

BUDGET AND FINANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Budget and Finance Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 15th May 2012 at 6.30pm in the Scrutiny Meeting Room, Civic Offices, Telford

PRESENT: Councillors R. Sloan (Chairman), K. Austin, A. Lawrence, C. Mollett and R. Williams (Co-optee).

Also attending: K. Kalinowski, Assistant Director Care & Support; Jo Cornwell, Team Leader – Contracts & Quality Monitoring; Stephanie Jones, Scrutiny Group Specialist.

BFSC-44 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Budget and Finance Scrutiny Committee held on 23rd April 2012 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

BFSC-45 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs. R. Evans, A. Stanton, C. Turley.

BFSC-46 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

BFSC-47 SUPPORTING PEOPLE

The Chairman reminded members that this item was being reviewed following questions arising from scrutiny of the budget proposals at a previous meeting. The key issues for members related to the large number of people receiving low cost support: whether real benefits could be delivered for such small amounts, the costs of delivering small amounts of support whether this offered value for money or could be delivered differently and whether the service could be protected in the current climate.

Karen Kalinowski, Assistant Director Care & Support, and Jo Cornwell, Contract & Quality Monitoring Team Leader, summarised the report circulated with the papers for the meeting.

The report explained that Supporting People had a budget of around £3.9 million (2010/11) and £3.7m (2011/12), £3.5m (2012/13) and £3.3m (2013/14) to help vulnerable people maintain or establish independence giving them a better quality of life. The programme currently funded 39 contracts related to housing support, community alarm services and support in extra care housing. Providing this kind of low level preventative support allowed people to live independently at home without

the need for costly care packages.

A large number of the low cost services were for Sheltered Housing and Community Alarm schemes. The Community Alarms helped tenants to maintain their independence in a safe environment, and could be used in the future to plug in other telehealth technologies (such as falls mats) which would help to proactively manage people at home. The alarms contract had just been re-tendered and moved to one provider at a saving of £80k per year.

Supporting People also helped people maintain their tenancies. A small amount of support (e.g. one hour a week) had been shown to help prevent the breakdown of tenancies, and research by CLG backed this up. Appendix 1 gave details of the CLG study which showed that the net financial benefits of Supporting People were estimated nationally at £2.77 billion per year against an overall investment of £1.55 billion. Applied to Telford & Wrekin, the net benefit was estimated at £10.3 million based on an investment of £3.4m. Without the services, the impact on social care and health services budgets would be unsustainable.

Supporting People funding replaced elements of housing benefit and had passed to local authorities to administer. The old benefits were tenancy based rather than needs based which meant that owner occupiers were not eligible for support. The services are currently undergoing a major redesign, moving to a floating support model with eligibility driven by needs and not tenancy.

The services were contracted out at unit costs so there were no additional administration costs to the authority other than contract management and monitoring which was very minimal and based on risk. There was rigorous accountability. Although the government had removed the ring fenced purchasing grant, ceased to provide an administration grant and removed the need to report to Communities and Local Government, providers continued to collect and provide quarterly performance returns which provided a wealth of information about the outcomes in terms of enabling people to live independently. Outcomes were benchmarked with other authorities. A needs analysis had been carried out with service users, providers, stakeholders and commissioners to establish how the services were working and how they should be reshaped for the future. All stakeholders saw the value of the service in terms of preventing the need for expensive social and health care, and in terms of helping people to stay in their own homes.

In summary, Supporting People offered excellent value for money in terms of the benefits and savings delivered, and it was felt an extension to the service would reap even bigger benefits.

Following the report, further information was then provided in response to Members' questions:

- In terms of quantifying the potential savings, this can only be done by making assumptions about what would have been spent had the Supporting People service not been put in place. The model is based on a 3:1 ratio of return. In Telford & Wrekin, Supporting People is being re-modelled to move away from a tenure based system to a floating support service. Under the tenure system,

support can be provided regardless of the level of need, and this needs to change so that support is based on need, irrespective of whether the person is a tenant or owner occupier. Targeting the low level preventative support in the right place will reduce pressure on social care budgets.

- The adult care service has been restructured to move towards preventative services - enablement, re-ablement and rehabilitation. People with a higher level of need than Supporting People will go through a 6 week intensive enablement programme to reduce the level of dependency on expensive care. National evidence shows that this approach can save up to 70% on care costs.
- Currently, around one third of people using the Intermediate Care service are put through the enablement programme, of which, around one third have no on-going care requirements on completion of the period of reablement. The restructure increased capacity in the enablement team so it is expected that over time all people will go through enablement. This will mean more people will have a lower level of need, or no need at all. It will take some time to build up the service and demonstrate the impact on budgets, and savings targets have been set over 3 years.
- There are people in their own homes receiving social care who would have benefited from Supporting People services which is why the service is moving from tenure based care to floating support.
- The Council's preventative agenda will also save money from the health budget. The NHS had passed £2m to the authority under a Section 256 agreement to invest in reablement services. Some of this funding has been used to increase the clinical capacity (physiotherapists etc.) in the multi-disciplinary teams and to enhance community based services, although more investment in this was required.
- The majority of the Supporting People budget was spent on providing small amounts of low level preventative support to a large number of people. An example of the type of support provided at the higher cost end was support for around 12 adults with learning difficulties, supported in their own flats within a shared accommodation scheme. Supporting People had helped them live independently and had gradually reduced the level of care and night staff required. Although the cost was at the high end of the Supporting People range, it was very small when compared to the cost of social care.
- In terms of the service redesign, a wider service was being looked at to provide support to people other than those in social housing in receipt of benefits. Previously, a number of hours support had been allocated according to the fact that a person lived in a registered social landlord property and is in receipt of housing benefit, regardless of need. The aim was to move to an assessment system so that support would be provided as needed, and hours could be adjusted so that more could be provided but within the same cost i.e. hours based contracts tailored to people's needs. Details of the model would be formalised by the end of June and would go back to providers for consultation. Providers were committed to moving forward from a tenure based system to a

floating service model.

- The wish of people to remain independent and living in their own homes could not be underestimated, and the whole approach was to move from an institutional to a community based approach.

At the end of the discussion, the Chairman summed up by saying that the Committee had tested the evidence and were pleased and satisfied by what they had heard. The Committee requested a further report in 12 months time to see what savings had been made and how the service had improved.

RESOLVED - that a further report be brought back in 12 months.

BFSC-48 FORWARD PLAN

The Chairman reminded members that this was the last meeting of the Committee for this municipal year and that the scrutiny work programme for 2012/13 was being planned. Members were invited to put forward their suggestions for the work programme for any area and not just related to the Budget & Finance Committee's remit. The Cabinet Member for Resources would be consulted about the timetable for consultation on the 2013/14 budget proposals to help determine the Committee's schedule of meetings.

The Chairman had not been nominated as the Committee's Chairman for 2012/13 and this would therefore be his last meeting in the Chair. He thanked all Members for their hard work over the last year.

The meeting ended at 7.40 p.m.

Chairman:.....

Date:.....