

ADULT SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

9 FEBRUARY 2015

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

Present:

Councillor: Carl Richardson (In the Chair)

Councillors: Paul Beck, Geoff Lilley, Brenda Loynes, George Springer and Stephen Thomas.

Frank Harrison, Years Ahead Forum.
Maureen Lockwood, Hartlepool HealthWatch
Public: E Leck and S Little.

Officers: Jill Harrison, Assistant Director, Adult Services
David Ward, Head of Finance (Child, Adult Services and Public Health)
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

56. Apologies for Absence

Councillor Sirs.

57. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Thomas declared a prejudicial interest in Minute No. 59 and left the meeting during consideration of the Capital Budget element of the report.

Councillor Thomas declared a personal interest in Minute No. 60.

58. Minutes of the meeting held on 5 January, 2015

Confirmed.

59. Strategic Financial Management Report – As at 31st December 2014 (*Director of Child and Adult Services & Chief Finance Officer*)

Type of decision

None – for information only.

Purpose of report

The purpose of the report is to inform Members of the 2014/15 Forecast General Fund Outturn, 2014/15 Capital Programme Monitoring and provide details for the specific budget areas that this Committee is responsible for.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Head of Finance reported that the latest report showing the overall Council position submitted to the Finance and Policy Committee on 30th January 2015 advised Members that there would be an overall underspend in the current year. The report on the position at 31st December 2014 advised Members that there is currently a net forecast budget under spend at the year-end of £188,000, which equated to 0.2% of the net annual budget. This position is still dependant on the outturn for seasonal budgets, such as winter maintenance and elderly care services.

The position in relation to Adult Services was also reported. The unbudgeted costs relating to Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) remain a budget pressure. These costs would be funded from a combination of the 2014/15 Adult Services managed budget underspend and the use of departmental reserves. Three specific Adult Services reserves were being created. Two related to specific grants received from the CCG (towards winter pressures) and the Department of Health (remaining balance of the Care Act Implementation Grant) and the other related to the creation of a 'contingency' reserve for Direct Payments that were monitored and managed on behalf of relevant clients by an external provider. This funding had been returned following a change in provider and would be retained by the authority to fund costs arising in addition to these clients regular Direct Payment provision such as redundancy and sickness cover.

(Councillor Thomas left the meeting at this point.)

Expenditure against the Capital Budget to the 30th November 2014 was also reported. Projected spend mainly related to the development of the Centre for Independent Living in 2015/16. It was highlighted that the capital programme reflected a new Department of Health grant called 'Autism Innovation Capital Grant'. This was a one-off, non-recurring grant allocation of £18,500 which had been received during this financial year. Although the grant was technically not ring-fenced there were a number of grant conditions which needed to be complied with including the grant needing to be spent before the end of March 2015. The grant would be awarded to 'Incontrol-able', a disabled persons user-led organisation based in Hartlepool. It would be spent against the principles

of the Autism Act 2009 and would be used to purchase ICT equipment including tablets and laptops for use at the Centre for Independent Living which would be pre-loaded with autism related information, advice and guidance.

The Head of Finance highlighted that at present the budget for the commissioning of services for older people was significantly over-spent. This is partly offset in the current financial year by one-off funding (such as Care Act implementation funding and the Better Care Fund) but it's expected to be a significant pressure in future years.

Members were concerned that this winter had not, to date, been particularly hard and therefore services may come under greater pressure in future years. Members questioned if specific reserves were being created now to address this issue. The Assistant Director stated that measures were being put in place as far as was possible.

Decision

That the report be noted.

60. Independent Living Fund – Transfer of Funding 2015/16 *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

Type of decision

None – for information only.

Purpose of report

The purpose of the report was to provide the Adult Services Committee with information regarding the transfer of funding and responsibilities relating to the Independent Living Fund (ILF).

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director reported that the Independent Living Fund (ILF) had originally been established in 1988 and provided financial support to disabled people so they could choose to live in their communities rather than in residential care. It was a directly funded government scheme which provided discretionary cash payments directly to disabled people to allow them to purchase care from an agency or pay the wages of a privately employed personal assistant.

To qualify for help from the ILF an individual would normally have to continue to fulfill a series of conditions, to which an additional eligibility

criteria was introduced from May 2010 restricting applications to those in work. The Assistant Director reported that currently there were 42 individuals in Hartlepool receiving ILF. All had been met by officers and the changes to the fund explained to them.

From 1 July 2015, all local authorities would receive a Section 31 non-ringfenced grant (pro-rata for 9 months of the financial year) which would be paid as one lump-sum by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in June / July 2015. The amount to be transferred would be calculated by the DCLG based on the number of users as at 30 June 2015 and the amount of ILF funding they received as at that date. The 42 people currently in receipt of ILF in Hartlepool received a total of approximately £0.67m of funding (net of any contributions).

As the ILF was no longer open to new users this number cannot increase and would reduce over time owing to mortality, people requiring residential care or their needs changing so that they become eligible for fully funded NHS Continuing Health Care. No additional funding would be received for administration costs and there would be no claw back of unspent funds, nor would any additional funding be allocated for any overspends.

Members sought assurance that the best value for money was being obtained by the 42 recipients of the fund for the services they purchased. The Assistant Director stated that as a minimum there was an annual review of care and support packages. All of the individuals were known to the authority and received regular reviews of the other support they received.

Members expressed their concern at the changes made to the ILF, particularly as highlighted by the Assistant Director, if the fund was 'mainstreamed'. This was a further change in funding for services for the most vulnerable that was pushing services back decades to the detriment of those service users and their communities.

Decision

- (i) That the Committee notes that ILF grant funding received in 2015/16 will be used to maintain the level of funding provided to individuals on 30 June 2015.
- (ii) That the Committee notes that ILF contributions will remain unchanged for 2015/16 whilst a review is undertaken.
- (iii) That the Committee notes the uncertainty in relation to funding in 2016/17 and beyond.

61. Hear My Voice – Inclusion North Event, 27 March 2015 – Verbal Update (*Head of Service, Child and Adult Services*)

Type of decision

None – for information only.

Purpose of report

To inform the Committee of the Hear My Voice event on 27 March, 2015.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Adult Services reported that the Houses of Parliament Parliamentary Outreach Team was holding an event in Hartlepool at the Civic Centre on 27 March 2015 to encourage people with a learning disability to vote in the forthcoming election through an explanation of what parliament does and assisting in the process to register to vote.

Members commented that circulation of the details of the event should be undertaken to all relevant groups to ensure as good a response to the event as possible. The Assistant Director indicated that details had already been shared with the Learning Disabilities Board and would be circulated to all relevant groups as suggested.

Decision

That the report be noted.

62. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

None.

The meeting concluded at 10.35 am

P J DEVLIN

**CHIEF SOLICITOR
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