

SPECIAL HEALTH SOCIAL CARE & WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 17TH JULY 2014

SUBJECT: SHOPPING SERVICE

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR SOCIAL SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 As part of the agreed budget strategy for 2015/16 and 2016/17 this report seeks the views of Members in relation to the current provision of a discretionary Shopping Service.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The report provides information on the discretionary shopping service currently provided for individuals in conjunction with other eligible assessed needs.
- 2.2 The report outlines options for the future of this service to support the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Council's MTFP currently requires estimated savings of £6.5m for the 2015/16 financial year and £6.9m for 2016/17.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 The provision of a shopping service is discretionary, i.e. the Directorate is under no statutory obligation to provide such a service. Other Gwent Authorities have confirmed they do not provide or commission a shopping service unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- 4.2 Currently there are 976 people in receipt of this service and the demand for the service has increased year on year. Shopping is not provided as a stand-alone service as individuals receive the service as part of a larger package of care provided in their own home. In the majority of cases individuals have 1 hour per week for carers to undertake shopping in a local shop.
- 4.3 Care providers currently undertake the shopping service for individuals, with the service being primarily commissioned from the independent sector at a cost of circa £13.50 per hour. In 12 cases the service is provided by the in-house Home Assistance & Reablement Team (HART). The annual total cost of the service is circa £690k.

4.4 The following options have been identified for Members to consider: -

Option 1 - Maintain current service provision

Under this option the existing service will be maintained at a cost of circa £690k per annum. However, the increasing demand for the service is likely to result in cost pressures in future years for a discretionary service at a time when it is necessary for the Directorate to make financial savings.

Option 2 - Cease provision of a shopping service with no alternative provision

Under this option the service would cease from an agreed date with no alternative provision being made available through the Directorate of Social Services. This option would generate savings of £690k and individuals would be required to make their own shopping arrangements. In circumstances where an exceptional need is agreed a level of service will be provided.

Option 3 - Establish a dedicated shopping service

The rate currently paid for the shopping service is the same as that paid to providers for personal care. Under this option a tender process would be undertaken for a dedicated shopping service. It is anticipated that the service could be commissioned at a lower rate than currently paid for personal care, as there are no regulatory requirements for a shopping service in terms of staff training and qualifications. For each £1 reduction per hour that can be achieved through a re-tendering exercise, approximately £50k per annum could be saved.

Consideration would need to be given to whether this dedicated service would be provided to existing service users only or offered to new service users. If the former is agreed the savings would increase over time as the numbers in receipt of the service diminishes. If the latter is agreed the savings may be negated due to increased demand for the service.

Option 4 - Develop a range of community no/low cost options.

This option would involve ceasing the service from an agreed date, whilst in the interim developing a range of community options to enable people to resolve their own difficulties. This could include the following: -

- The use of volunteers to undertake shopping for or with individuals.
- Enabling individuals to access existing services such as Internet shopping.
- Signposting individuals to meal delivery services, local shop deliveries etc.

If this option was agreed there would need to be engagement with a range of services including Digital Inclusion, Caerphilly On-line and Communities First to provide options for people to access internet shopping and /or local facilities. It is unlikely that the full savings of £690k would be delivered under this option, as there may be a need for some investment in alternative low cost services. Furthermore, there may also be a need to invest in 2 fixed-term posts for a period of 6 months to generate the information on community based services and engage with individuals to enable them to meet their own needs. This could be considered as a potential Invest to Save scheme.

Option 5 - Close service now and develop criteria for provision

Under this option the service would be maintained for existing users but would only be provided to new service users where agreed eligibility criteria are met that focus on exceptional need. Savings would be delivered over time as the number of existing service users reduce, consequently, it will be some time before any sizeable savings are delivered. Demand from new service users would also need to be carefully managed.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 An equalities impact assessment will be completed for the preferred option.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 As identified throughout the report.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The impact on staff would be minimal as there are only 12 service users in receipt of a service from the in-house Home Assistance & Reablement Team (HART).

8. CONSULTATIONS

8.1 There are no consultation responses that have not been reflected in this report.

8.2 A consultation process will be undertaken on the preferred option.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Members of the Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider and comment upon the options set out in paragraph 4.4 of the report.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 To ensure that the views of the Scrutiny Committee are considered prior to this matter being referred to Cabinet.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Local Government Act 1972.

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