Court) - Athlone Court in Blyth is sheltered accommodation with hard wired alarm system and a full time scheme manager/warden. Charges have been introduced for this service.

• Places for People - St Stephens Close is sheltered accommodation in Seaton Delaval. Charges have been introduced for this service.

Alarm call systems

• Anchor Trust (Alnwood; Alnmouth; Ashington Drive; Guidepost; Chapel Court; Seahouses; New Barns; Warkworth; Rowan Court, Blyth; The Granary, Berwick; West Court, Amble) - all services are for older adults spread across Northumberland, these are fixed alarms within the individual properties. Charges have been introduced for this service.

• Berwick Borough Housing (dispersed alarms and hardwired alarms) – the dispersed alarms (70) and hardwired alarms (40) are only in the Berwick area. Charges have been introduced for Berwick Borough Housing services; some services have been transferred to the management of Northumberland Telecare (the former Valley Care).

• ISOS - (floating alarms; hardwired alarms) – the dispersed/general purpose alarms are available to residents across the Tynedale area. Charges have been introduced for this service.

• Homes for Northumberland (dispersed alarms; hardwired alarms) - the dispersed and hard wired alarm systems are all located in the Alnwick area. Future arrangements for these services are under review.

• Home Housing Association (Tow House Green) – an alarm-only service for 2 people. Charges have been introduced for this service.
• Housing 21 (Curlew Court; Henderson Court) – Curlew Court (Wooler) and Henderson Court (Berwick) have hard wired alarm systems only. Charges have been introduced for this service.

• North British (Jubilee Court; Linden Road; The Gables) – Jubilee Court (Blyth) Linden Road (Seaton Delaval) and The Gables (Blyth) are all sheltered accommodation with hard wired alarms but no scheme manager/warden support. Charges have been introduced for this service.

• Nomad (Clayport Mews; Tithe Cottages) – Clayport Mews (Alnwick) and Tithe Cottages (Ponteland) two sheltered accommodation schemes have hard wired alarms only. Charges have been introduced for this service.

Learning Disability Services

• Azure run a number of projects. The Cheviot scheme was an accommodation based service supporting three service users. Keele Drive was an accommodation-based service of 11 houses, with a capacity of 42 beds of which on average 38 were occupied in Cramlington. There was also a house with 3 beds in the West of the County for people with a severe learning disability. The Community Access and Employment Service was provided in South East Northumberland for 20 people and over time had evolved into a domiciliary support service. All users of these schemes were offered social care assessments, and a number are now receiving new or additional social care support.

• Age UK operated a “floating support” service, initially contracted for 8 people who live in the Alnwick and Amble areas but now supporting four people. All service users were offered social care assessments, and now receive new or additional social care support.

• The Coquet Trust had a house in Ashington for an individual tenant with learning disabilities, who is now receiving social care support.

• Flexible Support Options operated a “floating support” service in the Ashington and surrounding areas. Five people were supported, all of whom are now receiving new or continuing social care support.

• Helping Hands Community Care supported three tenants in a house in Hexham owned by Golden Lane Housing (Mencap). Ongoing support for them is now funded as a social care service.

• Mencap also managed a further house in Hexham capable of accommodating up to three people with a learning disability. There are two current occupants; both are now receiving social care support.

• SP funded two services in Ashington, each supporting a single individual with a learning disability [details not included to avoid identifying the service users]. In both cases, the individual service users also received social care support.
• **New Prospects** operated two accommodation schemes in Blyth and Prudhoe. The Blyth scheme has two long-standing users and the Prudhoe scheme is for one woman. All three users are now receiving increased social care support.

• **Turning Point** provided a number of SP-funded services. A “floating support” service in the Ashington, Morpeth, Bedlington and Newbiggin areas supported 21 people with learning disabilities, all of whom were offered social care assessments and where necessary social care services. A supported house in Blyth has accommodated three people for many years, as has a house for a further three people in Seahouses. Five of the residents in the accommodation schemes received social care support as well as an SP service, and now have enhanced social care support. The other resident self-funds care and support services.

• **St Cuthberts Care** operated a “floating support” service in Cramlington for seven people, which has always been well utilised. All of the service users also received social care support, and their needs have been reviewed.

**Teenage Pregnancy**

• **Barnardos** provided a “floating support” service for teenage parents in the Ashington and Bedlington areas. It provides 20 places and is normally well utilised. The Council’s accommodation framework for young people now funds this service.

**Mental Health Services**

• **Blyth Star Enterprises** provided “floating support” for six people, and accommodation-based support for 12 people at various locations in Blyth. All users have been offered social care assessments and those with eligible needs have been provided with social care support.

• **Byker Bridge Housing Association** provided a “floating support” service mainly for people with mental health problems, predominantly delivered in the West of the County but also supporting some people in South East Northumberland. The service catered for 32 people and was well-utilised. All service users were offered social care assessments.

• **Mental Health Matters** operated a “floating support” scheme based in Berwick. It had capacity to support twenty people but only eight clients. This service has been remodelled with support from Council officers.

• The **Richmond Fellowship** provided a “floating support” service to 35 people with mental health problems, predominantly in Morpeth, Alnwick and Ashington. All service users were offered social care assessments, and where appropriate social care support.

• SP also funded support for four tenants in a house in Newbiggin, which works closely with NHS mental health services. All four current tenants are now receiving new or increased social care support following assessment.
Homeless Services

- **Byker Bridge Housing Association** received SP funding towards the costs of a hostel in Blyth with a capacity of 8 or 9 rooms with shared living space, and a house in the West of the county supporting two single homeless people with mental health problems who have been resident there for some time. The provider is now funding these schemes in other ways.

- **Homes for Northumberland** received SP funding towards three units for homeless single persons and families – Lamb House (Cramlington), Woodlands Lodge (Hexham) and The Hawthorns (Ashington). Replacement funding is now provided from rental income.

- **Stonham Community Support** received SP funding towards the costs of this service, which included a 16-bed service in Blyth for young single persons and couples who are homeless or are at risk of homelessness or who have other issues such as drug or alcohol dependence or who have suffered from domestic violence. The service also provided a “floating support” service to people in their own tenancies across Blyth. The service has been remodelled, and receives referrals from the Young Persons Framework panel.

- **StopGap** received funding from SP for its project providing accommodation for rough sleepers and homeless people based in Hexham, and its linked “floating support” service. Their services are still operating, assisted by increased income from other sources; the organisation is currently reviewing its longer-term plans to take account of a number of changes affecting the context in which they operate.

Physical Disability Services

- **Leonard Cheshire** received SP funding for a 9-place scheme for people of working age, formerly a residential care home. All residents also received social care support, and their needs have been reviewed, with additional support arranged where necessary.

Offenders

- **Norcare** (now part of Thirteen Care and Support) were funded to provide a “floating support” service in Blyth for 13 people at risk of reoffending. This service has now closed; the provider made arrangements to ensure that all service users who needed ongoing support were referred to other agencies.

- **Stonham** were funded for their Northumbria Probation Tenant Support Service in Blyth for 12 people at risk of reoffending. This service has been remodelled.

Substance Misuse

- **Turning Point** received SP funding for a “floating support” service for eight people in the Blyth area with problems related to drug and alcohol. This project has closed.

Other accommodation

- **Places for People** received SP funding for a scheme in Blyth providing accommodation for six people with a variety of needs. All service users were offered social care assessments, and where appropriate social care support.