

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM 7

EXECUTIVE REPORT

PROVIDING COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Executive Member for Culture and Communities: Mick Thompson

Executive Director for Growth and Place: Kevin Parkes

12th December 2017

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. The report sets out the ambitions and commissioning intentions for providing community support over the next two years.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

2. The report recommends reviewing our commissioning approach for homelessness, domestic abuse and sexual violence to enable a more strategic and co-ordinated service to be developed. Existing arrangements would remain in place until March 2019.

IF THIS IS A KEY DECISION WHICH KEY DECISION TEST APPLIES?

3. It is over the financial threshold (£150,000)
It has a significant impact on 2 or more wards
Non Key

DECISION IMPLEMENTATION DEADLINE

4. For the purposes of the scrutiny call in procedure this report is

Non-urgent
Urgent report

If urgent please give full reasons

BACKGROUND AND EXTERNAL CONSULTATION

Community Support

1. The Council has traditionally provided services to vulnerable people around a range of themed issues, including domestic abuse, homelessness and sexual violence. These services have provided much needed support to many individuals and families in the town over a number of years, and have been instrumental in changing many people's lives for the better.
2. The current delivery of these services can be summarised as follows:
 - Homelessness (£2m per annum)***
 - 3. The Council commissions a range of interventions aimed at supporting adult and youth homelessness, offenders with housing related support needs, veterans with extensive housing related support needs and vulnerable females. A range of support services are made available to these client groups ranging from community based floating support through to fully supported accommodation. In addition to these homelessness interventions, Middlesbrough Council also contracts out its statutory homelessness prevention and housing advice service to Thirteen Group, which aims to support people before they reach the point at which they need to access the more costly interventions.
 - Domestic Abuse (£481k per annum)***
 - 4. The Council currently commissions refuge and outreach services, dispersal units, perpetrator programmes, children / young people / family support services, independent advisor services, counselling services, and support services for women and children at risk of forced marriage and honour based violence. The Council also accesses government funding to address the needs of those with complex needs or with no recourse to public funds.
 - Sexual Violence (£59k per annum)***
 - 5. The Council currently commissions independent sexual violence advisor services, sexual violence counselling services, and contributes to a Tees Valley wide project aimed at co-ordinating and promoting sexual violence support.
 - 6. The cost breakdown for individual services is listed in Appendix I.

Alignment and Reconfiguration

7. Although each individual service has had its own direct impact on the community, they have all traditionally been commissioned separately through a number of different directorates, and with a range of different providers. As a reaction to this traditionally dispersed commissioning approach, the provider market in Middlesbrough has also developed into segmented specialist areas, narrowing the focus of some activity even further.
8. Work has been undertaken during 2017/18 to bring the various elements of community support together within one directorate, with a view to moving towards a more co-ordinated approach. Exploring the various themed elements, and the services within them in more detail has identified that although the services are contributing significantly to the town, there is an inbuilt degree of overlap, duplication and inefficiency due to the wide range of commissions and providers,

and consequently delivering a variable user experience. As there is a significant overlap in the customers of each service (due to their multiple, and mutually reinforcing needs), there is also a view that a more joined up approach to these services could yield a significant improvement in outcomes for people. The area of community support has previously been identified within the Council's Change Programme as requiring a new approach to be implemented to drive a more effective, and financially efficient model of delivery.

9. It is therefore proposed that services labelled as community support are reconfigured to adopt a more person centred approach that is able to address multiple vulnerabilities – moving away from a system where people need to interact with different providers through different referral routes for each different element of their needs. This will require adopting a different approach to procurement/commissioning than has been used previously for these services.
10. It should also be recognised that the Council is not the only funder, commissioner or provider of community support services in Middlesbrough, and a strong network of voluntary and community sector provision underpins a wider public infrastructure. How the Council's offer sits within this wider context will be a major factor in its future success.
11. Aligning multiple commissions and activities into a more joined-up model will require significant work to be undertaken to co-ordinate the end dates of existing contracts with providers, manage the required needs assessments to ensure appropriate targeting, and follow a robust procurement/commissioning route. Due to the complexity of the current picture this may take a number of years to achieve fully.

Opportunities

12. Although the alignment and reconfiguration of these services will take some time to achieve, the fundamental nature of the review work required to achieve this will enable the Council to factor in emerging issues, reflect best practice that is being highlighted nationally, and respond to research that is identifying critical success factors. Some of the issues identified for consideration include:
 - a) a clearer and more effective pathway for people will be required to respond to changes in how partner agencies are working with vulnerable clients, including the Police, South Tees CCG and the Community Rehabilitation Company;
 - b) alternative models of housing related support, such as Housing First and Psychologically Informed Environments are being implemented successfully around the country, and are showing significant benefits for service users;
 - c) significant work has been undertaken nationally to understand the issues around hidden homelessness and hidden poverty, leading to a need for more proactive 'early help' to avoid crisis situations developing;
 - d) authorities such as Plymouth City Council are adopting new ways of working that bring together all commissioning for vulnerable people (i.e. including mental health and drug & alcohol services) to provide an effective, and financially efficient 'system-wide' approach;

- e) changes in legislation around Universal Credit, Local Housing Allowance and the Homelessness Reduction Act will require service flexibility that currently does not exist;
- f) the role of the Live Well Centre in Dundas House as a hub for service users with multiple needs is offering delivery opportunities that were not possible when the existing commissions were put in place; and,
- g) the Council's approach to drug & alcohol treatment services will need to be recommissioned in just under three years, and will offer the opportunity to adopt more system wide approach if aligned with community support.

Proposed Approach

13. Aligning and reconfiguring around 15 different commissioned services will require a detailed review of the infrastructure necessary to provide support to users, as well as a detailed (and up to date) assessment of user needs. As the nature of the problems faced by service users are many fold, complex and interlinked, the natural assumption would be to pursue delivery options that address multiple issues collectively, and are responsive to the needs of the user, rather than being constrained by organisational or contract boundaries. The principles of future delivery should be:
 - a) create a whole system approach that meets the needs of clients with a singular support need whilst also providing an improved offer to clients with more complex needs;
 - b) develop a more efficient system through a collaborative model of support that reduces duplication and delivers an improved client experience with positive outcomes;
 - c) create a contractual environment where suppliers share responsibility for achieving outcomes and are mutually supportive, making decisions based on the best outcome for the service user; and,
 - d) develop the workforce to up skill generic support staff, enabling specialist services to be more targeted whilst improving service delivery and outcomes.
14. Achieving this across the three main elements should be relatively easy to achieve, given sufficient lead in time. More important however is to ensure that the approach taken to Council commissioned activity around these themes fits appropriately with the wider context of changes in health and social care. It is therefore proposed that this would be undertaken in three stages:
 - a) agreement of a vision for the Council's wider approach to supporting these service users (also incorporating drug & alcohol services and mental health), that would stand as a long-term 'commissioning intention';
 - b) alignment and reconfiguration of homelessness, domestic abuse and sexual violence services to fit around existing approaches to wider issues such as mental health and drug & alcohol dependency – in line with the agreed vision; and,

- c) alignment and reconfiguration of the whole system around the identified service users, in line with the long-term vision.

15. The timescales for each stage would be as follows:

Stage	Milestones	Lead
Agreement of a long-term vision for the Council's approach to supporting service users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement of longer-term vision (March 2018) • Report to Executive (October 2018) 	Directors of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture & Communities • Public Health & Public Protection • Adult Social Care & Health Integration • Children's Care
Alignment and reconfiguration of community support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs assessment undertaken (March 2018) • Determine procurement/commissioning model (June 2018) • Identification of supplier(s) (September 2018) • Report to Executive (October 2018) • Implementation (March 2019) 	Director of Culture & Communities
Alignment and reconfiguration of the Council's overall approach to supporting service users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs assessment undertaken (March 2019) • Determine procurement/commissioning model (June 2019) • Identification of supplier(s) (September 2019) • Report to Executive (October 2019) • Implementation (March 2020) 	Directors of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture & Communities • Public Health & Public Protection • Adult Social Care & Health Integration • Children's Care

16. The alignment and reconfiguration of community support will be managed as a project, through the Council's existing project management framework, with progress reported through to the Change Programme Board.

17. The development of the future approach will also involve working closely with partners to identify joint working/commissioning opportunities, and to ensure that the direction of travel best fits the wider context. Part of this will be achieved through engagement with the relevant partnership structures in Middlesbrough, including the Children's Trust Board and the Health and Wellbeing Partnership.

Implications for Existing Service Delivery

18. Aligning the existing commissions so that a wider reconfiguration can take place will require an exemption from the Council's Standing Orders to enable a number of changes to existing contracted delivery to be actioned. These include extending a number of contracts around domestic abuse and sexual violence until March 2019 to enable continuity of service where possible throughout the process. This is not without its risks as some contracts have already been extended due to a previous attempt to align commissioned domestic abuse activity. Extensions to March 2019 would however enable the scope of the alignment and reconfiguration to be maximised, and the risks to vulnerable service users to be minimised. Any contract extensions would be agreed through the Council's Commissioning Team.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IA)

19. This report sets out the approach to developing a direction of travel for community support. The outcome of this approach will require a full impact assessment to be undertaken.

OPTION APPRAISAL/RISK ASSESSMENT

Option Appraisal

20. The following options have been explored when developing the proposed approach:
- a) **do nothing** – rejected as whilst the outcomes currently being achieved are considerable, reviewing the collated commissions has identified that the value for money being achieved could be improved, as could the contribution to the 2025 Vision for Middlesbrough. The wide range of existing commissioned services are not integrated sufficiently to meet the multiple needs of vulnerable service users or ensure the best use of resources;
 - b) **aligning and reconfiguring community services in isolation** – rejected as although this would achieve significantly improved efficiency and performance of existing commissions, it would miss the longer-term opportunity to integrate with other linked services such as drug & alcohol and mental health. Agreeing a shared vision from the outset would ensure that this opportunity is not missed; and,
 - c) **recommissioning a single service, from a single provider** – although not rejected entirely, there is a clear role for a wide range of organisations in supporting vulnerable people. Other approaches that prioritise organisations and groups working collaboratively are likely to be prioritised.

Risk Assessment

21. The following risks have been identified as potential barriers to progress:
- a) **reduced service provision** – although an aligned and reconfigured approach will be expected to cost less than the existing arrangements, this would be achieved by removing duplication, designing a more effective and co-ordinated user offer, and targeting earlier support to prevent more expensive interventions being utilised. The outcomes for individuals should improve, and the number of people supported could reasonably be expected to increase, rather than decrease.
 - b) **new legislation** – the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act will put additional pressure on services in the short-term but government funding will be made available to assist with its implementation. The act places a legal duty on Councils to give people meaningful support to try to resolve their homelessness, as well as introducing measures to prevent people becoming homeless in the first place, so longer term it will help to reduce the need for some services as more emphasis will be put on prevention.
 - c) **gaps in existing provision** – although we know there is duplication across existing service provision, there is also the potential for the needs assessment to

identify areas where provision is not currently available. It is anticipated that prevention funding made available through the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act will allow earlier interventions and assist in identifying these risks before they require more costly services.

- d) ***managing extended contracts until March 2019*** – although seeking exemptions from the Council’s Standing Orders can represent a procedural risk, extending some contracts will be necessary to achieve overall alignment, whilst maintaining services to vulnerable users. The service will work with the Council’s Commissioning Team to minimise these risks.

FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND WARD IMPLICATIONS

Financial

22. There are no immediate financial implications for adopting the proposed approach, however the approach being taken will ultimately contribute to the financial savings targets identified within the Medium Term Financial Plan. The activity required to review activity, undertaken needs assessments and extend / renew existing contract activity prior to alignment and reconfiguration will all be met within existing budgets.
23. The savings ultimately achieved will contribute to the £1.4 million identified within the Medium Term Financial Plan over the next three years, although the split between stages will depend upon the model being adopted. Experience from other areas suggests that agreeing and implementing the right model will ensure that significant savings should fall out of the system without impacting upon users in any way.
24. A more aligned and reconfigured approach would also ensure that any money spent by the Council was being used most effectively to address the identified needs of vulnerable people.

Ward Implications

25. Ward Implications – the services identified for alignment and reconfiguration will potentially have an impact across all wards, but particularly those where there are higher levels of deprivation.

Legal Implications

26. The Council has a statutory obligation to provide accommodation and support for victims of homelessness and domestic abuse and there are a number of key legislations that need to be considered, including the Homelessness Act 2002, and the Housing Act 1996 (Part 7). The Homeless Reduction Act (2017) is also likely to commence in April 2018, and places additional burdens on local authorities, including extra requirements in terms of how and when homeless prevention and housing advice is provided, as well as an extension to the groups of people to whom we have duties.
27. Ensuring that a robust procurement/commissioning approach is ultimately adopted will require significant future input from the Council’s Commissioning Team, who have been fully engaged in the development of the issue to date.

RECOMMENDATIONS

28. It is recommended that the Executive:
- a) endorses the need to align and reconfigure community support services as outlined;
 - b) approves the necessary exemptions from Standing Orders to extend existing contracts until March 2019 to enable alignment; and,
 - c) approves the commencement of the process to agree a long-term vision and undertake the procurement / commissioning activity to align and reconfigure community services.

REASONS

29. As mentioned in the report, current support services are commissioned by different organisations and are therefore not always joined up and can lead to duplication. The adoption of an appropriately aligned and reconfigured service will lead to cost savings, more efficient service provision and better outcomes for the end user.

30. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

Body	Report title	Date
Plymouth City Council	Commissioning plan for support services for adults with complex needs	February 2016
University of York	Housing First in England An Evaluation of Nine Services	February 2016

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