

2nd July 2012**Agenda Item: 4****REPORT OF CHAIRMAN OF THE ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH
COMMITTEE****RESPONSE TO PETITION PRESENTED TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE
COUNTY COUNCIL ON 17TH MAY 2012****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of the report is to inform the committee of a response to the issue raised in a petition presented to the Chairman of the County Council at the Council meeting on the 17th May 2012:
 - a. Petition regarding Supporting People, Mansfield (ref 2012/002).

Information and Advice**Petition Regarding the Reduction in the Supporting People Grant in Mansfield**

2. A petition of 804 signatories has been received objecting to the proposed reduction in the Supporting People Grant. The petition says:

'We, the undersigned, object to the proposed drastic reduction in the Supporting People Grant which will affect all of those who use services such as: sheltered accommodation, wardens, help for homeless people, those subject to domestic violence, help and support for those with mental health to stay out of hospital, drugs and alcohol services, people with learning and physical disabilities etc. Reducing the overall budget from £22.5m to possibly as low as £7.5m is going too far.'

'We the undersigned object to the downgrading of long term support within sheltered housing.'

The reduction in Supporting People Grant

3. The 'Supporting People Grant' used to be paid to the County Council by Central Government in order for the Council and its partners to commission housing-related support services for vulnerable people. The grant was ring-fenced for this purpose and had been reducing over time since the programme commenced in 2003. In April 2009, the ring-fence for this funding was removed and since April 2010 it has not been a separately identified grant. Following extensive consultation Full Council, in June 2011, approved proposals for

Supporting People funded services which enabled savings and efficiencies to be achieved whilst at the same time targeted the available resources at the most vulnerable adults and young people.

The effect of the savings and efficiencies programme on vulnerable people

4. Following the initial review of all services, the County Council took additional time to work through the Supporting People savings proposals and undertook two consultation exercises. In taking account of the feedback received from the consultations, the Council has been able to respond in a number of ways which have helped to reduce the impact on vulnerable people:
 - a) In the main, key accommodation services, such as women's refuges and supported accommodation for homeless people, young people and teenage parents, have been retained with a sustainable level of funding.
 - b) Additional funds have been committed to enable a phased reduction over an extensive period of time, allowing providers to make the necessary adjustments in a more planned way. The Council is already encouraged to see that, as a result, many providers have been able to maintain existing service capacity after some funding levels were reduced in November 2011.
 - c) Some services, such as floating support services and services for people with mental health needs, have been reconfigured to enable efficiencies to be delivered. These are currently subject to tender in accordance with European Union Procurement Rules. In developing the specifications for these services the Council has been mindful of the need to ensure that people have access to preventative services at times of need and more flexible commissioning approaches have enabled the Council to get the best outcomes for vulnerable people from the more limited funds available.
 - d) Services for young people and women experiencing domestic violence are being commissioned in a more integrated way, working more closely with other departments within the County Council to achieve more streamlined commissioning and delivery of services. This should benefit those receiving and those delivering services.
 - e) Support services for older people are currently being reconfigured and instead of funding long-term services in sheltered accommodation regardless of need, the Council is seeking to commission a wider range of preventative services including outreach support and befriending services which are focussed on providing support for older people when they need it, such as at times of change.

Reducing the budget possibly to as little as £7.5m

5. In response to the first consultation exercise, which ended in January 2011, the Council responded with plans to ensure that the Supporting People budget was retained at the maximum possible level of £12.5m. The Council has been able to do this by both committing additional County Council funds and by attracting funding from Health.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

6. To update the Committee on the petition presented to the last meeting of the County Council.

Statutory and Policy Implications

7. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) It is RECOMMENDED that the contents and proposed actions be noted and the petitioner informed accordingly.

COUNCILLOR KEVIN ROSTANCE

Chairman of the Adult Social Care and Health Committee

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments

8. Because the report is for noting only, no constitutional comments are required.

Background Papers

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

Mansfield District:

- East Mansfield – Councillors B Cross and M Wright.
- North Mansfield – Councillors J Bosnjak and P Tsimbiridis.
- South Mansfield – Councillors C Winterton and S Garner.
- West Mansfield – Councillor V Bob and J Stendall.
- Warsop – Councillor J Allin.

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