

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on the 13 June 2019

Report of the Director of Public Health and Wellbeing

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
(All Divisions);

Integrated Home Improvement Service - Consultation Outcome

(Appendices A and B refers)

Contact for further information:

Dr Sakthi Karunanithi, Tel: 01772 530765. Director of Public Health and Wellbeing
Sakthi.Karunanithi@lancashire.gov.uk

Executive Summary

At its meeting on 14 February 2019, Full Council approved a proposal to cease the Integrated Home Improvement Service, subject to a full public consultation, with the final determination to be made by Cabinet taking into account the responses.

This report outlines the results from public consultation, in the context of wider policy developments and equality analysis, and provides appropriate information for Cabinet to consider the proposal to cease Integrated Home Improvement Service, resulting in an annual budget saving of £880,000. The Integrated Home Improvement Service also provides for delivery of Lancashire County Council's statutory obligation to provide 'minor adaptations', and therefore this element of the service will require procurement should the proposal go ahead.

This is deemed to be a Key Decision and the provisions of Standing Order C19 have been complied with.

Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to:

- (i) approve that the Integrated Home Improvement Service contracts be decommissioned (ceased) by 31st March 2020, and that work take place with existing providers to deliver this.
- (ii) support the development of new approaches and integrated pathways, utilising some of the one off investment funding of £0.500m agreed by Cabinet as part of proposals relating to Health Improvement Services.
- (iii) approve that a procurement exercise be undertaken to deliver a 'minor adaptations' service which is currently delivered through the Integrated Home Improvement Service.

Background and Advice

Since 2014, Lancashire County Council has operated an Integrated Home Improvement Service across the county.

This service brings together home improvement services under a single specification to provide a value for money integrated and enhanced service focussed on low level practical preventative measures and advice, including the supply and installation of minor aids and adaptations. Together, these services aimed to provide support to make homes safe, secure and risk free.

The Integrated Home Improvement Service provides early intervention and support to keep people independent and well in their own homes, prevent admissions to hospital and residential care. The service also supports people returning from hospital. It provides a holistic approach, with many people who require a minor adaptation also benefiting from other Home Improvement Agency (HIA) services. Services are provided directly by the Home Improvement Agency and appropriate referrals are also made to other agencies, thus increasing the customer's knowledge of available local community and neighbourhood support.

The Integrated Home Improvement Service includes the following key elements:

- a) Handy person services - typically used for small jobs/repairs that take less than two hours
- b) Home visit to assess and advise what jobs/repairs are needed. Other support (see below) can also be delivered directly through the Home Improvement Agency, by referral to other services as appropriate.
- c) Help to organise/oversee home repairs, maintenance, adaptations or security measures such as drawing up plans, organising quotes
- d) Advice about what housing is available to meet an individual's needs
- e) Advice about what financial support is available, this includes help for people to maximise their income such as attendance allowance, and supporting people to apply for grant funding to enable them to afford adaptations.
- f) Advice and information about other organisations that can help

To be eligible for Integrated Home Improvement Services people must be disabled and/or have a long term condition; be at risk of admission to hospital or residential care; and/or need support to be discharged from hospital or care setting. Initial advice and guidance, together with handyperson support is provided free of charge to eligible people, with materials being chargeable.

The Integrated Home Improvement Service is also contracted to deliver the statutory 'minor adaptations' up to a value of £1,000, that Lancashire County Council is required to provide. Examples of such adaptations include external rails and step adaptations, additional banister rails and semi-permanent ramping. This element of

the service will need to be procured separately, and people who are eligible under Adult Social Care (ASC) legislation will continue to receive it.

Service Performance 2018-19

Providers report receiving 18,375 enquiries during the year, although this will also include other Home Improvement Agency advice and/or support services including delivery of statutory minor adaptations.

Of the services proposed to cease:

2018-19	Number	Examples
Core Jobs	2612	Arranging and applying for funding for boiler repairs / replacement; support to claim welfare benefits; case worker home assessment and advice.
Handy Person Jobs	6664	Such as steps repaired, carpet tacked down, bed moved downstairs, locks fitted and doors made secure.

Consultation

The council has undertaken a comprehensive consultation with a range of stakeholders to ensure views are sought on the proposal, to allow due consideration of the implications. The public, staff and partner organisations were invited to give their views on the proposal to cease the Integrated Home Improvement Service. The consultation was promoted across Lancashire via partner organisations, community bodies and service providers. Electronic versions of the consultation questionnaire were available online through the council's website, with paper versions by request and distributed via the provider organisations.

The fieldwork ran for eight weeks between 18 February 2019 and 15 April 2019. In total, 981 completed questionnaires were returned from members of the public and service users (176 paper questionnaire responses and 805 online questionnaire responses). In terms of the consultation with partner organisations, 140 completed questionnaires were received.

The detailed Integrated Home Improvement Service Consultation Report (Appendix A) has been developed from the consultation responses received.

Key findings - Public Consultation

- About two-thirds of respondents (65%) said that they have used the Integrated Home Improvement Service in the last two years and about two-fifths of respondents (38%) said that they have referred someone to the service.
- Respondents who have used the Integrated Home Improvement Service in the last two years were most likely to say that the services they had used were: handy person services (75%), home visit to assess and advise what jobs/repairs are needed (50%) and help to organise/oversee home repairs, maintenance, adaptations or security measures (36%).
- About four-fifths of respondents (82%) disagreed with the proposal.

- When asked why they agree or disagree with our proposal, respondents were most likely to comment that it is a vital service (54%), that elderly, disabled and/or vulnerable people need to be helped and safeguarded (31%) and that other organisations don't offer these services or advice (23%).
- When asked how the proposal would affect them, respondents were most likely to say that they wouldn't know where else to go for these services (35%).
- When asked how they get the support they needed or may need in the future, if they were unable to use the Integrated Home Improvement Service, three-fifths of respondents (60%) said that the work would not get done and over a quarter of respondents (27%) said that they'd pay for the work to be done by someone else.
- When asked if there is anything else that they think we need to consider or that we could do differently, nearly half of respondents (46%) asked for the service to continue.

Key findings – Partner Organisation Consultation

- Nine-tenths of respondents (90%) said that they disagree with the proposal.
- When asked why they agreed or disagreed with the proposal respondents were most likely to say that it helps the elderly, disabled and vulnerable to live independently and safely (67%), to keep it, it's a much needed service (37%) and that it will increase demand on much needed services (29%).
- When asked how the proposal would affect their services and the people they support respondents most commonly said that it will affect vulnerable people's health, wellbeing and independence (63%), increased cost/pressure on social care and other services (31%), there would be nowhere to sign post to/no other provision (26%) and increased cost/pressure on the NHS (26%). 11% responded by saying that, services will not be viable.
- When asked if there is anything else that they think we need to consider or that we could do differently, respondents most commonly said to reconsider, explore other options/delivery models (56%), there is not an alternative (36%) and it will affect vulnerable people's health and quality of life (32%).

Key findings – Partner Organisation Workshops

Consultation workshops with service providers and partner organisations were held between 15 February 2019 and 18 March 2019. In total, 61 people attended the workshops.

Impact on vulnerable people's independence and the added demand and increased costs to health and social care were the most frequently raised issues across the workshop groups.

Participants were asked to consider what could be done differently. Other suggestions were made including use of Better Care Fund and working with the NHS and districts through the Integrated Care System, to consider alternative options. Alternative redesign suggestions included pooling the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) funding with minor adaptations funding, and streamlining the whole adaptations system.

The potential loss of the Home Improvement Agency services as a result of not being financially viable was raised by partner organisations, which may impact on wider services outside the Integrated Home Improvement Service contract, but also remove one of the options for delivery of minor adaptations which will still need to be provided as required by legislation.

Proposed Approach

Overall, although the consultation has identified concerns should the service cease, on balance, and in order to contribute to Lancashire County Council's commitment to achieving a balanced budget, it is recommended that the council works with existing providers to decommission (cease) the Integrated Home Improvement Service contracts by 31st March 2020. This provides for a three month period beyond the initial proposed cessation date.

As it is recognised that Integrated Home Improvement Services are valued and help keep people independent in their homes, it is proposed to:

- Delay the implementation of this saving until 31 March 2020 to allow for the procurement of the minor adaptations element of the service and to approach partner organisations to discuss potential future funding opportunities
- In particular, approach district councils to request they consider using the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) funding to support Home Improvement Agencies. Spend against the Disabled Facilities Grant budget varies by district, with most districts now spending the totality of their annual budgets. Consultation responses suggested this could be considered, although there was not a general consensus in support.
- Work with NHS and district colleagues to consider alternative arrangements and funding opportunities.
- Consider how Home Improvement Agency services can work most effectively with other preventative services, developing a joined up approach to redesigning pathways to keep people safe and well in the home.
- Consider how services can work together to provide a continuum of equipment and adaptation, from handyperson services, low level equipment, minor adaptations, through to more major adaptation utilising the Disabled Facilities Grant. This could be supported by proportionate assessment, including self-assessment, trusted assessors, Adult Social Care (ASC) Support Officers and Occupational Therapists (OTs).
- Promote the Home Improvement Agency Services local networks to increase people's community knowledge and link them into other services to support the development of neighbourhood working.
- Build on the existing strengths of Home Improvement Agency Services to undertake home based risk assessment, and to investigate the possibility of contributing further to partners initiatives for example to reduce front door demand, support discharge pathways, prevent falls and provide people with advice and support.

If partners were able to commit to this process, the county council would invest a one off amount to support the transformation process, whilst continuing to fund minor aids and adaptation services. In 2018/19 the county council spent just over £1million

on minor adaptations delivered through the Integrated Home Improvement Service contract in adult social care. However county council funding for non-minor adaptation services (listed (a) - (f) above) will cease.

Risk Management

- **Partner Contributions**

Through the consultation, it was evident that there was a desire for further discussions given the importance of the current Integrated Home Improvement Service. However no specific commitments of alternative funding have been identified. It is proposed that the Integrated Home Improvement Service will cease at the end of March 2020, and at this point there remains a strong possibility that new funding arrangements will not be agreed.

- **Wider Policy Agenda**

Integrated Home Improvement Service works within a policy framework that is increasingly focused on prevention and joining up services to provide people with what they need to maintain their independence and wellbeing. Of particular note are the:

- Corporate Strategy
- Care, Support and Wellbeing of Adults in Lancashire - Vision
- NHS Long Term plan (<https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/>)

Should the proposal go ahead, the opportunity for Integrated Home Improvement Service to continue to support these agendas will be lost.

- **Procurement of Minor Adaptations Element**

Currently Adult Social Care delivers its statutory minor adaptations through the Integrated Home Improvement Service contract. Should the proposal go ahead, the minor adaptations element of the service would require a separate procurement exercise to be undertaken. It is understood that Public Health funding supports the financial viability of the current Integrated Home Improvement Service, so removal of that funding may put the continued delivery of minor adaptations through Home Improvement Agencies at significant risk, and may also result in availability of services different across the county.

The current funding arrangements enable the Home Improvement Agencies to work flexibly with Adult Social Care and Occupational Therapists to deliver services. This flexibility could be lost, with the possibility of increasing workload for Occupational Therapists, service delays and increasing the cost of providing minor adaptations.

The short timescales involved in a procurement exercise for minor adaptations will place demands on corporate commissioning and procurement services, together with operational teams.

- **Increasing Demand**

Demand may increase for Adult Social Care and NHS services, particularly in terms of increased falls and accidents, resulting in increased budgetary pressures.

- **Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector**

Demand within the sector for advice and support services may increase, for example for welfare benefit and income maximisation support.

Equality Impact

Ceasing Integrated Home Improvement Service is most likely to disproportionately impact on older people, particularly older females, and those with disabilities and or long term health conditions (Equality Analysis Appendix B).

Finance

The agreed saving in relation to Home Improvement Services was in total £0.880m and was profiled for delivery over 2019/20 (£0.220m) and 2020/21 (£0.660m).

If the recommendations of this report are agreed, and the cessation of the contracts is delayed until 31 March 2020, this will result in a budget pressure of £0.220m in 2019/20. In order to mitigate this budget pressure in 2019/20 the service will seek to manage the savings shortfall across the wider service. However, if the service does not succeed in covering this potential overspend, then the shortfall will need to ultimately be met from the transitional reserve.

Legal

The Care Act requires the Council to provide or arrange for the provision of services, facilities or resources which would contribute or reduce the need for care and support. The statutory element of the provision of service provided by the Integrated Home Improvement Service will be subject to a separate procurement exercise.

The Council will continue to exercise its function under the Care Act by working with health colleagues to ensure the integration of care and support provision.

Mitigation

The following are expected to mitigate the impact of this proposal:

- The continued provision of statutory minor adaptations will mean that adaptations up to the value of £1000 will be available to people eligible under Adult Social Care legislation.
- Private handyperson services may be available and accessible to some. The continued delivery of the Safe Trader Scheme, assists in sourcing reputable contractors.

- Access to alternative sources of welfare benefits advice, particularly in the voluntary, community and faith sector.
- Work with system wide partners to support integrated pathways and new approaches, with a focus on prevention and wellbeing, to keep people well at home. The council is also currently in negotiation with clinical commissioning groups to jointly invest in falls lifting services.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
N/A		