

ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

A meeting of the Adult Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel was held on Tuesday 9 January 2024.

PRESENT: Councillors J Walker (Chair), TA Grainge, D Jackson (Vice-Chair), M Nugent, S Tranter, G Wilson and C Cooke - Elected Mayor

PRESENT BY INVITATION: Councillors

OFFICERS: S Blood and E Scollay

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors

23/37 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received at this point in the meeting.

23/38 **COUNCIL BUDGET 2024/25 AND MTFP REFRESH- ADULT SOCIAL CARE.**

The Mayor and Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration were in attendance at the meeting and gave a presentation which covered the following issues in relation to Adult Social Care:

- Remaining Budget Gap
- Post Settlement Update/ Exceptional Finance Support
- Adult Social Care- context
- Questions: Adult Social Care – Budget Saving proposals
- Next steps

The budget gap was £6.3 million, having taken into all the current saving proposals. The Local Government Finance Settlement announced in December 2023 had provided a small improvement, A report would be submitted to Executive on 17 January 2023 recommending an application to the Government for Exceptional Financial Support (EFS). EFS would provide temporary funding solution that would enable the Council to achieve financial sustainability and avoid having to issue a Section 114 Notice.

The Mayor provided some context for the current position in Adult Social Care- as follows:

- A scheme of delegation was implemented in November 2023 to provided increased budget controls in relation to approval of spend on care packages and placements.
- High cost spend in our Learning Disability services has identified as an area for review in 2023, commencing with a review of independent supporting living schemes and out residential care provision at Levick.
- Adult Social Care had experienced significant recruitment and retention pressures over the last 3 years which has impacted on case waiting lists and the Council's ability to review high cost packages.
- Adult Social Care has seen an increased in case complexity over recent years, particularly in relation to transition and safeguarding cases. This is impacting on caseload sizes and is contributing to the Council's recruitment and retention challenges.
- Availability of suitable housing is impacting on Adult Social Care spend and Adult Social Care issues have been highlighted in the corporate review of housing.
- CQC assurance for Adult Social Care was introduced in 2022. As yet it is unknown when Middlesbrough Council will be inspected but this may be early in Spring 2024.

Adult Social Care was the second largest area of net expenditure for the Council at £49.8m (40% of the Council's opening total net revenue budget) for 2023/24. Adult Social Care gross

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spend was £109.6m offset by £59.8m income. Care Sector supplier capacity and demand for the Health and Care sector continue to provide challenges for the Council.

This was borne out on several areas where Middlesbrough remains an outlier in activity for Adult Social Care Services. The Panel were shown some statistics which advised that Middlesbrough has more adults admitted to residential and nursing care home at 42.4 per 100,000 population compared to Regional and England as 17.8 and 13.9 respectively.

The Panel were advised that the budget proposals reflect the increased demand for services and savings initiatives and proposals focused on improved efficiency of current systems and transformation of the Adult Social Care delivery model through enhanced early intervention, digital technology, increased reablement, and a broadening of our accommodation offer.

In terms of the financial context, the Mayor advised the Panel of the following:

- For Period 7 (October 2023), the forecast outturn is £133.792m (before Financial Recovery Plans), an adverse variance of £7.438m (+5.9%) – a decrease of (£1.118m) from the £8.556m reported at Quarter 2.
- Financial Recovery Plans totalling £1.584m have been proposed which if assured and fully implemented would reduce the adverse variance to £5.854m.
- Adult Social Care, with a current net budget of £49.648m forecast outturn is £51.334m, as adverse variance of £1.686m, however with financial recovery plans the outturn may reduce by £0.219m to an adverse £1.467m.
- The key drivers of the adverse variance is due to an increase in the number and cost of residential placements, enablement and support packages and direct payments to service users. This is partially offset by additional grant income and an underspend from staff vacant posts.

In terms of the wider context, the Mayor advised that Middlesbrough residents tend to want to remain living in the Middlesbrough area. Due to the demand, this has an impact on independent care homes being built within specific wards.

In terms of housing demand, there was a need to build more bungalows, with support networks in place. As Middlesbrough has more individuals aged 18+ in residential care than other parts of the country, this calls for demand to look at extra care facilities and look at small accommodation / supporting living.

Middlesbrough's residential care is economical, however there needs to be tighter to examine that individuals are providing with the correct accommodation, reablement service (if application) and use the Middlesbrough independent living service. Services within the MILS will generate income, for example Connect Telecare.

There was currently only one supported housing provision in Middlesbrough- Pennyman house, North Ormesby. Pennyman house offers 42 flats with extra care housing for people aged 60+ who may be frail or who need an increased level of care and support. There was therefore more need for small specialist provision units in the Town, including those for individuals with learning disabilities / mental health needs.

In terms of delivering services, some neighbouring local authorities, for example Sunderland City Council use an arm's length training provider, Sunderland Care and Support to deliver their services. There is therefore a need to evaluate what other local authorities provide and from there look at the need and demand of Middlesbrough's care packages.

The Orchard, for example, which offers an inpatient facility and support and care for adults with mental health problems. Service users come from outside Middlesbrough to use this provision.

The Mayor outlined the budget savings proposals considered to potentially affect front line service delivery levels included:

- Accommodation and Support review.
- Fairer charging / Fair cost of Care.
- Review of Independent Supported Living Schemes.
- Expand Autism Day Care through relocation of Cumberland Resource Centre
- Re-provision use of Levick Court
- Review of Direct Payments
- Court of Protection Service Charge.

Budget savings proposals considered that were considered to have minimal, or no effect in front line service delivery levels included:

- Temporary accommodation and support review
- Introduction of Residential Care Panel
- Review of Domiciliary Care
- Review of Care Package Funding
- Expansion of reablement provision
- Review of high cost care packages
- Transformation of Adult Social Care Services
- Review of Adult Social Care Client income contribution for residential care.

The Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration outlined that in terms of forecasting figures, homelessness was the most difficult to forecast. Adult Social Care, however did overestimated wage increases which has been favourable.

- Homelessness – £2 million has been granted from the Towns Deals Board, and further grants may become available in the coming months.
- The Council need to consider the current homelessness provision, for example, the Council currently outsource the out of hours helpline. A new working model needs to be developed, looking at a building offering information/ accommodation upstairs, and considering capital rather than revenue.
- Council currently do not have a consistent system, which needs to be addressed to ensure adequate progression.

The Panel felt it pleasing to see that Adult Social Care were not expecting redundancies, as most had come from vacant posts, bar 2 posts as outlined from saving summaries ACS10 (expand autism day care through relocation to Cumberland resource centre) and ACS15 (Review of Adult social care client income contributions for residential care).

Vacant posts have been frozen and there has been an audit of posts which carry statutory responsibility. Within ASC transformation agenda, there is a need to work SMARTER.

A Member queried whether that had been any changes to the Council's assessment of our care. Responding to the query, the Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration outlined that all demands are subject to individual need. Some urgent assessments will be dealt within 4 hours of a referral, e.g. urgent occupational therapist referral, whilst others may take weeks.

It was suggested that it would be useful for the Scrutiny Panel to receive progress updates and performance data on a quarterly basis.

AGREED as follows that the:

1. Information provided was received and noted.
2. Panel's comments on the Council Budget 2024/25 and MTFP Refresh- Adult Social Care would be forwarded to the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

No Items raised.