

<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Head of Housing and Waste Management</b>
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<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Report Track:</b>	<b>Cabinet: 24/03/16</b>

**CABINET**  
**24 MARCH 2016**  
**IMPACT OF SUPPORTING PEOPLE CUTS ON HOUSING**  
**AND THE WIDER COMMUNITY**

**1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To outline the impact of the withdrawal of Supporting People grant funding from the end of March 2016.

**2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Cabinet note the contents of this report in relation to:
- a) The financial impact of the withdrawal of Supporting People grant funding
  - b) The mitigating measures that partner agencies and the Council have taken to keep services operational

**3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.1 Supporting People grant funding of £222,000 will be withdrawn by Staffordshire County Council at the end of March 2016. This is in addition to the £300,000 that was withdrawn in 2014/15.
- 3.2 Withdrawal of Supporting People funding affects the most vulnerable people in the District. Those with the highest needs such as single homeless with support needs or teenage parents could potentially lose their accommodation and support networks.
- 3.3 Partner agencies who manage the affected services in the District have had to re-evaluate their Business Plans and try and find alternative funding to maintain their projects and support provision. This has not been possible in all cases.

- 3.4 Bromford Housing has confirmed that they will not be in a position to provide a floating support service, post March 2016. To maintain a floating support service to socially excluded groups the Council will provide £30,000 from within the Tenancy Services budget to fund a Tenancy Sustainment Officer. Staffordshire County Council has confirmed that they can match fund our contribution so two Tenancy Sustainment Officers can be recruited. Their funding would link in with the Building Resilient Families and Communities (BRFC) Programme which is Staffordshire's response to the Government's Trouble Families initiative. As the funding links with the BRFC programme it would need to be reviewed annual as part of the Payment by Results commissioning process.

#### **4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1 The Council's Strategic Objectives include 'More and better housing' which incorporates 'planning for the housing needs of the District'.

#### **5 Report Detail**

- 5.1 In June 2014 Staffordshire County Councils Cabinet approved a review of services formerly funded via the historic Supporting People grant funding stream. This was a two stage withdrawal of funding. In 2014/15 £300,000 of Supporting People funding was withdrawn which helped finance our social alarms and sheltered housing support services.

- 5.2 The Council managed to protect all of the services provided in our sheltered schemes through the introduction of a service charge, which is met in full for tenants who receive 100% housing benefit. This means that our sheltered housing scheme tenants continue to receive the support of a Scheme Manager and enjoy the other additional services which the schemes provide.

The Council also protected the continued provision of a social alarms service for up to 1,350 of our most vulnerable tenants through efficiencies and funding from the Housing Revenue Account.

- 5.3 Phase 2 of the funding withdrawal will result in the following support groups funding ceasing at the end of March 2016:
- Single homeless with support needs;
  - Young people at risk;
  - Teenage parents;
  - Floating support services for socially excluded groups;
  - Offenders and people at risk of offending;
  - People with learning disabilities;

- Remaining sheltered housing services for older people; and
  - The Supporting People element of Extra Care housing services
- 5.4 The Council made representations to Staffordshire County Council objecting to the removal of funding without consultation and the impact this would have on vulnerable groups in the District but there has been no reversal of the decision or alternative funding found.
- 5.5 The Supporting People services in Cannock Chase that will no longer receive funding from the end of March 2016 are:

<u>Provider</u>	<u>Service Type</u>	<u>Contract value to the District per annum</u>
Bromford Housing Association	Floating support for socially excluded groups	£96,196
Bromford Housing Association	Young Families Supported Housing Scheme, Heath Hayes	£14,753
YMCA Wolverhampton	Supported Housing Foyer (Aelfgar House, Rugeley)	£110,985
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£221,934</b>

- 5.6 Staffordshire Women's Aid will also lose their Supporting People funding but a commitment has been given to continue to fund domestic abuse services and this is to be a pooled arrangement with Stoke-on-Trent City Council and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- 5.7 Heantun Housing was also subject to a loss of funding for the County-wide Floating Support Offender Service. However, an offender based support project has been commissioned by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) which is at a reduced level from the current support contract. The contract is for Heantun Housing Association to support 120 people County-wide on a floating support basis with a priority to support high risk offenders.
- 5.8 Council Officers have been having regular meetings with Staffordshire County Council and the Providers affected to try to mitigate the impact of the potential loss of these services from April 2016.

### **Bromford Housing Group Services**

- 5.9 Bromford Housing Group have confirmed that in the short term they will fund the Young Families Scheme in Heath Hayes but to date they haven't made any decisions regarding their longer term plans for this facility.
- 5.10 Bromford has also unfortunately confirmed that they will no longer be in a position to provide a floating support service to socially excluded groups. Referrals to this service have been regularly made by Housing/Housing Options staff and it is felt that the lack of this type of support will have a negative impact on the wellbeing of vulnerable groups in the District. Between January 2015 and January 2016 approximately 100 referrals were made to this service and there are no alternative floating support providers in the District.
- 5.11 Funding of £30,000 from the Tenancy Services budget will be utilised to fund a Tenancy Sustainment Officer. This post will focus on enabling people to sustain their tenancies which could include money advice, particularly concerning welfare reform, focusing on affordability issues at a pre-tenancy stage and signposting when appropriate. This post will help to mitigate the loss of the Bromford Housing floating support service.
- 5.12 Staffordshire County Council have confirmed that they can match fund our contribution so two Tenancy Sustainment Officers can be recruited. Staffordshire County Council's funding would link in with the Building Resilient Families and Communities (BRFC) programme which is Staffordshire's response to the Government's Troubled Families initiative. As the funding links with the BRFC programme it would need to be reviewed annually as part of the Payment by Results commissioning process.
- 5.13 Building Resilient Families and Communities puts in place a 'team around the family' operating model. This model has 3 levels of intervention dependent upon the assessed needs of the family. Families are worked with directly to improve outcomes and in particular, reduce offending and anti-social behaviour, increase educational attainment and increase employability.
- 5.14 The government has funding available to help achieve improved outcomes for families on a payment-by-results basis. Staffordshire County Council would be able to access this funding by match funding a post and enabling the postholder to work part of the time with the Family Intervention Projects Team (FIP). Members of the FIP teams are made up of personnel from Staffs County Council Family First Local Support Teams, Staffordshire Police and from a range of other agencies including the voluntary and community sector.
- 5.15 The funding provided by Cannock Chase Council for a Tenancy Sustainment Officer will be used specifically for housing related support issues, particularly with helping to ensure vulnerable people have the necessary support to remain in their home. More complex support issues would be dealt with during the time spent within the FIP team and the expertise from the FIP team would be shared across the Housing team to build effective links.

### **YMCA Wolverhampton**

- 5.16 The Aelfgar House Supported Housing Foyer in Rugeley is managed by the YMCA. There are 26 units of accommodation available for young people aged 16-25 who may have a range of complex support needs. A support contract was put out to tender by Staffordshire County Council to make funds available to meet the support needs of 16/17 year olds. The YMCA won part of this contract and although the contract amount does not match the funding they have lost, they are confident that Aelfgar House can continue providing the same level of provision for 12 months from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016. Beyond this period uncertainty remains, so there is no long term solution available to them at the current time.
- 5.17 Service provision that will be lost within the County will also have negative implications for Cannock Chase. Midland Heart has confirmed that they cannot absorb the cost of delivering services at Lichfield Foyer/Aiden Court and Lichfield House/Scotts House without funding. Lichfield Foyer provides supported accommodation for young single homeless aged 16-25 and Lichfield House provides supported accommodation for those aged 18-30. The facilities will close on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 and alternative uses for the buildings will be identified. As of February 2016, 3 residents from Cannock Chase were residing at Lichfield House and 5 at Lichfield Foyer so the loss of these facilities limits where the Council can make referrals to and could increase homelessness in the future.
- 5.18 Eagle House in Stafford is also owned and managed by Midland Heart. There are 32 units of accommodation for single homeless people aged 18 to 64 with support needs. Seven residents of Cannock Chase are currently receiving support at the facility. Midland Heart have stated that the loss of funding will see changes that impact on the range of customers they are able to support at Eagle House. Loss of this facility or a potential change in client group will further limit the referral options that the Council has for vulnerable people who need support.
- 5.19 The Council have received a Government Homelessness Prevention grant annually since 2002/03 but there are no guarantees that this will continue indefinitely and there are increasing pressures on this allocation as more projects/schemes try to access funding streams to stay in operation. The Council have allocated £64,640 for 2016/17. Typically the grant has helped to fund projects such as a Citizens Advice fast track money advice project, the Safe As Houses scheme which helps victims of domestic violence to stay in their home and a contribution to the Cannock Chase Churches Housing Coalition rent advance/loss and damage guarantee scheme. Demands on this grant allocation will only increase with the loss of Supporting People funding.

**6 Implications****6.1 Financial**

Funding of £30,000 for the Tenancy Sustainment Officer is contained within the HRA approved budget for 2016-17. The second post is to be funded from a contribution from Staffordshire County Council of £30,000 which will be reviewed annually.

**6.2 Legal**

None.

**6.3 Human Resources**

The role of Tenancy Sustainment Officer has been subject to job evaluation and is graded as F on the Councils pay scale which ranges from £21,530 per annum to £24,472 per annum.

**6.4 Section 17 (Crime Prevention)**

None.

**6.5 Human Rights Act**

None.

**6.6 Data Protection**

None.

**6.7 Risk Management**

The Council have taken action to try to lessen the impact to the District of the Supporting People cuts but the long term future of services remains uncertain.

**6.8 Equality & Diversity**

Community Impact Assessments (CIAs) were undertaken by Staffordshire County Council for both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Supporting People Review.

**6.9 Best Value**

None

**7 Appendices to the Report**

None

**Previous Consideration**

Removal of Supporting People Grants    Cabinet    17 July 2014  
By Staffordshire County Council

**Background Papers**

None