

People Scrutiny Commission

17th July 2017



Report of: John Readman, Strategic Director – People

Title: Update on the Reductions to the Supporting People budget consultation

Ward: City wide

Officer Presenting Report: Lindsay Winterton, Interim Principal Commissioning Manager (Adults)

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Recommendation

It is recommended that the People Scrutiny Commission note the update on the live consultation on the options of how to make a £1.8m budget reduction on Supporting People services.

Summary

Bristol City Council approved its budget in February 2017. Reluctantly, one of the identified areas was a requirement to reduce the spend on Supporting People services. The council currently spends £7.2m on these services every year, but there is a need to reduce spend by £1.8million - equivalent to 25 % of the total budget. The required savings are £643k in 2017/18 with a further £1.16m reduction in 2018/19.

Twelve weeks consultation commenced on 13 June 2017 and will close on 5th September 2017 and is focussed on the proposals of **how** to achieve the required year on year savings of £1.8m. We are seeking views on our proposals from people who use Supporting People services, council staff and organisations who provide these services in the independent and voluntary sectors as well as the general public.

People can tell us their views by completing a survey, taking part in consultation meetings, or by emailing us. We will publish and make widely available what people tell us and what we plan to do next. A report to Cabinet will include material about what we have found out from this consultation and how we have taken responses in to account in the recommendations to Cabinet.

The significant issues are to note the process detailed consultation documents

These are available in alternative formats and on Bristol City Council's website at:

<https://bristol.citizenspace.com/people/reductions-to-supporting-people-budgets/>

1. Policy

What are Supporting People Services?

Supporting People services are free and available to help a wide range of vulnerable people live more independently. This is a prevention service providing early intervention support which in many cases avoids the need to access higher level and higher cost services. Examples of how the money is used include:

- buying services that help people to remain independent
- supporting people who may become homeless without this help
- helping people keep a tenancy
- stopping people needing more social care

There are a diverse range of services run by a number of different organisations provided by the council and the independent and voluntary sectors. These include:

- supported living accommodation for people with mental health issues or a learning disability
- sheltered housing
- advice services
- a range of “floating support” that supports people in their own homes

The development of new affordable ways of delivering Supporting People services will be through encouraging people to become more independent and supporting access to employment and skills training. We will continue to focus on safeguarding our most vulnerable people, preventing crisis and improving outcomes with the aim of reducing reliance upon more costly and complex services.

2. Consultation - internal and external

The Reductions to the Supporting People budget consultation document makes reference to the type of services, number of service users and current budget. There are 11 types of services delivered by 47 different providers including some council provided services. Budget reductions within these services could impact on:

- vulnerable people in need of housing related support services
- some council staff who provide directly managed Supporting People services
- independent and voluntary sector providers and their staff
- carers and people who support vulnerable adults

3. Context

Reductions to the Support People budget

The decision to implement the budget reduction of £1.8 m against these services was made at the meeting of Full Council on 21st February. Public consultation commenced on 13th June 2017 and makes suggestions on how the reductions could be split across all the different services and requests further suggestions on other ways we could consider to reduce the costs to the council of the services.

A summary of the four suggested options on how we can make savings is illustrated in the table below:

No.	Option	Description
A	Reduction of 25% for all services	All services will need to reduce either the number of people they help, or the level of support they can offer. They will probably have to reduce staff numbers as well.
B	No reductions to Accommodation Based services and some low level Mental Health and advice support. Reduction of 49% to all Floating Support services	This will mean there is no reduction to accommodation places and would protect people with high levels of need. But there would be significant reductions in the floating support services on offer.
C	A reduction of no less than 6% across all services and further reductions based on specific criteria.	These criteria are: how complex the needs are of the people that service supports, Mayoral priorities, highly specialist services, cost per service user. This option allows more targeted reductions.
D	Application of criteria to determine the reductions but with a maximum reduction of 51% applied to any service area	This means that we'll apply the same criteria as described in Option C, but ensure that no one service area will have reductions greater than 51%. This will mean some services will need to take a higher level of reduction than in Option C.

The full consultation document provides further detail on what the impact of each option could be and is available on the council website and is attached as Appendix 1.

People including service providers and service users are invited to have their say by:

- attending the wider Neighbourhood Consultation Events as well as bespoke Supporting People meetings to discuss and give their views on the proposals
- completing the online survey – attached as Appendix 2 in the form of a survey booklet
- writing to us at supporting.people@bristol.gov.uk

All the consultation material is available on the Council's website at:

<https://bristol.citizenspace.com/people/reductions-to-supporting-people-budgets/>

Alternative formats in braille, large print, easy read and audio CDs are available from the supporting people team.

4. Proposal

It is recommended the People Scrutiny Commission note this update on the consultation process and the proposed next steps below:

- by 5th September 2017 we will have consulted on options for making the recurrent budget reductions
- by the Cabinet meeting in September or October 2017 (depending on what is arranged) we will have analysed the consultation results with involvement from the lead cabinet member and presented them with recommendations to Cabinet
- by the end of 2017 we will have negotiated and implemented the reductions to provider budgets in line with contract conditions and notice periods
- we will progress implementation of the recommendations to deliver the required financial savings of £643,000 in 17/18 and an additional £1.157m in 18/19

5. Other Options Considered

Not applicable

6. Risk Assessment

It should be noted that the decommissioning of these services poses a real risk that people will enter statutory services earlier than they would have without support under Supporting People.

During consultation we will be discussing with service providers how to mitigate these risks and how services can be refocused. A measurement of success is how far we can make reductions without a resulting impact on statutory services.

This will be measured by tracking any service users entering statutory services who previously received Supporting People services and noting any increase in these numbers from the same time period last year.

7. Public Sector Equality Duties

- 7a) Before making a decision, section 149 Equality Act 2010 requires that each decision-maker considers the need to promote equality for persons with the following “protected characteristics”: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Each decision-maker must, therefore, have due regard to the need to:
- i) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010.
 - ii) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to --
 - remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic;

- take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of people who do not share it (in relation to disabled people, this includes, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities);
 - encourage persons who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
- iii) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to –
- tackle prejudice; and
 - promote understanding.
- 7b) The Supporting people consultation documents include an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) document which is available on the council website and is attached as Appendix 3.

We also plan to have focus groups to discuss the EqIA and the impact on people with protected characteristics. We will then review it at the end of the consultation and take into account all feedback on in the production of a revised document to accompany the recommendation which will go to Cabinet.

8. Legal and Resource Implications

Legal (taken from the Outline Business Case)

It must be ensured that the Council has due regard to its public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010 in relation to the decisions to be made in connection with this business case.

Finally, any proposed contract variation or extension would need to comply with the Council's Procurement Rules and the Public Contracts Regulations. We would need to see copies of the contracts, and the proposals to amend these to comment on the risk of this.

* d/w Nancy Rollason during the preparation of the consultation documents has highlighted that although the consultation is asking people to rank criteria for Options C and D, they will not be aware of the full impact on each service; and should options C and D be taken forward this could be subject to further challenge. This risk has been acknowledged by the lead member and strategic director and will be managed through the consultation process and preparation of final recommendations.

(Legal advice provided by Sinead Willis and Nancy Rollason)

Financial

(a) Revenue (taken from the Outline Business Case)

Due to the delays in going to consultation any implementation of the changes in service and resultant reductions in contact value are at best likely to deliver two months savings in the current financial year.

(b) Capital

Not applicable

(Financial advice provided by Neil Sinclair, Finance Business Partner)

Land

Not applicable

Personnel (taken from Outline Business Case)

Given the proposed reductions to some services delivered in-house, there may be a risk of redundancy. Once the preferred option is known following consultation, HR advice should be sought on the level of risk and the best way to manage it.

(Personnel advice provided by Alex Holly, HR Business Partner)

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 – Reductions to the Supporting People budget, Consultation Document
- Appendix 2 – Survey Booklet
- Appendix 3 – Equality Impact Assessment

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers:

None