

EXECUTIVE

A meeting of the Executive was held on Wednesday 2 October 2024.

- PRESENT:** Mayor C Cooke (Chair), Councillors T Furness, P Storey, J Thompson, Z Uddin and N Walker
- ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** M Barker, B Carr.
- OFFICERS:** C Benjamin, S Bonner, R Brown, G Field, C Heaphy, R Horniman, J Savage and E Scollay
- APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Councillor P Gavigan

24/31 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

24/32 MINUTES - EXECUTIVE - 4 SEPTEMBER 2024

The Mayor advised he had approached the Director for Environment and Community Services for further information relating to Licences for Houses in Multiple Occupation.

The minutes of the Executive meeting held on 4 September 2024 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

24/33 ADULT SOCIAL CARE RESIDENTIAL CHARGING POLICY

The Mayor and Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Public and the Executive Member for Finance and Governance submitted a report for Executive consideration.

The report's purpose was to seek approval of the Residential Charging Policy.

Central Government provided Local Authorities with Statutory Guidance issued under the Care Act 2014 in respect of a single legal framework for charging for care and support under sections 14 and 17. The Act was supported by the Care and Support Regulations (Statutory Instruments) and Care and Support Guidance and Annexes issued under the Care Act 2014 which Local Authorities must follow when charging individuals for their care and support needs.

The Residential Charging Policy would ensure that the current process for charging was transparent and consistent. This policy would continue with the principle that residents should only be required to pay what they could afford and in turn, be entitled to financial support through a means tested financial assessment.

The policy set out procedures for claiming financial help with residential social care charges. The policy would safeguard the interest of local taxpayers by ensuring the financial assessment process would include a welfare benefit check to ensure full entitlement was claimed. This would be undertaken initially by the Financial Assessment Team and if necessary, Welfare Rights. This would ensure the cost of care to the Council is minimised should unclaimed benefits be identified.

An improvement to the application process had also been introduced for both residential and non-residential financial assessments. Using an e-form, financial assessment information was gathered quickly, and online which sped up the process for assessing the cost of care packages. This approach improved the governance process as the information was held centrally, and only information necessary to process the assessment was gathered. Consequently, this had reduced the need for visits to residential care homes which historically has been necessary to gather the relevant information. The approach was extremely effective and efficient.

Where service users were unable to access online solutions, the service continued to provide residential care visits for vulnerable groups.

ORDERED that:

1. Executive approve the Residential Charging Policy to take effect from 7 October 2024.
2. Delegated authority to approve any future minor revisions/modifications is provided to the Director of Finance and the Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration, and the Executive Member for Finance and Governance and the Executive Member of Adult Social Care and Public Health to maintain effective service delivery and reflect revisions brought about by regulatory and/or statutory guidance changes.

OPTIONS

The Care Act 2014 provided a single legal framework for charging for care and support under Sections 14 and 17. It enabled a local authority to decide whether to charge a person when it was arranging to meet a person's care and support needs. The implementation of a Residential Charging Policy provided residents or service users with clear guidelines around the assessment process or how to appeal should they disagree with the assessment carried out therefore minimising the risk of challenge.

The Council did have the option not to implement a policy and do nothing. The Financial Assessment team would still work within the Care and Support Regulations (Statutory Instruments) and Care and Support Guidance and Support Annexes issued under the Care Act 2014 but may have been open to challenge by residents as no Policy would have been in place.

REASONS

The Policy was a key decision that impacted on two or more wards and as such required Executive approval.

The policy upheld good practice within democratic processes and enabled the proposed policy to maintain visibility with the Executive and provide residents with a clear understanding of how a stay in residential care would be assessed from a financial perspective.

The proposed policy would result in no changes to the threshold to services and support provided, however would further strengthen current working arrangements should any queries arise in respect of any financial assessment.

The proposed policy provided clarification to residents with simplified and clear details of how the income, savings and property would be financially assessed should an individual require care in a residential setting.

That delegated authority to approve any future minor revisions/modifications was provided to the Director of Finance and the Executive Member for Finance and Governance as well as the Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration and Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health to reflect revisions brought about by regulatory and/or statutory guidance changes.

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ANY OTHER URGENT ITEMS WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR, MAY BE CONSIDERED.

The Mayor advised Executive that an additional meeting of Executive had been scheduled for the 28th October 2024 to consider reports on the Household Support Fund and the Linthorpe Road Cycle Lane.

A discussion took place regarding consultation with Executive Members when Executive meetings were arranged outside of the agreed schedule.

NOTED

02 October 2024

The decisions will come into force after five working days following the day the decision was published unless the decision becomes subject to the call in procedures.