

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
THURSDAY 10 JULY 2014
HOUSING RELATED SUPPORT PROPOSALS
REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND STRATEGIC HOUSING

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(The decisions on this matter will be recommendations to Cabinet)

1. PURPOSE

To consider the implications of Oxfordshire County Council's proposals for reduced spending on housing related support.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee makes recommendations to Cabinet with regard to the consultation response to be made by the District Council in respect of the proposals.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. The County Council is currently consulting on proposals to reduce their expenditure on housing related support services for homeless people, substance misusers and victims of domestic abuse. The proposal was approved for consultation by the Oxfordshire Health Improvement Board on 29 May and the consultation period ends on 17 September 2014.
- 3.2. As part of its budget setting process last year, the County Council decided to reduce their housing related support budget for these client groups by 38% reflecting the level of reduction in Supporting People grant that they receive from Central Government. The budget will reduce over two years from £3.8m spend in 2014/15 to £2.3m in 2016/17, a reduction of £1m in 2015/16 and £0.5m in 2016/17.
- 3.3. The services that people receive as housing related support vary according to the needs of the individual but they are designed to enable vulnerable people to achieve independent living. Typically services help people to manage money and pay bills, learn how to sustain a tenancy, reduce offending, substance misuse or other anti-social behaviour and facilitate access to community and health services, work or training. Housing related support has proven to be particularly effective in preventing homelessness.
- 3.4. The services that are affected by the proposals are detailed in [Appendix A](#) (page 5). Accommodation based services comprise hostels and move on accommodation supporting various client groups including rough sleepers and other single homeless adults and victims of domestic abuse. Community floating support meets the needs of the full range of client groups including young people, those with mental health problems and the physically disabled as well as vulnerable families. Floating support is currently delivered to people in their homes rather than being tied to specific accommodation. It is a particularly flexible service in that support hours can be tailored to the needs of the individual as their needs change over time and can be made available to prevent crisis or homelessness.
- 3.5. The County Council has set out individual proposals for hostel provision, move on accommodation, floating support, substance misuse and domestic abuse services. Only one scenario has been provided for the purposes of the consultation exercise,

although alternative proposals can be submitted in response to the consultation. Details of the consultation questions are set out in [Appendix B](#) (page 7).

Hostels – proposed reduction of £450k (28%) from £1.5m to £1.1m in 2015/16

- 3.6. No reduction in the 56 bed spaces in O'Hanlon House Oxford. This is the entry point to the pathway of housing related support for single people who have been verified as sleeping rough and have a connection to Oxfordshire.
- 3.7. Accommodation based support will be commissioned at a reduced hourly rate of £18 per hour compared with current average hourly rates between £18.50 and £25 per hour.
- 3.8. No reduction in the number of bed spaces in Simon House and Lucy Faithful House, the other two hostels in the City but 23 bed spaces will no longer be supported.

Move on accommodation – proposed reduction of £75k (15%) from £488k to £413k in 2015/16

- 3.9. Eight of the 83 bed spaces in Julian Housing in Oxford will no longer have support
- 3.10. Four of the 8 bed spaces in West Oxfordshire will not be re-commissioned and one will become an emergency bed space.
- 3.11. Funding in Cherwell District will increase from £27k to £100k to develop additional services for single homeless people to better meet the needs of the local population

Floating Support – proposed reduction of £390k (31%) from £1.2m to £0.9m in 2016/17

- 3.12. The proposal is to apply the reduction in two phases, half in 2015/16 and half in 2016/17 in order to allow learning from the first phase to inform commissioning in the second. No indication is given as to how the reduction would be apportioned across the county.
- 3.13. The majority of floating support is provided on a one to one basis at present but it is proposed that the reduction will be achieved by commissioning new innovative models of provision including group support and less one to one.
- 3.14. The following table illustrates current floating support service provision

District area	Capacity (units)	Capacity %age	2014/15 funding
Cherwell	128	23%	£283,968
Oxford	183	33%	£407,433
South	80	14%	£172,850
Vale	70	13%	£160,504
West	92	17%	£209,889
Total	553	100%	£1,234,644

Substance Misuse – proposed reduction of £214k (100%)

- 3.15. Services at Howard House, Project 195 and Osney Court in Oxford will no longer be funded from this budget. The Public Health Team will re-commission treatment services which will replace this provision.

Domestic Abuse – proposed reduction of £132k (40%) from £331k to £199k in 2016/17.

- 3.16. This budget funds the provision of 29 bed spaces in the three refuges and the resettlement service in Oxford, Cherwell and South Oxfordshire. It also funds the outreach support service in West Oxfordshire. A review of services for victims at

risk of domestic abuse is to be carried out to inform commissioning of new services. There will be a further consultation exercise after the review.

- 3.17. As West Oxfordshire is the only District to benefit from funding from this budget for an outreach service (approx. £40k), it has been suggested that this service should not be re-commissioned. This outreach service has capacity to support around 15 people, either male or female at any one time.

Implications for West Oxfordshire if this proposal is implemented

- 3.18. Whilst it is thought that the proposed 50% reduction in supported accommodation for single adults in West Oxfordshire could be managed effectively, the proposed reduction in floating support has potentially far reaching implications for the District Council's ability to prevent homelessness and to support vulnerable people to access alternative accommodation, particularly if combined with the loss of the outreach service for victims of domestic abuse.
- 3.19. In 2013, there were 247 recordable crime incidences of domestic abuse and 732 non recordable crime incidences in the District. The loss of the outreach service, if floating support is not available in its place, would have a serious impact on the Council's ability to support victims of domestic abuse to either remain in their present home or be re-located to alternative accommodation within the District.
- 3.20. Floating support can be provided to anyone who requires support irrespective of the type of accommodation in which they live. Services can have a greater 'reach' than accommodation based services since people in isolated or rural areas can be provided with support in their own homes.
- 3.21. Floating support is a key aspect of the pathway of service provision since it can prevent people from needing to go into supported accommodation and can also assist people to move on from supported accommodation at an earlier point than might otherwise be the case.

4. ALTERNATIVES/OPTIONS

- 4.1. Other proposals that have been considered by the County Council have been:-
- A greater reduction in the number of supported hostel beds in Oxford and less reduction in floating support
 - No increase in service provision in Cherwell District and less reduction in existing services
 - Commissioning fewer refuge places and re-commissioning outreach support on a countywide basis
- 4.2. Members may have other options to be considered.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. The County Council has responsibility for the provision of the range of services discussed in this report but there are significant implications for the services the District Council provides in relation to housing support.
- 5.2. Should the County Council continue with the proposals within this report to reduce funding, members may want to consider how this Council commissions its services for housing support from its available budget to see if there are any modifications in service provision which may provide a better all-round service to users and mitigate some of the effects.

6. RISKS

- 6.1. Any reduction in the provision of housing related support in the District is likely to have an adverse impact on homelessness prevention at a time when the need for floating support in particular is increasing particularly in connection with the impact of welfare reform.
- 6.2. The County Council has carried out a service and community impact assessment of the proposals and considered various ways to try and mitigate any potential adverse impact. This is available at https://consultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consult.ti/Housing_Related_Support_Service/consultationHome

7. REASONS

The provision of housing related support is one of the Council's corporate priorities in connection with its homelessness prevention strategy.

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Background Papers:
Oxfordshire County Council consultation

https://consultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consult.ti/Housing_Related_Support_Services/consultationHome

Information about current housing related support services in Oxfordshire

Service area	Service	Provider organisation	Type of provision	2014/15 funding
Hostels	O'Hanlon House, Oxford	Oxford Homeless Pathways	56 bed spaces with support in a purpose built hostel	£597,000
	Simon House, Oxford	A2 Dominion	52 bed spaces with support in a purpose built hostel	£478,000
	Lucy Faithfull House, Oxford	Two Saints	61 bed spaces with support in a purpose built hostel	£505,000
Move on accommodation	Julian Housing, Oxford	Oxford Homeless Pathways	83 bed spaces with support in shared houses	£297,000
	Vineyard, Abingdon	Oxford Homeless Pathways	14 bed spaces with support in single flats	£86,000
	Single Homeless Service, West Oxfordshire	St Mungo's	8 bed spaces with support in a shared house	£78,000
Floating support	Community Floating Support	Connection	553 people supported in the community	£1,235,000
Substance misuse	Howard House, Oxford	Smart CJS	10 bed spaces with support in a shared house	£56,000
	Project 195, Oxford	St Mungo's	7 bed spaces with support in a shared house	£91,000
	Osney Court, Oxford	St Mungo's	7 bed spaces with support in single flats	£67,000

Service area	Service	Provider organisation	Type of provision	2014/15 funding
	Connection Project, Cherwell	Connection	6 bed spaces with support in single flats	£27,000
Domestic abuse	Access and helpline service Refuges in Oxford, South and Cherwell Outreach in West Oxfordshire	A2 Dominion	Countywide access - 22 people supported in the community Local helpline and access service Oxford - 13 bed spaces with support in two shared houses Cherwell - 12 bed spaces with support in a shared house South - 4 bed spaces with support in a purpose built refuge Resettlement from refuges - 29 people supported in the community West Outreach - 15 people supported in the community	£331,000

Oxfordshire County Council Questionnaire for Housing Related Support Consultation

The amount of the overall saving needed has been agreed. Now we want to know your views about:

- The principles we are proposing to use for commissioning (choosing what services to buy) of housing related support
- What the services should be supporting the people who use them to achieve (outcomes)
- The detailed proposals for
 - Hostels
 - Move on accommodation
 - Floating support
 - Substance misuse
 - Domestic abuse

Outlined here are the details of the proposal for your comment:

Q1. Principles for commissioning of housing related support

The commissioning principles we are proposing are:

- 1) Housing related support helps people to live independently and complements the delivery of statutory duties.
- 2) Housing related support funding should pay for support services, not 'bricks and mortar'.
- 3) Accommodation and building related costs should be paid for through housing funding streams such as rent, housing benefit and service charges.
- 4) There is a need for emergency accommodation across the county to prevent rough sleeping.
- 5) Support provided should meet a range of high to medium to low levels of needs.
- 6) Support provided should offer best value for money.

Question: Please give your views on the proposed principles. Is anything missing? Could anything be added?

Q2. Outcomes for people using the services

Housing related support services have historically been commissioned to support people to achieve the following overarching outcomes:

- Economic wellbeing
- Enjoy and achieve
- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Make a positive contribution

The achievement of these outcomes is measured by more specific targets. Specific measures for future services could include how many clients are supported:

- to achieve independence or move on in a planned way
- towards and into employment, education and training
- to engage with appropriate health services
- to determine their own support needs and take the lead in addressing them
- to develop positive relationships with family and friends
- to reduce substance misuse

- to remain safe
- to reduce offending behaviour
- to increase their motivation and self-confidence

Question: Please give your views on these proposed outcomes. Is anything missing? Could anything be added?

Questions about the detailed proposals

Overall the necessary savings target has been agreed. The below outlines how we are proposing each service area is changed to achieve it. We want to know what you think about each area: tell us your views about **what** is proposed to be changed, **how** and by **when**.

We want to know whether you think the savings should be divided up differently between the five service areas - have we got the balance right?

Q3. Hostels

1. The first part of the proposal for hostels does not contribute to the savings. It is proposed to maintain the 56 bed spaces at O'Hanlon House and to create a new Assessment Centre. This will further reduce rough sleeping and be the entry point into the pathway (the 'pathway' is a model to think about the way services are provided from the perspective of the person using them: their aims, aspirations and increasing independence and how they can access the support they need to achieve these at the right times.)
2. It is proposed to reduce funding for hostel-based support from £1.5m in 2014/15 to £1.1m in 2015/16. This is a proposed reduction of £450k or 28%.

It is proposed that this reduction in funding is achieved by:

- Commissioning support at a reduced cost of £18 per hour (support is currently paid for at between £18.50 and £25 per hour. Nationally the average cost of home support is £15 per hour)
 - Reducing intensity of support at Simon House and Lucy Faithful House, with 23 bed spaces no longer having support attached
3. To make the changes from 2015/16

Question: What are your views on points 1-3 of the proposals for Hostels?

Q4. Move on accommodation

1. It is proposed to retain provision of three emergency access beds in Cherwell, South and Vale and West Oxfordshire. This part of the proposal does not have savings attached and aims to improve access and better meet the needs of local population.
2. It is proposed to reduce funding for move on accommodation from £488k in 2014/15 to £413k in 2015/16. This is a proposed reduction of £75k or 15%. It is proposed that this reduction in funding is achieved by:
 - Reducing intensity of support at Julian Housing, with eight out of the 83 bed spaces no longer having support attached
 - Reducing capacity at West Oxfordshire Single Homeless service by four bed spaces or £39k, to better reflect the needs of local population
 - Transferring the Cherwell Connection project into the main adult homeless pathway from the substance misuse pathway
 - Increasing Cherwell funding to £100k to support developing services for single homeless people to better meet the needs of local population

3. To make the changes from 2015/16.

Question: What are your views on points 1-3 of the proposals for Move on accommodation?

Q5. Floating Support

1. It is proposed to reduce funding for floating support from £1.2m in 2014/15 to £0.9m in 2016/17. This is a proposed reduction of £390k or 31%.

It is proposed that this reduction in funding is achieved by:

2. Commissioning new innovative models of community based support including 1:1 and group support
3. Making the saving in two phases - 15% reduction in 2015/16 and a further reduction in 2016/17. This allows any learning from using the new models of support in the first year to be applied when planning the second year.

Question: What are your views on points 1-3 of the proposals for Floating Support?

Q6. Substance Misuse

1. It is proposed to reduce funding for substance misuse from £214k in 2014/15 to £0 in 2016/17. This is a proposed reduction of £214k or 100%. However, services will still be provided.

Julian Housing in Oxford will continue to be available for move on accommodation from treatment services. In addition, the Public Health Team is already in the process of re-commissioning treatment services which will pick up these needs, providing £150k of subsidy.

2. It is proposed that the reduction in funding is achieved by: Stopping funding Howard House, Project 195 and Osney Court
3. To make the changes from 2015/16

Question: What are your views on points 1-3 of the proposals for Substance misuse services?

Q7. Domestic Abuse

1. It is proposed to reduce funding for domestic abuse from £331k in 2014/15 to £199k in 2016/17. This is a proposed reduction of £132k or 40%.
2. It is proposed that the need for local helpline, access and outreach services is reviewed to develop the most efficient and cost effective service distribution.
3. The savings plans will be based on this review and will be put in place in 2016/17

Question: What are your views on points 1-3 of the proposals for Domestic Abuse services?

Q8. The balance

Please tell us what you think of the way we have divided up the savings between the five service areas (hostels, move on accommodation, floating support, substance misuse and domestic abuse). Have we got the balance right?

Q9. Further comments

Please give any further comments or suggestions on how the savings could be implemented

Q10. Social and Community Impact Assessment (SCIA)

We have undertaken an assessment of the impact on individuals and groups of these proposed changes. These are outlined on the Social and Community Impact Assessment which is available on the consultation page.

Question: Please give your views on the impacts identified. Have we missed anything?