

Decision Record – Consultation on the Proposal to close Warwickshire Employment Support Team (WEST)

Cabinet Portfolio Holder taking the decision	Cllr Jose Compton Adult Social Care
Date of Decision (not before 3 June 2016)	03/06/2016

Decision Taken

That the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care approves the commencement of a public consultation on the proposed closure of the service.

Reasons for Decisions

The approval of the Portfolio Holder is required before a consultation exercise can be undertaken.

Background Information

Warwickshire County Council (WCC) has identified the need to make around £92million savings by 2018. This figure has arisen from reductions in the grants we receive from Government, pressures from inflation and additional pressures from our changing population. On 6 February 2014 WCC agreed a medium term –financial plan covering the period 2014 – 2018. This medium term financial plan underpins the delivery of our One Organisational Plan.

The One Organisational Plan (OOP) requires savings of £280,000 from Warwickshire Employment Support Team (WEST). The proposal in the OOP is “based on exploring alternative delivery, funding or decommissioning the service”. Alternative funding has not been secured in part due to additional financial strains on public finances. In order to realise the savings, WEST service would need to decommission all council funded operation which would require the full closure of the service. If this decision were taken, attempts would be made to seek opportunities to secure some of the specialist skills held by WEST staff within other services.

Warwickshire Employment Support Team (WEST) is a countywide service for people with a learning disability, Autism or Asperger’s who want to find and sustain paid work. The specialist team help find people full and part-time employment by providing:

- expertise on disability employment and benefit issues;
- personal profiling and job matching;
- developing the skills people need for employment; and
- on-going support to employees and employers.

WEST customers are considered to be undertaking ‘supported permitted work’ through the support of the service. ‘Supported permitted work’ is work where a person claiming certain benefits is supervised by the local authority or another specified support service which provides or finds work for people with disabilities. Supported permitted work has no restriction on the hours worked and can be for an unlimited period. Individuals cannot earn more than £115.50 a week after tax and national insurance deductions.

The proportion of adults with a learning disability in paid employment is a national measure

which forms part of the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF 1E). In Warwickshire, performance has been positive with an increase year on year from 5.8% in 2012/13 to 11.1% in 2014/15, significantly above average. This has been achieved through a range of measures.

WCC has a statutory duty to provide information and advice about the availability of employment support for disabled adults under the Care Act 2014. There is also a duty to provide information and advice about provision for young people aged up to 25 in preparing for adulthood, including finding employment, under the Children and Families Act 2014. These duties do not require the Local Authority to provide the additional support provided by WEST.

The Care Act 2014 does require the Local Authority to meet specific individual needs where an adult has been assessed as having a need arising from/relating to a physical or mental impairment or illness, who is unable to achieve at least 2 outcomes (work/employment is listed as an outcome) and this is likely to impact significantly on their wellbeing. This would be considered as part of an assessment for Adult Social Care.

There are approximately 150 WEST customers at any one time supported by the 8 individual (6 FTE) employment support staff, including the manager.

Details of the consultation to be undertaken can be found in the published report.

Financial Implications

As set out in the report.

Report Author	Elaine Coates
Head of Service	Beate Wagner
Strategic Director	John Dixon
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Jose Compton

Checklist

Urgent matter?	No
Confidential or Exempt?	No
Is the decision contrary to the budget and policy framework?	No

List of Reports considered

Link to published proposed decision report:

<https://democratic.warwickshire.gov.uk/cm5/CalendarofMeetings/tabid/128/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/645/Meeting/3816/Committee/552/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>

List of Background Papers - please include a contact for access to background papers

Members and officers consulted or informed – please include any comments

Portfolio Holder – Councillor Jose Compton
Legal – Alison Hallworth, Jane Pollard
Finance – Virginia Rennie
Equality – Belinda Blake
Democratic Services – Paul Williams

Adult Social Care & Health OSC – party spokes:

Councillors Mike Perry, Maggie O'Rourke, Kate Rolfe