

CABINET – 23RD NOVEMBER 2018

DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW MODEL FOR HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING SUPPORT

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

PART A

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the Cabinet's approval to consult on a new model for Homelessness and Housing Support Service for Leicestershire.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that:
 - a. The draft model for homelessness and housing support be agreed for consultation;
 - b. A further report be submitted to the Cabinet in Spring 2019 regarding the outcome of the consultation and presenting the final service model for approval.

Reasons for Recommendations

3. The County Council has a statutory duty to take appropriate steps to improve the health of people living in Leicestershire. This includes the provision of health improvement information, advice and support services aimed at preventing illness. Consultation with stakeholders will help inform the revised model. Being homeless has significant negative impacts on both physical and mental health and so the health of the homeless people is a priority area for public health.
4. The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) includes a savings target of £3.1m by 2020/21 across a number of contracts as part of the Early Help and Prevention Review (EHAP). Expenditure on homelessness support has been included in the Review and any savings realised from the current offer will contribute to the EHAP savings target.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

5. The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee will consider the proposed new model at its meeting on 16 January 2019 as part of the consultation process. The outcome of the consultation together with the final delivery model will be submitted to the Cabinet for approval in the spring of 2019.

6. Subject to approval of the final model by the Cabinet, it is intended that it would be implemented from October 2019.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

7. In September 2014 Cabinet considered the outcome of the strategic review of the Adults and Communities Department's secondary prevention services, and authorised the Director of Adults and Communities to implement the proposed prevention offer for Homelessness Support establishing the current service.
8. In June 2016, the Cabinet considered the outcome of an independent review of Early Help and Prevention services and approved the EHAP Strategy arising from that review. The proposed new model for homelessness and housing support is within the scope of this Strategy and will form part of the prevention offer in Leicestershire as set out in the Target Operating Model for prevention in the EHAP review.
9. In April 2018 commissioning responsibility for the service was transferred from the Department for Adults and Communities to Public Health, along with a revised MTFS savings target of £200,000 to be achieved by April 2020.
10. The Council does not bear the statutory responsibility for homelessness support. That responsibility lies with district councils under the Homelessness Act 2002 and latterly the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA), which came into effect from 3 April 2018 and which places a new duty to prevent and relieve homelessness regardless of priority. The Council does however have a duty under the Act to assist the district councils with formulating their strategies and to take these into account when formulating its social service function.
11. The proposals outlined in the report support the County Council's Strategic Plan and Single Outcomes Framework adopted in December 2017. Specifically it supports the following outcomes:
 - Wellbeing and Opportunity: The people of Leicestershire have the opportunities and support they need to take control of their health and wellbeing.
 - Keeping People Safe: People in Leicestershire are safe and protected from harm.
 - Affordable and Quality Homes: Leicestershire has a choice of quality homes that people can afford.

Resource Implications

12. The new model for homelessness and housing support is expected to achieve savings of £200,000 per annum which would contribute to the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) savings target. The total remaining budget for this service will be £300,000 per annum.
13. As part of the service remodel, it is likely that TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 1981) will apply. The purpose of TUPE is to protect employment rights when employees transfer from one business to another,

which may be the case with the new delivery model. Further work is required to identify potential redundancy costs.

14. The Director of Corporate Resources and the Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on the content of this report.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

15. Mr. J. Miah CC (Loughborough East). This report has been circulated to all Members of the County Council via the Members' News in Brief.

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PART B

Background

16. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 places statutory duties on the Council for public health services, including the duty to improve public health through mandated and non-mandated functions.
17. There is strong evidence that the public health duties of the Council make it desirable to offer support for a vulnerable group of society with poor health outcomes. Without appropriate support there is likely to be a pressure on the Council's statutory services including Residential Care, Supporting Independence Services, and Home Care.
18. Being homeless has, as would be expected, significant negative impacts on both physical and mental health. The average age of death for those who are rough sleeping or resident in homeless accommodation is 47 for men and 43 for women, therefore, the health of the homeless is a priority area for public health. In 2014, 80% of homeless people in England reported that they had mental health issues, with 45% having been diagnosed with a mental health condition. The most prevalent health problems among homeless individuals are substance misuse (62.5%), and 42.6% report having both substance misuse and mental health issues. Given that these problems are causally linked with homelessness, they add significantly more costs to homelessness due to the need for health and social care support
19. It is proposed that a future service model provides support for those at risk of homelessness who require more intensive support with issues such as substance misuse and mental health issues, moving away from the current more general housing support service. In addition the new model will work with families at risk of homelessness as well as single people.

Current Service

20. The County Council currently commissions housing-related support to vulnerable people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. This service is currently provided by Nottingham Community Housing Association (NCHA).
21. There are two components to the current service:-
 - a) An in-reach support service into the Falcon Centre Homeless Hostel in Loughborough which NCHA sub-contracts to Falcon Support Services within the Falcon Centre. The hostel is a 30-bedded hostel based in Loughborough, for homeless single people and couples over the age of 18. The current cost of this element of the contract is £180,000 per year.
 - b) An outreach floating support service which is delivered by both NCHA and The Bridge. The current cost of this element is £320,000. This includes a combination of telephone support, group work, specific issue surgeries, e.g. benefits advice, signposting and one-to-one contact where necessary. This element of support consists of 6.2 whole time equivalent staff.

22. The current service aims to enable service users to develop or maintain their independence within the community. It does this by providing 'short term' accommodation and a floating support service, to both prevent homelessness and to support and enable homeless people to move back into secure appropriate accommodation.

Proposed New Model for Homelessness and Housing Support

23. It is proposed that the in-reach housing support element based at the Falcon Centre remains unchanged, continuing to provide intensive support and accommodation in times of crisis. However it is proposed that the outreach floating support element will be decommissioned and replaced with a redesigned (£120,000) community outreach model in line with the Council's Local Area Coordination service (LAC).
24. Leicestershire Local Area Coordination is a complex community-based intervention, operationally delivered by a team of Coordinators. Also referred to as an Asset Based Community Development programme, LAC's fundamental aims are to increase individual and community capacity while reducing demand for costly primary and acute services, as well as other public services, by working with beneficiaries who are vulnerable and often experiencing a range of multi-layer complex challenges. It is considered that this evidence based preventative model could therefore also be applied to homelessness prevention. The remit of the current LAC Service would expand to include responsibilities around prevention of homelessness. A number of additional Local Area Coordinators would be recruited. Subject to consultation on the service model it is anticipated that around three whole time equivalent posts would be created as specialist posts working in partnership with the wider LAC team.
25. LACs have already established excellent partnerships and referral mechanisms with district and voluntary and community sector partners. It is expected that referrals would continue to be received for outreach floating support and that onward referrals would be made for other supporting services including district council prevention services and substance misuse and mental health services. The LAC coordinators will, if the proposal is accepted, facilitate a holistic assessment of need and ensure that the right services are engaged to provide wrap around support to individuals at risk of homelessness. Different to the current offer, the LAC model would work with families as well as single people at risk of homelessness.
26. The Homelessness LAC coordinators would enable the development of a consistent Leicestershire-wide approach to preventing homelessness. Each specialist LAC would have a distinct geographical remit. The specialist LACs will also provide cascade training to all the other 22 current LACs to enable them to provide an enhanced service tackling some of the key risk factors for homelessness such as support with tenancy issues, debt counselling, neighbourhood disputes, alcohol and drug addiction and family breakdown.
27. Each specialist LAC would develop relationships with district and community partners to ensure a consistency of approach, identifying and where possible filling in gaps in service provision, and will work to ensure duplication of services is avoided.

28. The Falcon Centre in-reach service element would remain unchanged. The Centre in-reach support element would enable support for those already homeless and in crisis, complementing the specialist LAC service, and Homelessness Service provision already being provided by district councils.

Timeline

29. The current service has been extended until end September 2019. It is planned for a new service to be in place no later than October 2019.

Consultation

30. Subject to the Cabinet's approval, a targeted consultation exercise is planned to take place for 12 weeks between January and April 2019. The consultation will seek the views of district councils, the current provider, Nottingham Community Housing Association (and its sub-contracted providers), the wider voluntary and community sector, CCGs and health service providers, and the current service providers for substance misuse and mental health services. This will be done via an online questionnaire and targeted consultation events. The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee will receive a report on the proposals at its meeting in January 2019.
31. The outcomes of the consultation will help inform the final model which will be presented to the Cabinet for approval in the spring of 2019.

Equalities and Human Rights Implications

32. The Equality Act 2010 imposes a duty on the local authority when making decisions to exercise due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not. An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) report will be completed in relation to the impact of any change to service model. This will be informed by the outcomes of the consultation and will be presented to the Cabinet alongside the consultation outcomes to assist the Cabinet with the exercise of its Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010.
33. An EHRIA screening assessment has been carried out, which concludes that although the proposals are likely to have an impact on individuals or groups associated with several of the 'protected characteristics', at this stage the direction and size of the impact is unknown and so a full EHRIA is required. The EHRIA screening will be used to inform the consultation exercise, for example in targeting the cohorts and representative groups who should be involved.

Background Papers

Report to the Cabinet on 17 June 2016 - Early Help and Prevention Review and Strategy
<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=4603&Ver=4>