

**Press release dated 6 August 2014**

## **CONSULTATIONS AGREED FOR CHANGES TO HOUSING-RELATED SUPPORT**

People using or providing housing-related support will be asked for their views on phase two of proposed changes by Derbyshire County Council which could see some services staying the same while others reduce or stop.

The services currently receive funding from the county council's adult care budget.

The new proposals to maintain, change, reduce or stop funding some housing-related support services form part of the authority's plan to meet £157 million of budget cuts by 2018.

The council must make the savings due to reductions in Government grants, inflation and greater demands on areas of the budget for adult social care and vulnerable children.

Adult care has the largest share of the overall county council budget and currently £206 million is spent on services for older and vulnerable people including adults with disabilities.

To meet the target required by the Government the council must save up to £60 million from the money it spends on adult care services by 2018.

In January the council revealed plans to make cuts to a number of adult social care services. One of the proposals was to cut the money it spends on housing-related support by £9 million over two years, in two phases.

Following consultation, phase one of the changes to housing-related support services has now been agreed, with £2.4 million being cut from services.

Extensive discussions with providers of services during the phase one consultation and extra money from business rates and the council's public health budget has led to some services that could have been cut straight away being able to operate for longer, in one case up to 18 months longer.

The council is now considering new proposals as part of phase two of the housing-related support cuts.

At its meeting this week (Tues 5 Aug), the council's Cabinet agreed to consultations being held on proposals to change, reduce or stop funding a number of housing-related support services.

The council will consult on continuing the following services at existing levels or a reduced level which will not impact on clients:

- Long-term services for people with physical or sensory disabilities – these services provide housing-related support for people with a physical or sensory disability which

may adversely affect their communication and/or mobility and access to information. It is proposed to continue funding the existing two schemes, supporting 14 clients. There will be no change to the service.

- Home Improvement Agency – this countywide service assists 114 vulnerable homeowners and private sector tenants who may be older, disabled or on a low income to repair, improve, maintain or adapt their homes. It is proposed to continue funding the service at the same level.
- Falls Recovery Service (FRS) – this service, set up with the NHS, responds to people who have fallen, and while they may not be injured, need help to get up. It is proposed to continue funding the service at £304,904 per year, but this will no longer come from the HRS budget.
- Mental Health HRS Accommodation-based Long-Term Service (over two years) – through discussions with the current provider, it is proposed to reduce funding for the service from £93,600 to £29,120 from 1 April 2015. By using other funding means and increased client contributions, this would not affect the level or quality of service provided.
- Community Alarm Monitoring Long-Term Service – alarms and telecare devices can support individuals to live safely and independently at home. The proposal is to continue supporting the same number of people (up to 12,500 clients) but to reduce the planned budget from £1,093,853 to £651,786 from 2015/16. The proposal is that Derbyshire County Council would form a joint public sector company to continue delivering an alarms service. The formation of the company would generate efficiencies and would not affect the level or quality of service.
- Extra Care, Long-Term Service – this service provides support to people living independently in extra care schemes. The proposal is to continue funding HRS in the three extra care schemes (Whitfield House in Glossop, Stonelow Court in Dronfield and Oakland in Swadlincote). There will be no change in service for clients.
- Floating support services for people with a learning disability – this service provides support to people with a learning disability countywide to live independently in their own home. The proposal is to reduce the length of support from two years to nine months.

The council will also consult on continuing the following services subject to a review:

- Supported Living for people with a learning disability – these services provide care and support to people living independently in their own accommodation. The current budget from HRS is £2,667,059 per year and the proposed budget is £1,446, 415. A

review of supporting living for people with a learning disability is being carried out which aims to achieve these efficiency savings. This review will be finished by December 2014 and a further report will go to Cabinet for consideration.

- Young People's Housing-Related Support Service – this service supports 294 young people aged 18-24 who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The original proposal was to reduce the budget from £1,031,367 to £172,182. Discussions followed with the service provider and changes have been made to the service, which would allow it to continue running for an extra 12 months up to 31 March 2016. The proposal is to carry out a review of the service to consider the future after this date and any future proposals would be subject to a full consultation.

The council will also consult on continuing the following services within reduced budgets:

- People at Risk of Domestic Abuse – accommodation and floating support services. These services support men or women, with their children if they have any, who are at risk of domestic abuse, offering accommodation, such as refuges, and support in people's homes. Discussions with service providers has led to a revised proposal which would see the budget reduced from £849,838 to £662,874, leading to a reduction in support and accommodation. The length of support received in accommodation-based services would reduce from two years to one year and the support at home (floating support) would reduce from two years to nine months. There would also be a reduction in numbers of people being able to access the service from 204 to 160.
- HRS Services for People with Mental Health Conditions – the proposal is to reduce these services, the number of clients they support and the length of support received for both accommodation-based with floating support and the floating support service. It is proposed to reduce the service from a total budget of just over £1.8 million to £535,971, affecting 229 clients by April 2017.
- Handy Van Network – this service, run with Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service, supports older and vulnerable people carrying out practical tasks in their homes to help them stay safe. The proposal is to reduce funding from £452,602 to £251,951 on 1 April 2016. The plan would be to achieve the saving by re-procuring the service. It is anticipated the reduced funding could see a reduction in the number of visits the vans carry out per year.
- Older People's Floating Support – this service provides people aged over 55 years with housing-related support to maintain and develop maximum levels of

independence. The proposal is to continue to provide the service at a slightly reduced level, from 6,838 clients to 5,924 clients from 1 April 2015.

- People with a learning disability placed with families for support (providers) – three providers are currently funded to deliver housing-related support to people with a learning disability in an adult placement. It is proposed the funding for these services is reduced from £21,188 to £10,137 per year.

The council will also consult on proposals not to re-procure and stop funding to the following services:

- Older People's Sheltered Housing with warden on site – the proposal is not to re-procure sheltered housing (with warden) services after 31 March 2015 when the current contracts end, saving £788,395. There are 16 providers of this service and up to 1,139 older people currently receive it.
- Derbyshire Older People's Housing Options Service – this service is delivered by iDecide and provides information, advice, support and practical help to older people. The proposal is not to re-procure this service from 31 March 2015 when the contract ends, saving £197,426 per year.

All the services which face being changed, reduced or have funding stopped are being considered as part of phase two as the council does not have a legal duty to provide them.

Since the proposed budget cuts to adult care services were first announced in January, the council has been working with providers of housing-related support services to see where savings can be made and if they could be maintained at some level but provided differently, at a lower cost.

These discussions continued throughout phase one of the consultation and are still continuing with organisations that could be affected by phase two of the proposals.

In addition to consultation, the council will also be undertaking detailed analysis of the possible negative impacts of these proposals.

Changes made by providers to some services, renegotiations of contracts and money from public health and business rates will be used to offset some of the cuts where possible, and it is anticipated that phase two will result in savings of just over £6 million.

Derbyshire County Council Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care Councillor Clare Neill said: "We are working hard to protect services where we can and trying to find ways to mitigate against some of the cuts where possible, including using council reserves.

"However, the size and scale of the cuts we are facing means we have no choice but to reduce or cut funding in some areas.

“We want to hear from as many people as possible during the consultation and work with organisations affected to see if services can be offered differently so that some can continue to run, even on a reduced budget, to support the most vulnerable.

“I would urge people to give their views, talk to us and work with us during the consultation to see if we can come up with alternative solutions that may result in maintaining some services, even at a reduced level.”

Councillor Neill added: “During the consultation I would also ask people to tell us their ideas on how we could make additional savings across the council. If they think we do something that wastes money or duplicates something another organisation is doing, we want to know about it and hear their suggestions.”

Consultations will be launched on 12 August for proposed changes, giving people who may be affected and providers of the services time to give their views.

The usual 12 week consultation period has been extended by two weeks due to the consultations being launched in August, when many people who may wish to comment could be away.

All people and providers who are potentially affected will be made fully aware of the proposals and have an opportunity to comment or propose alternative means of achieving the savings.

People who may be directly affected and interested parties will be written to and given more information, along with a questionnaire where they can give their views. They will also be able to fill out the questionnaire online at [www.derbyshire.gov.uk/challenge](http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/challenge)

The consultations will run until 18 November 2014.

A further report will then be prepared, taking in to consideration the views given, and considered by the council in February 2015.