Housing Related Support – Consultation Report

February 2015
Introduction

Through the One Organisational Plan 2014-2018, the County Council details its core purpose and desired outcomes that will ensure a focus on services that can be afforded both now and up to 2018. Responding to the challenges presented by reductions in the grants received from Government, pressures from inflation and additional pressures from our changing population means shaping the future of a very different Warwickshire County Council.

Within the Plan, there is a target to reduce overall spending on Adult Social Care services by £17.9 million by 2018. The impact of this will be significant and also a challenge to achieve. In order to meet this challenge, we will need to redesign many of our services and find new ways to do things. At the same time, we must ensure that our most vulnerable citizens are supported and that services are as efficient and effective as possible.

Housing Related Support services are currently available to anyone aged 16 years and over across Warwickshire. The service aims to help people stay in their own home or work towards living in their own home by:

- Preventing problems that can cause homelessness, hospitalisation or institutional care
- Supporting people to live as independently as possible
- Delivering high quality, planned and cost effective support services.

In February 2014, Council agreed a reduction in the available funding for Housing Related Support services of £4 million by 2018.

Over the next four years the budget available for housing related support will be reduced from £8.6 million to £4.575 million per annum. This reduction means we have to carefully consider how resources will be targeted in future.

To achieve this we have made a number of proposals to re-structure Housing Related Support services across Warwickshire. These proposals include changing how we decide who is eligible for support; stopping some services, keeping some services the same and offering services in a different way.
We have now completed a full public consultation on these proposals. This means that we have asked a wide range of people, agencies, housing associations, district councils, charities and voluntary groups and District and Borough Councils to tell us:

- If they agree or disagree with our proposals;
- What the impact of our proposals will be;
- How we could do things differently.

These proposals may be adjusted depending on what the people of Warwickshire tell us in the course of this consultation. We wish to offer and deliver as many of the right services to the right people at the right time, and the results of this consultation will help to inform these decisions.

The public consultation took place from September 8th 2014 until November 28th 2014, and received a total of 1,505 responses. As part of the consultation process, the County Council conducted focus groups with customers and providers, and received many letters that provided a vast amount of information.

This report summarises all of the information received from the consultation and our response to it.

**Consultation Process**

A comprehensive public consultation process was conducted during September - November 2014 and provided an opportunity for the citizens of Warwickshire to put forward their views on a series of proposals designed to re-structure Housing Related Support services.

Due to the wide range of client groups supported by Housing Related Support services, it was imperative that a range of consultation methodologies were utilised. This approach would ensure views were sought from a broad and diverse range of people.
These methods included:

**Questionnaires**

A questionnaire was developed as an accessible and generic version to support the wide range of potential respondents.

A paper copy of the generic questionnaire was sent to all current HRS service users (6,000 copies), together with a pre-paid return envelope to support postal returns. In addition, both versions were available online on the council consultation website.

In total – 1,172 individual questionnaires were returned.

**Focus Groups**

49 separate focus groups were completed where participants were assisted to respond to the consultation.

33 sessions were completed by Grapevine on behalf of WCC with people with a learning disability. A total of 151 customers participated in these focus groups and were able to detail their responses to the consultation.

A further 16 focus groups were completed and are detailed below.

**Figure 1: Breakdown of focus groups conducted (excluding Learning Disability)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Client Group catered for by service</th>
<th>Focus Groups</th>
<th>Customers attending</th>
<th>Relatives / Carers attending</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young People at Risk / care leavers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frail Elderly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless Families</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offenders</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older people</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical and / or Sensory Disability</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single homeless</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young parents</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>131</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Telephone Helpline**

33 people were supported to complete their consultation responses through the telephone helpline provided
Other Responses

248 responses were received in other formats such as letter and email. Of these, three (3) people submitted their responses via DVD.

Frequently Asked Questions

A Frequently Asked Questions page was provided on the consultation website to bring together useful information for respondents to use in completing the questionnaire.

Other Contacts

Regular briefings (written and verbal) have been provided to elected members throughout the consultation period, together with responses to specific questions from constituents.

We have also attended a number of meetings including Warwickshire Safeguarding Adults Board and North Warwickshire Health and Well-Being Board to support the consultation process.

What respondents told us

Some people told us that they found some of the consultation questions difficult to understand or felt that what we were proposing was unclear.

“You are saying things are going to change but are not specifying how things are going to change. There is not enough information about what you are proposing to change.” – Customer of a Housing Related Support service

“I am struck by the complexity of this consultation & suspect that many of the people affected would find it difficult to get their voices heard in this format. I wonder how many replies you will get.” – [Respondent did not state in what capacity they were completing the questionnaire]

Where respondents told us that they were finding it difficult to access or understand the questionnaire we:

- Offered telephone support to record individual responses;
• Offered face to face support by conducting meetings with individuals and/or service groups to record responses to the proposals;

• Offered the questionnaire in a range of languages where required;

• Worked with service providers to support individuals and groups to engage with the consultation process;

We recognise that re-structuring services is difficult and some of the ways we might change services are difficult for people to understand. In order to ensure that people continue to help us to re-structure HRS services, we will be inviting service users and other key stakeholders such as the five District and Borough Councils in Warwickshire to work with us to design future services to ensure that they meet needs across the County.

In total, 1,505 individual responses were received. This Consultation Report is the analysis of those responses and the key themes identified.
Section 1.1 – Proposals to change the way services are provided

Proposal 1

For all new Housing Related Support services from April 2015: That in the future Housing Related Support services should only support those customers who are assessed as being eligible for social care services or as being on the “edge of care”

Respondents were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the proposal to change this service; 40% of respondents strongly disagreed with the proposal, with a further 14% disagreeing to a lesser extent.

Figure 2: Agreement with Proposal 1 (921 responses)

The overriding concern of respondents was the issue of limiting access by using narrow eligibility criteria. Respondents were concerned that people in need would not manage or cope if the eligibility criteria were to be too restrictive.

However, those respondents who agreed with this proposal indicated that some level of assessment of need was favourable in order to ensure that services were available for those who needed them most. There was interest in the idea of ‘edge of
care’ (the term for this guidance was provided in the consultation), as a means to establish eligibility. However, respondents wanted more information about how this might be applied and what it would mean to them.

The majority of respondents wanted services overall to remain unchanged and that any eligibility criteria should be wider to allow more people to access support.

Many respondents wanted to see more joint commissioning of services as a way to preserve a valuable service and get better value for money.

**What people in Warwickshire told us during the consultation:**

“There are too many people that need support. Once this support stops, you will find there will be even more of a drain on resources: more evictions, more children in care, more street homeless, people with nowhere to go and limited places to go for advice. These proposals will ultimately cost you more money.” – Customer of a Housing Related Support service

“I work for BID Services and my main concern with the proposed changes is that the majority of people we support would not be eligible to under the FACS or 'Edge of Care' criteria and so be vulnerable to homelessness, debt and social exclusion without the support they need to remain independent in their homes. My other major concern is that the services people will be referred onto who do not meet this criteria are already in great demand and under-resourced and so this is unrealistic in meeting the needs of all the people who will no longer be able to obtain supporting people services.” – A service provider

“As a housing related support worker I believe we will become inundated with people at crisis point. Many times with referrals we can prevent evictions and help people get on an even keel. If they are coming to us when they have lost everything but still are not eligible for social care services, how are we going to be able to help?” – A service provider

“The Districts and Borough Councils can be engaged to explore how we can collectively re-design provision, examining co-commissioning strategies, cross authority procurement, alternative public funding mechanisms and alternative delivery models. All of these may enable a greater collective budget for the commissioning of housing related support.” – [Respondent did not state in what capacity they were completing the questionnaire]
Overarching themes were:

- That HRS services should be available to those who need them and that everyone should be treated equally and without discrimination;
- That HRS services should prioritise the most vulnerable people and any revised eligibility criteria should ensure that people in need are not overlooked;
- That HRS services should focus on providing early intervention and prevention support so that people are not in a crisis;
- That HRS services should remain unchanged and the Council should look to make savings in other areas.

What we will do:

- We will develop eligibility criteria for HRS services that focuses on those most vulnerable and in need;
- We will retain this proposal but will work to ensure that the combination of eligibility for social care support (Care Act 2014) and being on the ‘edge of care’ complement each other and support those most in need;
- We have developed a more detailed definition of ‘edge of care’ and associated assessment guidance that can be applied by a range of key agencies such as Housing, Social Care and Probation.
Section 1.2 – Proposals to change the way services are provided

Proposal 2

Services for single homeless people who need accommodation-based Housing Related;

We propose to change services for single homeless people with support needs who require an accommodation based service. We will focus on helping people to develop the skills that prevent future homelessness and gain the skills and experience to improve opportunities for paid employment.

Respondents were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the proposal to change this service; a mixed response was received, with 33% agreeing with the proposal and 17% strongly disagreeing.

Figure 3: Agreement with Proposal 2 (545 responses)

Overall, respondents agreed with this proposal. The majority felt that single people were given a low priority in terms of housing and not largely recognised as being in need of support. Respondents felt that this proposal would support the need for accommodation based services and that there should be a focus on increasing access to emergency homeless accommodation.
There were concerns that floating support was needed to complement accommodation based support and that the proposal would not allow this. Also, there was concern that this proposal would effectively reduce the options available to a group of people who were already excluded from services.

What people in Warwickshire told us during the consultation:

“Our fear is that these changes will simply displace an issue from the County Council to the Borough and District Councils. Work to prevent homelessness is, of course, a sensible route, but inevitably some individuals will end up in the position of being homeless and need accommodating.” – [Respondent did not state in what capacity they were completing the questionnaire]

“Single people at risk of homelessness often have multiple issues they have to deal with - suggesting a visit to CAB or district council housing department often isn’t the only answer and they need access to specialised help and on-going support. They often need to support of a single point of reference and to develop a trusting relationship to help with these multiple issues and as a result of these changes, many specialists will no longer be funded.” – A member of the public

“People need to develop skills and experience to provide better accommodation. I agree with the decisions.” – A member of the public

“Continue to fund floating support in Youth Justice. Consideration to providing accommodation to these young people which goes beyond emergency accommodation – such as that in the Dudley Project where young people are provided with accommodation which can then be maintained after a period of sustained improvement. This project means young people do not have to move from the homes they have created.” – A social care professional

Overarching themes were:

- Single homeless people need support as they are very often not eligible for statutory homeless support from the Local Housing Authorities. They often have multiple needs that have a negative impact on their ability to maintain accommodation;

- Services for single homeless people should help people to be empowered and live independently;

- Current services are already providing this support and therefore should remain unchanged;
• There are not enough accommodation based services for single homeless people across the County and in particular, there are not enough emergency access hostels to take people off the streets;

• If these services are reduced or withdrawn, there will be increased pressure on other services such as housing, mental health services and probation.

What we will do:

• We will re-commission accommodation based services for Single Homeless with support needs that are needs led. These services will be commissioned to support multiple and complex needs, including those presented by adult offenders;

• To use the eligibility criteria for the Care Act 2014/ ‘edge of care’ to meet the requirements of those who are most vulnerable;

• Work with Housing Associations, The Voluntary Sector, Probation and the five District & Boroughs to identify alternative accommodation solutions and to identify all relevant funding streams to support the development of these services.
Section 1.3 – Proposals to change the way services are provided

Proposal 3

Services for people living with mental ill health, learning disability and / or physical / sensory impairment

The proposal of a new targeted service that would focus on supporting people creatively in the community to develop new skills to enable them to take more control of their lives and maintain their independence.

Respondents were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the proposal to change this service; 39% of respondents either ‘agreed’ with the proposals to change the service and 9% ‘disagreeing’.

Figure 4: Agreement with Proposal 3 (490 responses)

Respondents agreed that this proposal would enable customers to live more independently, help them to socialise and meet people; and boost their self-confidence. References clearly indicate that people like the idea of being supported to take more control of their lives and maintain their independence.
However, respondents raised concerns about the impact of applying Adult Social Care and/or ‘edge of care’ as a method of defining eligibility for support.

**What people in Warwickshire told us during the consultation:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quote</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“This would give our customers, the help they need and understanding, and development of a worthwhile life standard.”</td>
<td>Family carer / informal carer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“This is a good idea to have support tailored to those suffering from mental illness and those with learning disabilities. However, these people will still need some sort of higher level support given by professionals with the relevant qualifications.”</td>
<td>A health care professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“It is difficult to fully assess any impact given the lack of detail in these proposals. Our prevailing concern would be that there would be continued homelessness amongst those with mental health support needs, particularly combined with other needs such as drug/alcohol misuse.”</td>
<td>[Respondent did not state in what capacity they were completing the questionnaire]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Continue with the services currently provided as there is a social return on investment in that this keeps people out of care, hospitals and pressures on housing. It also empowers deaf people who do not have a voice to give their views and allow them to be involved in a decision making process. Having one to one support with experienced, specialist trained support workers; there is no need for interpreters as communication is delivered in their first language. Workers also have a full understanding of deafness and deaf culture.”</td>
<td>A service provider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“It needs to be a mixed provision – some people will benefit more from community support enabling them to remain well and independent in suitable accommodation; other people are further from independent living and will benefit more from more intensive support in a communal environment. However, there are not enough details to know what is really proposed and therefore what could be done instead.”</td>
<td>[Respondent did not state in what capacity they were completing the questionnaire]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Overarching themes were:**

- HRS services support should help a person to live independently by supporting them to gain independent living skills and help them to make their own choices;

- There needs to be a mixed range of accommodation based and floating support services to meet the needs of these service users;
• Services need to be designed to meet those who are in need of higher levels of support to prevent escalation of need alongside support for those who would benefit from a shorter term, community based solution;

• People living with mental ill health benefit from on-going support and people need to have someone to go to if they need some advice to prevent an escalation of need;

• If eligibility is restricted only to those who are eligible for social care support, then this could result in increased pressure on other services;

• How services will be developed needs a clearer explanation;

• More support is needed in the community to enable people to live independently and participate.

What we will do:

• To use the eligibility criteria for the Care Act 2014 / ‘edge of care’ to meet the requirements of those who are most vulnerable;

• We will work with service users and the Clinical Commissioning Groups, social work teams, the voluntary sector and housing associations and the five District & Boroughs to re-design services that will promote independent living;

• We will commission a range of support services based on outcomes to meet identified needs.
Section 1.4 – Proposals to change the way services are provided

Proposal 4

From April 2015, we are proposing to develop a new service offering support to young people who are leaving care; or are 17 years of age; or aged 16-21 years and at significant risk of homelessness and / or needing care services

Respondents were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the proposal to change this service; most respondents, 43% agreed with the proposal, with only 12% strongly disagreeing.

Figure 5: Agreement with Proposal 4 (429 responses)

Respondents were generally concerned with the proposal to reduce the age range for these services and that there was a need for support for those customers over the age of 21. Many also stated that current services were generally meeting the needs of this client group but that increased prevention services were needed for young people. Also, a need for more single accommodation and accommodation of a higher standard was identified.
Improved assessment processes were identified as a method of ensuring that only those in need of support received it. A need to couple this with stricter eligibility criteria was highlighted.

**What people in Warwickshire told us during the consultation:**

“We accord with your proposal to continue to provide support for young people and to develop a new service if this means working in partnership to provide a new service pathway. We would like a pathway that has a independent sector ‘front door’ and links with helping young people with training and work opportunities. However if your intention is to move housing related support services into a care arena using the new criteria we would have concerns.” - [Respondent did not state in what capacity they were completing the questionnaire]

“This would be good. However, young people who offend do not engage with mainstream provision and all evidence demonstrates that all services have failed to engage, support or manage these young people, thereby increasing their vulnerability and isolation. As such creating one service to deal with all vulnerabilities will fail young offenders and increase their vulnerability.” – A social care professional

“Supporting current services that offer housing support for young people makes more sense that creating a new one. It is imperative to offer early intervention and support young people into independent living will save funding to the Local and central government. Young people need to be maintain a settled home before applying for work and needs additional support such as the likewise course supported by Centrepoint and run by doorway.” - [Respondent did not state in what capacity they were completing the questionnaire]

“Hopefully, better prepare the young people to cope with housing matters. Reduce homelessness. Provide better options, support and service to this client group than exists at the moment.” – A service provider

“Ensure these cuts do not impact on the most vulnerable young people who are not always just those in the care system and ensure staff have the knowledge and skills and passion to support and manage their behaviours.” – A service provider

“Keep the universal support services - therefore being able to support more people and hopefully prevent further escalations.” – A service provider
Overarching themes were:

- There is a significant need for HRS service to support young people to prevent homelessness and promote independent living. Therefore, these services should not be restricted to those who are eligible for social care support (Care Act 2014) or on the ‘edge of care’;

- Service is required for those aged 16-17 years but should not be restricted to aged 21 years. The span should be 16 years to 25 years;

- Staff need to be qualified and equipped to support young people;

- Integration of services across health, education, social care and housing is essential to support young people to make positive life choices;

- Ensure that all relevant funding streams, including Housing Benefit are explored in order to provide seamless support to young people.

What we will do:

- We will ensure that services commissioned will be integrated with other relevant services such as the Clinical Commissioning Groups, education, social work teams and housing associations and the five District & Boroughs for young people;

- Develop and commission services that meet the needs of the most vulnerable up to the age of 25 years;

- Develop and commission services that have quality standards attached that ensure the provider has appropriately qualified and experienced staff who will promote independent living and prevent escalation of need and deliver outcomes;

- We will work with the five District and Boroughs and community and voluntary organisations to explore alternative funding options to support these services.
Section 1.5 – Proposals to change the way services are provided

Proposal 5

Services for older people

We are making two proposals relating to Housing Related Support services for older people:

1. That we should continue to support the Home Improvement Agency and Home Safety Check Scheme services in partnership with our district/borough housing partners and health. (These services help older people and adults with disabilities to stay living independently in their own homes.)

2. That we should seek to make the allocation of Housing Related Support services fairer and more transparent across the county. By April 2017, we propose to stop our current funding arrangement but offer support to older people irrespective of the type of accommodation they live in.

Respondents were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the proposal to change this service; two out of every five respondents (40%) strongly disagreed with the proposal.

Figure 6: Agreement with Proposal 5 (909 responses)
The majority of respondents agreed that the intention to ensure that Housing Related Support is available to Older People irrespective of where they live was a fair one. They stated that everyone should be treated equally and that support should be universally offered.

However, many respondents expressed their concern that any withdrawal of Warden Support would increase loneliness, feelings of isolation and have a negative impact on physical and mental health.

The majority of respondents wanted services to remain unchanged and the overriding theme was the need for Warden Support.

Concern was also expressed about the impact on physical and mental health and fears about safety in relation to any reductions to the provision of alarm services.

There was reference to improving the assessment process and amending eligibility criteria as a means of saving money and ensuring that service was available for those most in need.

**What people in Warwickshire told us during the consultation:**

“To withdraw funding for sheltered accommodation would make lots of older people vulnerable. These types of accommodation give those living in them a sense of community. Social outings are arranged, entertainment is provided which in turn gives people who may have once lived alone company and friends. Most important people have someone to turn to when necessary in the form of the warden. They have daily checks, someone to talk to each day. These elderly have paid their taxes and we are entitled to live stress free and this accommodation provides that.” – [Respondent did not state in what capacity they were completing the questionnaire]

“It means a reduction in service to people in sheltered housing. I will lose the feeling of security, have less confidence, loss of community feel.” – [Respondent did not state in what capacity they were completing the questionnaire]

“It is vital that older people are able to access the support they are entitled to ensure that they are able to continue living independently.” – [Respondent did not state in what capacity they were completing the questionnaire]
“Strongly disagree with the proposal to cut SP funding for people in sheltered schemes - most of whom will not be FACS eligible. Many elderly existing tenants will have chosen to move to schemes because of this support and it is now being cut. This loss of support for prevention will lead to tenants not getting the support they need and could also lead to sheltered schemes closing. This may not be a concern of WCC but it is certainly a housing concern. In addition, it will have a knock-on negative effect on larger family properties becoming vacant and available to let to families because older people will not move out of these large properties. This is a short sighted measure to cut prevention with potentially disastrous long term consequences for health budgets etc. I agree with the part of the proposal to support HIAs etc.” - [Respondent did not state in what capacity they were completing the questionnaire]

“I came into my complex for the support that it gives you to live independently, have someone there when I need them at a minute’s notice, where if you cut this I could be waiting a long time before someone calls on me.” – [Respondent did not state in what capacity they were completing the questionnaire]

“I feel safe and secure at the moment in my new community - more an extended family. We all look out for one another as much as we can - but have the reassurance that our SM/Warden is always on hand to help with any problems.” – [Respondent did not state in what capacity they were completing the questionnaire]

“As a family we feel this finding should remain, it is a vital service providing support to ALL who live on the complexes. Other areas should be looked at to provide the necessary cutbacks NOT the homes of our elderly.” – [Respondent did not state in what capacity they were completing the questionnaire]

**Overarching themes were:**

- It is important that people are treated fairly and that all older people have access to HRS services;

- It is also important to service users that they keep their Wardens/Sheltered Scheme Managers as provide important support;

- For some people, sheltered accommodation means that they do not have to move into residential care;
• Many people have moved into sheltered accommodation because of the level of support that is provided through Wardens/Scheme Managers and alarm provision;

• Preventing isolation and promoting social inclusion is an important function of the sheltered housing service, which would be lost if the Warden/Scheme Manager was removed;

• Any reduction in funding for sheltered accommodation will inevitably lead to increased costs elsewhere in the health and social care system.

• Concern about the impact on safety and increased fear if alarm services were reduced or removed as a result of funding reductions.

**What we will do:**

• To use the eligibility criteria for the Care Act 2014 / ‘edge of care’ to meet the requirements of those who are most vulnerable;

• We will make sure people are supported by using the Home Improvement Agency and Home Safety Check Scheme to enable people in their own homes / sheltered accommodation to live independently within their home as long as possible;

• Ensure the care act principles of providing information and advice are maximised through the services delivered for older people to minimise isolation and loneliness;

• We know from benchmarking against other local authorities that there are opportunities to access Housing Benefit to support the funding of support in sheltered accommodation. We will continue to explore this option with the five District & Boroughs, this will mean that some HRS funding can be identified to provide a floating support service giving access to eligible older people irrespective of their accommodation;

• We also know from other local authorities that there are alternative methods for funding alarm services (or funding assistive technology) and we will explore these opportunities.
Section 2.1 – Services we propose to stop providing

Proposal 6
Proposal to stop funding for: Homeless families with support needs – Gypsy & Traveller groups – People with non-specialist, generic Housing Related Support needs – Adult offenders – Floating support for Single Homeless people - Young offenders

Respondents were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the proposal to change this service; the majority of respondents disagreed with stopping this service, including 48% of respondents who ‘strongly disagreed’ with the proposal.

Figure 7: Agreement with Proposal 6 (642 responses)

Respondents were concerned that vulnerable people would not get the support they needed and that this would lead inevitably to increased homelessness. It was clear that people relied on support and would experience fear, isolation and anxiety if support was no longer available. In addition, respondents expressed concern that the withdrawal of these services would increase pressure on other services such as Housing Teams and Citizens Advice Bureau, who were already struggling to meet increasing need.
Some respondents expressed a need to ensure that there is no duplication of services across agencies. However, reference was made to retaining a specialist service for Offenders to reduce the risk of re-offending and negative impact on the wider community.

There was clear reference to the need for more joint working (including working with charities and the Police and Crime Commissioners Office) in order to protect valuable services. Services for ex-offenders were identified as needing to be retained as they benefit the individual and the wider society.

More work should be done to ensure that successful outcomes are achieved for individuals by undertaking follow up work. This would reduce repeat use of services and increase individual resilience.

**What people in Warwickshire told us during the consultation:**

“We are concerned as to the destinations of those customers for whom support will be withdrawn under this proposal. We are concerned as to the capacity of the voluntary and community sector, especially the Citizens Advice Bureaux, to handle what could be a significant volume of extra work created by this proposal. We fear that the proposal displaces issues from the County Council to the Borough and District Councils, all of which have limited capacity.” – [Respondent did not state in what capacity they were completing the questionnaire]

“Who would we talk to. Travellers have to trust people, we are hated so takes times for us to trust I’ve been judged so much.” – Customer of a Housing Related Support service

“Whilst it is correct to say that a CAB will provide advice and signposting, this is not the same as the support provided by organisations like Bromford. People in the categories listed are in many cases those who most need help and may have complex needs needing a full support service. There is a danger of further excluding people who are already to some extent excluded.” – A service provider

“I am under the "Adult Offenders" section. I have been in prison on and off for 27 years. It wasn't until my Bromford support started that I really felt that I wanted to turn my life around. I would be isolated, homeless, in poverty and even back in prison if it wasn't for support. It's vital to keep.” – Customer of a Housing Related Support service

“I am Portuguese and speak little English. I would have been lost, evicted and helpless if it hadn't been for Bromford. Nothing is too much trouble for my support worker and I can see how hard she works. If support is taken away I would be terrified and isolated again.” - Customer of a Housing Related Support service
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customer</th>
<th>Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customer of a Housing Related Support service</td>
<td>“I would lose my support worker which would lead to me becoming even more isolated. I have autism and mental health issues and I don’t know how I’d cope without home visits to help me.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer of a Housing Related Support service</td>
<td>“Funding could be reduced more evenly over all the different housing related support services so all can remain open during this time of economic problems. Then when better times come funding will be able to be increased again.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A member of the public</td>
<td>“You really do need to reconsider cutting these services. It would be disastrous for so many people in the county if this were to happen. It would create fear, anxiety, poverty and homelessness. Those that are already homeless would have no chance of getting housed due to the council strict criteria on what they accept as homeless and vulnerable people would not know how to fight or appeal this. You need to look at other areas within the county to save money.”</td>
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**Overarching themes were:**

- Universal services such as Citizens Advice Bureau and Housing Options Teams do not have the capacity to absorb those people who need support but might not be eligible for support in re-structured HRS services;
- Withdrawing non-specialist HRS floating support will result in increased pressure on other services such as housing and health;
- Services such as Housing are often difficult for people to access;
- Service users will struggle to manage without HRS support, which in turn could lead to increased homelessness. If people are less able to manage debts, budgeting and bills, then this will impact on their ability to retain their accommodation;
- There will be an impact on community safety if specialist Adult Offender services are withdrawn. More universal homeless services will not have the expertise to manage the risk on the wider community posed by some offenders.
What we will do:

- We will work with the five District and Boroughs, Housing associations, Probation to develop a non-specialist HRS floating support service that can meet the needs of eligible service users and to agree how access to this service will be managed;

- Work with Citizen Advice Bureau and the five District and Boroughs to re-focus their priorities so they can support service users within this proposal;

- Ensure the Care act principles of providing information and advice are maximised through the services delivered for older people to minimise isolation and loneliness;

- Ensure that the needs of adult offenders (as they related to accommodation) are addressed through re-structured HRS services and in particular, through accommodation based services for those who are homeless with complex and multiple needs.
Section 3.1 – Services which are staying the same

Proposal 7

There are some Housing Related Support services that we are not currently proposing to make any changes to at this time:

‘Independent Living Service’ and ‘Services for people experiencing domestic abuse’

Respondents were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the proposal to keep this service the same; there was general agreement that the service should remain as it is, with 40% agreeing and a further 27% having no strong opinion either way.

Figure 8: Agreement with Proposal 7 (434 responses)

Respondents agreed that the support for domestic abuse services was vital and should continue with increased refuge provision. A need for a more strategic approach to delivering services was identified and that the different agencies should work more closely together.
There was some opposition to the continued provision of services to support substance misusers and that this ‘lifestyle choice’ should not be funded.

**What people in Warwickshire told us during the consultation:**

“Joint funding is what is needed to retain all of the current services. I appreciate that you are having to make extraordinary savings from your budget but whatever services you cut will ultimately cost the public in the long term.” – A service provider

“We support the County Council’s proposal to protect services for domestic abuse and to continue to recognise that a partnership approach which provides for joint budget resource is a productive one.” - [Respondent did not state in what capacity they were completing the questionnaire]

“We agree with the decision that WCC is not currently proposing to make any changes to the Independent Living Service for people who misuse drugs and/or alcohol and services for people experiencing domestic abuse. We would expect to be consulted on any future reviews when these take place.” - [Respondent did not state in what capacity they were completing the questionnaire]

“It is not made clear in this consultation why the fact that a service is currently jointly commissioned makes it more valued or higher performing than other services. Strategic relevance, significant demand, cost effectiveness or contractual commitments are strong justifications for maintaining an existing provision. The method by which it was commissioned does not appear to be a strong justification; therefore we can neither agree nor disagree.” - [Respondent did not state in what capacity they were completing the questionnaire]

“I don’t agree that people who misuse drugs or alcohol should get help. But people who have been experiencing domestic abuse should get help.” - [Respondent did not state in what capacity they were completing the questionnaire]

“Welcome recognition of these vulnerable groups but if services are withdrawn elsewhere it will impact on the ability of these providers to offer a holistic approach and meet needs.” - [Respondent did not state in what capacity they were completing the questionnaire]

“Overall a joined up approach across county and district and voluntary sector providers has to be the way forward, where the pooling of budget and looking at other sources of funding to compliment services to stop people falling through the net has to be the way forward.” - [Respondent did not state in what capacity they were completing the questionnaire]
Overarching themes were:

- Joint commissioning is crucial to ensure that the HRS needs of these clients groups are met. There is an opportunity to ensure that HRS services are better linked to other services such as the treatment programme for substance misusers and the Police and Crime Commissioner;

- Although these services are currently jointly commissioned, funding is separate. By having a single, pooled budget for these services, there may be opportunities for a more streamlined service that meets the needs of more people;

- Services should be re-commissioned based on the needs of the community and local priorities.

What we will do:

- We will update the needs analysis associated with these services in order to ensure that provision is needs-led;

- We will work with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Clinical Commissioning Groups to explore the developments around joint commissioning including funding methods for future services;

- We will ask service users to work in partnership to develop revised service models that meet need.
Section 4.0 – Further comments

Respondents were asked to provide any further comments and in particular, how they felt that changes should be implemented.

**What people in Warwickshire told us during the consultation:**

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<th>Comment</th>
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<td>“I know that it is difficult but savings can and should be made in other services, not those that affect vulnerable members of our society.”</td>
<td>[Respondent did not state in what capacity they were completing the questionnaire]</td>
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<td>“Before changes are made, it would be good if direct talks could be held with existing support services to give customer examples and talk of best practise, so that future services could be more effective and therefore hopefully find an alternative solution from stopping them all together. I believe if the existing services are stopped, it will have a much greater financial impact on local authority funding in dealing with the outcomes of vulnerable adults being left without support. Becoming vulnerable can happen suddenly with no warning, it can be an event that you do not have hindsight to see the solution, it is not always the result of a learning disability of long term health condition, and this will leave those individuals with no support to make the everyday decisions to turn things around quicker.”</td>
<td>A service provider</td>
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<td>“As previously mentioned, cutting valuable services in order to save money may work in the short term, however the financial implications of fixing the problems caused by this in the long term will be devastating to Warwickshire. The community will suffer, which will increase crime rates, homelessness, child abuse, mental health, etc. People rely on these services in already difficult times where services are already limited. Further cuts will make an already struggling community with little support available, suffer more and cause endless problems. These services are vital to the well-being of people in the area.”</td>
<td>A member of the public</td>
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<td>“The services you are proposing to cut support some of the most vulnerable people living in Warwickshire. Whilst we understand the need to make savings to the overall WCC budget it should not be at the expense of those who need support and help. We would suggest that if these proposals are implemented as they stand that the cost of supporting people where circumstances have deteriorated because of the withdrawal of support will cost more than the proposed savings.”</td>
<td>[Respondent did not state in what capacity they were completing the questionnaire]</td>
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Overarching themes were:

- Respondents value the HRS services currently in place and do not want to see any reduction;

- Withdrawal of services will increase pressure on other services such as Housing and social care and could potentially result in more homelessness and costly evictions;

- More discussion with service providers and other key is needed before any re-structure is implemented. Some changes can be made through negotiation rather than buying completely new services;

- Savings should be made from other areas within the County Council rather than HRS;

- As it is difficult to find new accommodation across the County, it is important that valuable accommodation is not lost.

What we will do:

- Ensure that HRS services are re-structured according to needs and local priorities;

- We will continue to work with Housing Associations, The Voluntary Sector, Probation and the five District & Boroughs to implement re-structured services;

- We will work in partnership with current service providers to ensure that valuable accommodation is not lost and that all retained accommodation is of good quality;

- We will work with the five District and Boroughs and community and the voluntary sector to explore alternative funding options to support these services.