

ADULT AND COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

16 January 2023

The meeting commenced at 2.00 p.m. in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.

Present:

Councillor: Bob Buchan (In the Chair)

Councillors: Gary Allen, Ben Clayton, Ged Hall and Sue Little.

Also present: as substitute in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.2.

Frank Harrison, Evelyn Leck.

Edwin Jeffries, HJTUC

Officers:

Denise McGuckin, Managing Director

Chris Little, Director of Resources and Development

Jill Harrison, Director of Adult and Community Based Services

John Lovatt, Assistant Director, Adult Social Care

Gemma Ptak, Assistant Director, Preventative and Community Based Services

Danielle Swainston, Assistant Director, Joint Commissioning

David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

34. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tim Fleming and Mike Young.

35. Declarations of Interest

None.

36. Minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2023

Received.

37. Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2023/24 to 2024/25 (*Director of Resources and Development and Director of Adult and Community Based Services*)

Type of decision

Budget and Policy Framework.

Purpose of report

The purpose of the report was to provide an update on the MTFS and to enable the Committee to scrutinise / comment on the 2023/24 savings proposals referred from Finance and Policy Committee.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Director of Resources and Development gave an outline of the report originally submitted to the Finance and Policy Committee on 12 December 2022 and updated Members on the subsequent impact of the Government's 2023/24 provisional settlement issued on 19 December. The Director outlined the strategy agreed by the Finance and Policy Committee to address the budget deficit the Council faced in 2023/24 and 2024/25. The Director advised members that the spending power, including the increased Council Tax and Adult Social Care precept, provided in provisional settlement was £1.188m more than forecast and it would be recommended that Finance and Policy Committee use these resources to reduce use of one off funding to balance the 2023/24 budget and put the Council's financial position on a more sustainable basis. Included in that strategy were a number of budget savings identified across all departments for 2023/24 and the report outlined those proposals that fell within the remit of this committee. The Director highlighted that the Finance and Policy Committee had requested that should any of the savings proposals not be supported by a relevant Policy Committee, that committee should forward alternative proposals to the same value as it was key that the savings proposed across the Council as a whole be met in 2023/24.

The Director of Adult and Community Based Services outlined each of the savings proposed for services within this Committee's remit, as detailed in Appendix C to the report. Details of any comments made by the Committee to be forwarded to the Finance and Policy Committee are included in the decision below.

The Managing Director stated that the MP, Jill Mortimer, had submitted her apologies for absence to this meeting in response to a question from a Member.

The Committee debated the issues outlined in the Director of Resources and Development's report and the savings outlined by the Director of Adult and Community Based Services. Members noted that the savings proposals set out in the report did protect front line services to the most vulnerable in the town. Members expressed their concern at the

Government's assumption that Council Tax payers had to keep paying more in the cost of living crisis with severe pressures on household budgets. Members also commented that the Council should still continue to lobby the Town's MP and government departments for further funding despite the additional funding reported by the Director of Resources and Development.

The Director of Adult and Community Based Services highlighted that two of the 2023/34 savings outlined in the report – Adult Social Care Staffing Review and Mobile Library Service – were the second year of savings proposals agreed last year.

The reduced subsidy to the National Museum of the Royal Navy was noted and Members questioned future year's subsidies to the museum. The Managing Director stated those figures would be shared with Members.

Members noted the number of post deletions outlined in the savings and questioned the impact of those on staff directly affected by the proposal and those in teams where vacant posts were being deleted. The Director of Adult and Community Based Services commented there were reductions through vacant posts and some recommissioning of services. Where vacant posts were deleted there would potentially be additional pressures on remaining staff and those would need to be managed through changes to ways of working and prioritisation. Members were concerned at the extra pressures and stress placed on staff. The Director stated that there was support available for all staff and an 'annual health check' for social care staff. This anonymous questionnaire had shown staff considered themselves to be well supported. The Managing Director added that the Council had recently received a Better Health at Work award.

A Member questioned the posts being made redundant and the costs associated. The Director of Adult and Community Based Services indicated that there would be appropriate consultation with any staff affected and redeployment opportunities across the Council would be explored. The number of potential compulsory redundancies had been kept to a minimum through deletion of vacant posts where possible and consideration of voluntary redundancy requests. The Director of Resources and Development stated that through the whole programme of savings for 2023/24 across all departments it was anticipated that compulsory redundancies would be extremely low and any costs would be met through the budget support fund.

The Chair thanked those present for their input into the discussions.

Decision

That as requested by Finance and Policy Committee the Committee considered the recommended 2023/24 savings proposed detailed in Annex A - Appendix C relating to the services within this Committees

portfolio and Members made the following comments to be reported back to Finance and Policy Committee on 23th January in relation to each of the savings proposed.

Budget Reduction Heading	Budget Reduction 2023/24 £000	Adult and Community Based Services Committee comments
Staffing Review	80	No specific comments were made.
Mobile Library Service	6	No specific comments were made.
Review of PA / Admin capacity	30	No specific comments were made.
Culture, Events and Participation Teams	58	No specific comments were made.
Workforce Development	25	No specific comments were made.
Adult Social Care – Commissioned Services	60	No specific comments were made.
Community Hubs and Libraries	71	No specific comments were made.
Reduction in NMRN subsidy	100	No specific comments were made. Details of future year's subsidies to be shared with Members.
Demand management in adult social care	400	No specific comments were made.

38. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

The Chairman ruled that the following items 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.

The meeting concluded at 2.40 p.m.

H MARTIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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