

ADULT SERVICES COMMITTEE MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

12 August 2014

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor: Carl Richardson (In the Chair)

Councillors: Paul Beck, Geoff Lilley, Kaylee Sirs, and Stephen Thomas.

Also Present: Lynn Allison - Healthwatch
Phil Rafferty - 50 Plus Forum
Members of the Public - Evelyn Leck, John Lynch and Frank Harrison

Officers: Gill Alexander, Director of Child and Adult Services
Jill Harrison, Assistant Director, Adult Services
Jeanette Willis, Head of Strategic Commissioning
Steve Thomas, Modernisation Lead – Older People, Dementia, Carers and Dignity
Denise Wimpenny, Principal Democratic Services Officer

11. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Brenda Loynes, George Springer and Health Watch representatives Ruby Marshall and Maureen Lockwood.

12. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Thomas declared a personal interest in Minutes 15 and 17.
Councillor Beck declared a personal interest in Minute 17.

13. Minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2014

Received

14. Savings Programme 15/16 – Adult Services (*Director of Child and Adult Services*)

Type of decision

Budget and Policy Framework

Purpose of report

To identify proposals for the delivery of savings in Adult Services for consideration as part of the 2015/16 budget process.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director presented the report which included the proposals for delivery of savings in Adult Services as part of the 2015/16 budget process, the risks associated with the proposals and the considerations which had been taken into account in developing them.

The report included a breakdown of expenditure of £45m as well as details of the outcomes/outputs. The savings target for Adult Services for 2015/16 was £1.075m. Details of how the savings target would be achieved were provided as detailed in the report. Members were referred to the risk implications, financial equality and diversity considerations as well as staffing considerations, as set out in the report.

A lengthy discussion ensued during which the following issues/comments/concerns were raised:-

- (i) A number of concerns were raised regarding the long term implications that the cuts would place on service delivery as well as the risks to service users given the aims of the BCF Plan to reduce the number of people aged 65 and over who were permanently admitted to residential care. Members were advised that whilst the intention of the Better Care Fund Plan was to reduce the number of people aged 65 and over who were permanently admitted to residential care it was not the intention to remove people from residential care where there was a need. The aim was to look at alternatives to residential care and to support individuals to maintain their independence as long as possible. Details of the various support mechanisms in place were outlined.
- (ii) The Assistant Director provided clarification in response to queries raised by the Committee which included support available for carers,

- (iii) The Committee debated at length the impact of continuing Central Government cuts on the most vulnerable people, the rising level of need for social care, the impact of underfunding on the delivery of Council services, the potential financial implications for the authority as a result of the potential changes to the Better Care Fund and the continuing pressures placed upon the Council as a result of the requirement to deliver more services in a community setting with a continued reduction in budgets. The need to challenge Central Government and health colleagues to ensure funding was made available to the Council to manage the increasing number of services transferring to the community was highlighted. Officers were complimented on the quality of services delivered given the impact of the continuing deletion of posts and reductions in staffing levels.
- (iv) Reference was made to a recent domiciliary care investigation undertaken by Healthwatch acknowledging the hard work of care staff and the need for the Council to work with external providers to ensure the issues of pay and service conditions of care staff were addressed.
- (v) In response to further comments made in relation to the need for additional investment in Adult Social Care and a query as to whether Adult Social Care's percentage of cuts could be met from other areas in the Council, the Director of Child and Adult Services advised that 64% of the Council's budget was spent on services for vulnerable adults and children and the sustained reduction in public sector funding over the last 5 years was predicted to continue resulting in greater challenges for 16/17. It was noted that Hartlepool had suffered the greatest level of reduction than any Borough in the North East. Members were referred to the challenges ahead for 16/17 and 17/18 and the significant risks associated with the potential changes to the Better Care Fund and the anticipated loss of funding of between £770,000 and £1.8m. In relation to the suggestion that other services take a larger cut in budgets, the Committee was advised that other areas were taking a higher percentage cut than Adult Services and were struggling to find ways to achieve the savings required.
- (vi) The importance of public engagement was emphasised and a view was expressed that engagement mechanisms should not be further reduced.
- (vii) The need to continue to deliver good quality services was highlighted as well as the importance of communicating to the public the types of support services available including benefit advice. The various methods of communicating such advice were discussed and it was suggested that Hartbeat and other organisations be utilised to publicise information of this type.. The Assistant Director outlined the various methods of communicating with the public and reported that work was currently ongoing in relation to the type of advice and

information available to which a report would be presented to a future meeting of this Committee in this regard.

- (viii) The Committee discussed the impact a change of Government would have on future funding allocations and requested that this issue be further explored by officers with a view to developing a case file in the event that funding became available.
- (vi x) Whilst the Committee were reluctant to agree savings proposals in relation to Adult Services, Members acknowledged that the savings had been identified from areas which would result in the minimal level of impact on frontline services and accepted that there were no alternative options.

Decision

- (i) The Committee reluctantly agreed the savings proposals relating to Adult Services and emphasised the need to try to maintain front line services as far as possible.
- (ii) That the contents of the report and comments of Members, as outlined above, be noted and be utilised to formulate a response to be presented to Finance and Policy Committee.
- (iii) It was noted that further reports may need to be considered by the Adult Services Committee as the position regarding the changes to the Better Care Fund became clearer.

15. Support for People with Dementia in Hartlepool (*Director of Child and Adult Services*)

Type of decision

No decision required – for information

Purpose of report

To provide Adult Services Committee with an update on the support available for people in Hartlepool living with dementia, taking into account the national and local context.

Issue(s) for consideration

The provided background information to the National Dementia Strategy and support available for people in Hartlepool living with dementia. Details of national developments around dementia, how Hartlepool had addressed

the National Strategy as well as the process for raising awareness of dementia in Hartlepool was provided, as set out in the report.

It was reported that Hartlepool Dementia Forum had been formed in 2011 by representatives from organisations within the town who strived to improve support to people with dementia. The Dementia Forum had established a working group bringing together a large range of local organisations to actively look at the possibility of Hartlepool becoming accredited as a Dementia Friendly Community. The Dementia Forum's Workshop had developed an action plan, attached at Appendix 1, which had identified the need to actively consult people who had dementia and their carers, details of which were included in the report. Members were referred to the process in terms of engagement with the wider community, as detailed in the report as well as the Accreditation as a Dementia Friendly Community process.

In the lengthy discussion that followed presentation of the report, Members welcomed the initiative, noting the benefits as a result and were keen to receive future updates in due course. In developing the project, Members highlighted the need to consider a number of issues which included the need to address the barriers and sensitivities associated with dementia, ensure the relevant support arrangements were in place particularly at the hospital discharge stage, loneliness/isolation issues as well as the importance of early diagnosis. With regard to early diagnosis, the Assistant Director advised that early diagnosis had been chosen as a local indicator and significant progress had been made with GP's in this regard.

Decision

- (i) That the developments of support for people with dementia and their carers be noted and further progress reports be received as appropriate.
- (ii) That the attendance of Elected Members at forthcoming one hour Dementia Friends Information Sessions be noted and encouraged.

16. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

The Chairman ruled that the following item of business should be considered by the Committee as a matter of urgency in accordance with the provisions of Section 100(B) (4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 in order that the matter could be dealt with without delay.

17. Any Other Business – Hartfields GP Surgery

A Member reported his disappointment and concerns regarding the proposal to close the GP Surgery at Hartfields. A discussion followed during which the Committee raised a number of concerns regarding the proposal to remove further services from the town, noting the potential impact on individuals as a result and, in particular, the impact on elderly residents in terms of travelling to access services. With regard to the impact on residents at Hartfields, it was highlighted that a number of residents may have made lifestyle choices as a result of the GP surgery located at Hartfields. Concerns were also expressed that the proposals included the closure of GP practices at Fens and Wynyard Road. The benefits of seeking the views of GP'S was highlighted. The background and reasons for the proposals were debated and the Committee was keen to receive further information in this regard. The Assistant Director advised that whilst the CCG had a role to play, the consultation was being led by NHS England.

The Director of Child and Adult Services added that a letter had been received by the Leader of the Council from NHS England regarding a review of medical services in Hartlepool and included a proposal to de-commission current practices in Hartlepool. Consultation would commence in relation to this issue on 4 August and would conclude on 29 September. Details of the proposals together with consultation timescales were provided and it was reported that arrangements would be made to provide Members with a copy of the letter to the Leader under separate cover following the meeting.

The Committee unanimously opposed the proposals and requested that their views be reported to the appropriate Committee to which the Director agreed to draft a response on behalf of the Committee. A Member requested that clarification on the decision making arrangements and timescales for consideration of this issue be provided following the meeting.

Decision

- (i) That the Director of Child and Adult Services formulate a draft letter of response to the Audit and Governance Committee, on behalf of the Committee, to reflect the views of Members, as detailed above.
- (ii) That details of the proposals in relation to the proposed de-commissioning of services together with the decision making route and timescales for consideration of this issue be provided under separate cover following the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 11.40 am

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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