

ADULT SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

1 December 2016

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

Present:

Councillor: Steve Thomas (In the Chair)

Councillors: Lesley Hamilton, George Morris, Carl Richardson and Sylvia Tempest

Also Present:

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 5.2 (ii) Councillor Springer was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Tennant

Councillor Paul Beck - Observer

Stella and Gordon Johnson - Healthwatch Representatives

Frank Harrison – Years Ahead Forum

Members of the Public – Sue Little, Evelyn Leck and Keith Riley

Officers: Sally Robinson, Director of Child and Adult Services
Jill Harrison, Assistant Director, Adult Services
Jeanette Willis, Head of Strategic Commissioning
Sandra Shears, Head of Finance and Corporate Services
Denise Wimpenny, Principal Democratic Services Officer

47. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Sirs and Tennant.

48. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Steve Thomas declared a personal interest as an employee of Healthwatch Hartlepool.

49. Minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2016

Received

50. Savings Programme 2017/18 – Adult Services (*Director of Child and Adult Services*)

Type of decision

Budget and Policy Framework

Purpose of report

To enable Members to consider the initial 2017/18 savings proposals relating to the Committee's remit to contribute towards achieving the overall savings requirement and to set out proposals to achieve further savings in 2018/19 and 2019/20.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Director of Child and Adult Services provided a presentation in support of a savings programme report which would be presented by the Assistant Director of Adult Services following the conclusion of the presentation. The presentation included the issues that would be considered by the Finance and Policy Committee on 2 December in a comprehensive report which brought together the previous separate Council Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy for revenue and capital to better integrate the Council's priorities and financial plans.

The presentation also included details of the Council's key priorities and 44 deliverables, the five year capital plan together with how this plan would be funded. Members were reminded of Government grant cuts over the last 6 years which had had a disproportionate impact on more deprived areas including Hartlepool. Given that the Council had already made significant budget reductions over the last 6 years, it was more and more difficult to balance the budget. Government grants would be cut by a further £9.8m over the next three years which was a cut of 38%. The Council faced a gross deficit of £20.8m and a three year strategy was being developed to address this deficit which aimed to minimise the impact on front line services. However, these measures would not address the whole budget deficit and the remaining deficit would be addressed through a Service Transformation Plan, details of which were provided.

The Assistant Director then presented a detailed and comprehensive report which included a breakdown of the 2016/17 budget, the proposals for delivery of savings in Adult Services as part of the 2017/18 budget process, the context for achieving savings in 2018/19 and 2019/20, the risks associated with the proposals and the considerations which had been taken into account in developing them.

It was reported that Adult Services would contribute £945,000 towards achieving the overall savings requirement for the Council over the next three years, £795,000 in 2017/18 and a further £150,000 in 2018/19. Anticipated pressures of £2,065,000 were expected within the next three years and strategies to manage these pressures were detailed in the report.

Members were referred to the risk implications, financial implications and 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) Members commented on the significant differences in funding levels between the north and the south and concerns were raised in relation to the impact in Hartlepool as a result of such funding gaps. The Committee commended officers in managing this difficult issue and requested that the Committee's thanks and acknowledgment be conveyed to staff in both Child and Adult Services.
- (ii) In response to a query raised in relation to corporate savings, the Committee was advised that the main corporate savings had been identified as a result of changes to prudential borrowing, treasury management and ICT contract savings.
- (iii) Concerns were raised regarding the impact of continuing Central Government cuts and, in particular, the introduction of the 2% social care precept. The Chair outlined the background to this decision by Central Government and indicated that the Council was given little choice but to implement this precept given the significant financial implications for those local authorities who chose not to introduce it.
- (iv) A Member raised objections to any further cuts in jobs or services and sought clarification in terms of the number of proposed compulsory redundancies. The Committee was advised that initially proposals identified six posts to be deleted, which may result in compulsory redundancies. However, since writing the report, this number had reduced to four. A summary of the arrangements in place to support individuals to secure alternative employment was provided and it was highlighted that everything possible would be done to minimise the number of compulsory redundancies, as had been done in previous years. Whilst the Chair provided assurances that work was ongoing with the Trade Unions to minimise the impact of these cuts and protect jobs and services where possible, there was a need to balance the budget which presented a number of challenges.

- (v) Given the proposals to reduce staffing levels in some areas, concerns were raised regarding the extra pressures placed on remaining staff and the potential impact on their health and wellbeing.
- (vi) The Assistant Director provided clarification in response to queries raised by Members and members of the public in relation to work that was ongoing to explore more cost effective methods of supporting adults with learning disabilities, the financial implications of the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards and the potential for the budget pressure to increase.
- (vii) A member of the public queried the support arrangements in place for adults with learning disabilities to access employment. The Assistant Director advised that the Council provided a supported employment service and continued to be one of the best performing authorities in the country. It was noted that there were over 15% of adults with learning disabilities in paid employment in Hartlepool compared to the national average of 6%.
- (viii) In relation to the Transforming Care Programme which involved people moving from long stay NHS provision back into the community, the potential detrimental impact on Council budgets was highlighted and, a query was raised as to whether funding support was available from the NHS to support these arrangements. The Assistant Director outlined the 'dowry' arrangements and assured Members that the Council continued to seek clarity on this issue through a range of routes including the Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board and ADASS (the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services). However, to date there remained a lack of clarity as to how community placements would be funded and it was noted that a number of other local authorities in the North East also continued to challenge this.
- (ix) The Committee further debated the impact of continuing Central Government cuts on the most vulnerable, the continuing pressures on the Council to deliver more services in a community setting with a continued reduction in budgets and, given the level of cuts, concerns were expressed regarding the risk of services becoming unviable.
- (x) In concluding the debate, the Chair reported that whilst the Committee were reluctant to agree savings proposals relating to Adult Services it was acknowledged that savings had been identified from areas which would result in minimal impact on frontline services.
- (xi) The Committee did not wish to support any reductions in staffing levels and recommended that all alternative options be explored to avoid compulsory redundancies where possible.

- (xii) The Chair reiterated the Committee's commitment to continue to work with Trade Unions in terms of job security and with service users to ensure the best possible standards of service were provided during these challenging times.

Decision

- (i) The Committee reluctantly agreed the savings proposals subject to all measures being pursued to avoid compulsory redundancies where possible.
- (ii) The Committee expressed a commitment to continue to work with the Trade Unions in terms of job security and with service users to ensure the best possible standards of service were provided during these challenging times.
- (iii) 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.

51. Policy for Full Fee Payers Accessing Older People's Residential Care (*Director of Child and Adult Services*)

Type of decision

Key Decision – Forward Plan Ref: CAS 059/16

Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to assess the impact of making amendments to the current policy regarding full fee payers accessing residential care. A change in approach is proposed which would mean that full fee payers would no longer enter placements under the Council's terms and conditions.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report which provided background information in relation to the proposals to make amendments to the current policy regarding full fee payers accessing residential care.

Members were referred to Appendix 1 which provided data on the current position for Hartlepool. Approximately 510 older people accessed permanent residential care on an annual basis and approximately 28% were self funders.

It was proposed that from 1 February 2017 the current policy be amended to allow providers of residential care for older people to contract and negotiate fees directly with full fee payers. This change in approach would apply only to full fee payers moving into residential care from this date onwards. There would be no impact on current care home residents who would continue to access placements based on existing terms and conditions.

Members were advised that the proposed change would help to address the concerns of current providers about the financial sustainability of current care homes and would also make Hartlepool more attractive for potential new developers who were interested in entering the care home market. The Committee was referred to the risk and financial considerations of the proposals.

The Assistant Director responded to queries raised in relation to nursing bed provision and concerns regarding limited availability and the associated increase in out of area placements.

Clarification was provided regarding the strategy to attract new care home providers/developers to the area and the arrangements in place to support providers.

In response to concerns raised by a member of the public regarding the fairness of the proposals, the Head of Strategic Commissioning advised that these concerns had been considered. A survey of the approach taken in other local authorities in the region revealed that the majority of Councils in the North East did not contract on behalf of individuals who could fully fund their of their own care, giving providers who operated in other Council areas the ability to charge differential rates and therefore secure more income for the overall running of their homes. Assurances were provided that whilst these concerns were acknowledged, the Council would work closely with providers to manage the proposed change in approach.

Officers responded to further queries raised in relation to the expected outcome of recent CQC inspections, which would be reported to the January meeting of this Committee and the assessment process in terms of payments for older people's residential care.

A Member commented on the benefits of in-house care provision and queried if such provision had been explored. The Assistant Director advised that the Council had not directly provided residential care for over 15 years, the reasons for which were outlined. Reference was made to discussions that had taken place at previous meetings in this regard. Members were advised that work was currently underway to explore alternative delivery models of care, the outcome of which would be reported to a future meeting of this Committee.

In summary, the Chair expressed disappointment regarding the decision taken by the Council to cease in-house residential care provision a number of years ago and the impact as a result, and was keen to see the Council more

involved as a provider of care in future. Concerns were reiterated in relation to the impact of continuing Central Government cuts and the pressures upon the Council to provide the best possible care as commissioner of services with limited resources. The difficulties for service users to find care homes were emphasised and it was acknowledged that the Council were left with little choice but to implement decisions of this type. The background to the reasons for the proposed changes to the Policy were reported.

Decision

That the proposed change to the Council's policy for full fee payers who enter residential care homes for older people be agreed.

52. Strategic Financial Management report – as at 30 September 2016 (*Director of Child and Adult Services and Chief Finance Officer*)

Type of decision

For information

Purpose of report

To inform Members of the 2016/17 Forecast General Fund Outturn, 2016/17 Capital Programme Monitoring and provide details for the specific budget areas that this Committee was responsible for.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report provided the background and financial reporting arrangements for 2016/17 as well as the General Fund budget outturn information in relation to the Child and Adult Services Department.

Members were advised that there would be a net forecast budget underspend at the year end of between 1 and 1.8%. This underspend related to a number of one off or non-sustainable underspends mainly relating to early achievement of 2017/18 savings. These underspends had enabled the DoLS budget pressure to be funded from the overall outturn position and therefore protect the DoLS reserve.

Details of the overall budget position for the Child and Adult Services Department were summarised in a table included in the report which included the reasons for the forecast outturn. Further details of specific budget areas were set out at Appendix A. Members were provided with details of recommended reserves together with planned capital expenditure, as set out in the report.

Decision

The Committee noted the report.

The meeting concluded at 11.55 am.

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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