

# **ADULT AND COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

## **MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD**

9 December 2024

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

### **Present:**

Councillor: Gary Allen (In the Chair)

Councillors: Moss Boddy, Bob Buchan, Ged Hall, Sue Little, and Aaron Roy

Also present: Councillor Carole Thompson as substitute for Councillor Fiona Cook in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.2

Officers: Jill Harrison, Executive Director of Adult and Community Based Services  
Gemma Ptak, Assistant Director, Preventative and Community Based Services  
Angela Armstrong, Principal Democratic Services and Legal Support Officer

### **15. Opening Statement**

The Chair addressed the Committee and members of the public in attendance and noted some comments that had been recently publicised on social media in relation to allotments rents. It was clarified that there would be no decision made at this meeting regarding future allotment rent increases.

### **16. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Fiona Cook.

### **17. Declarations of Interest**

None.

### **18. Minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2024**

Received.

**19. Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2025/26 to 2027/28** *(Director of Finance, IT and Digital Services and Executive Director of Adults and Community Based Services)*

**Type of decision**

Budget and Policy Framework

**Purpose of report**

To provide an update on the MTFS and to enable the Committee to scrutinise/comment on the savings proposals referred from the Finance and Policy Committee.

**Issue(s) for consideration**

The Executive Director for Adults and Community Based Services presented the report which reiterated that all councils across the country were facing significant financial challenges owing to the impact of inflation and demand on services along with historic inadequate increases in government funding to meet these challenges. As outlined at Finance and Policy Committee in November, the Council had a forecast budget deficit of £10.519m for 2025/26 and £13.122m over the full MTFS period.

As in previous years, addressing the deficit needed to be managed through budget saving actions which sought to minimise the impact on services where possible and use of reserves. With regard to savings, proposals totalling £2.954m had been proposed for 2025/26 and a total of £3.109m over the MTFS period. Pending publication of the local government finance settlement in late December, the acceptance of the proposals for 2025/26 and utilisation of reserves at the indicated level of £3.5m would leave a remaining budget gap of £4.065m. It was currently assumed that Hartlepool's allocation of the increases in government grants would meet this remaining gap for 2025/25. Should the government funding not be sufficient to close the remaining gap, additional savings would need to be identified and approved for 2025/26. Details of the individual savings were provided in Appendix B with the items relevant to this Committee shaded with some service areas being cross cutting across more than one Department.

The Chair referred to the significant budgetary pressures the Council was facing, especially in the area of Adult Services and was hoping for a positive financial settlement from the Government in December. The Executive Director of Adult and Community Based Services responded to a number of queries raised by Members of the Committee. There was reference to sponsorship that was received for events such as the annual fireworks display and Christmas lights switch on and the Executive Director of Adult and Community Based Services confirmed that the sponsorship received covered around 10-15% of the total costs of the

events but that the events themselves were never anticipated as being self-funded. During the discussions it was suggested that alternative ways to support the annual fireworks event with the support of local shop keepers and businesses should be explored due to its popularity and potential for income generation for local businesses.

In response to a question from a Member, the Assistant Director, Preventative and Community Based Services confirmed that the future operating model for all leisure and cultural activities would be examined to explore ways of making the provision more efficient and effective, including the potential for other organisations to deliver services. Further detail on this would be reported to a future meeting of the Committee.

### **Decision**

The savings proposals detailed in Appendix B relating to the services within this Committee portfolio were approved to be reported back to Finance and Policy Committee on 20 January 2025.

## **20. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent**

None.

The meeting concluded at 10.15am

**H MARTIN**

**DIRECTOR OF LEGAL, GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES**

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