

Audit Committee Update – Supporting People Programme Grant

8th July 2016

1. Introduction

In the last Audit Committee meeting on 22nd March 2016 a brief update report was presented to show the progress that had been made by the Supporting People Team on the key issues raised by the Internal Audit of the Supporting People Programme Grant.

This update seeks to evidence the work that has been done since the last Audit Committee meeting and seeks to re-assure members that the work is progressing in a planned and timely way.

2. Progress to date

2.1 Project Work

Progress is being made by the Supporting People Team on all the 4 elements that were agreed in the Status Report. However, this needs to be seen in the context of the wider Supporting People Programme Grant (SPPG) issues faced by the Welsh Government and Carmarthenshire County Council.

The following is a brief summary of the actions completed to date:

1. Floating Support projects – The tender for the new locality based floating support services was launched in April 2016. This tender was successful with a provider being found for all 9 nine localities. This will reduce the number of projects from 19 currently to 9 going forward. The number of service providers has also reduced from 7 to 5. This will mean that monitoring the new floating support service will be more efficient.
2. Jointly funded supported living projects – Work is currently being undertaken as part of the Accommodation and Efficiency Programme around these services.
3. Older people alarm services –An evaluation of these services has now been completed. A paper regarding the provision of this has been presented to the Supporting People Planning group for consideration.
4. Remaining services (Domestic Abuse, Homelessness, Young People and Substance Misuse static projects) - The prioritisation exercise work has been completed for some service areas and a report was submitted to the Supporting People Planning Group on 12th April where it was requested that an action plan be put in place. A detailed action plan was presented to the Group in the meeting on 5th July. This plan will inform the work of the Supporting People Team over the next 12-18 months and will help prioritise where the resources of the Team need to be focused.

2.2 Contract Monitoring

The programme of contract review meetings is ongoing with a number of meetings being held in April and May 2016. These were accompanied by monitoring visits to test eligibility for funding and also outcomes achieved.

2.3 SPURS

The concept of the SPURS (Supporting People Unified Referral System) Gateway system was introduced in the last update. A meeting of the Supporting People Lead Officers for the Mid and West Wales region (Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Powys) took place on Monday 20th June where this was discussed. It was apparent from this discussion that SPURS had not yet been fully implemented in the other counties. It was agreed in this meeting that Carmarthenshire join the system with all referrals going through this portal.

2.4 Financial Administration

Since the last Audit Committee, much work has been done to resolve the financial administration issues highlighted. It was anticipated that the transfer of responsibilities would have taken place in April 2016. Unfortunately, due to recruitment issues, this has not yet transpired. A new member of staff has been recruited to the Business Support Team commencing on Monday 4th July. Regular contact has been maintained with the Business Support Team and a procedure for the grant administration has started to be compiled. Work will continue to put this fully in place.

3. Feedback on Welsh Government Review

On May 25th 2016, the Welsh Government undertook a review of the administration of the SPPG by Carmarthenshire. Prior to the visit, the review team asked for a list of the payments made and contract information to back this up. A list of seven projects was then identified and more detailed information provided to the team. It is pleasing to note that the verbal feedback that the review team gave was generally positive. They reported that they could see definite improvements in the financial administration and payments of the SPPG and that appropriate contractual arrangements were now in place. They cited a couple of good practice service specifications and were complimentary of review work undertaken on domestic abuse. At the same time, they considered there was insufficient contract monitoring on some of the contracts that they sampled and identified this as an area for attention. This has been noted.

4. Conclusion

It is hoped that this report shows the progress that the Supporting People Team has made since the last Audit Committee meeting and the commitment remains to improve the administration and management of the SPPG in line with the standards expected by Carmarthenshire County Council.