

TO ADD CAPACITY TO THE FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT TEAM TO CARRY OUT CLIENT FINANCIAL ASSESSMENTS IN LINE WITH AGREED CLIENT CONTRIBUTION PROPOSALS

To: General Purposes Committee

Meeting Date: 28th January 2020

From: Mark Gedney, Head of Financial Operations & Personalisation,
Adult & Safeguarding Team

Electoral division(s): All

Forward Plan ref: Not applicable **Key decision:** No

Purpose: To consider a Transformation Fund bid to add capacity to the Council's Financial Assessment team which will enable the team to reassess clients in accordance with the Council's amended care charging policy and client contribution assessment criteria.

Recommendation: Committee is asked to:

Approve the Transformation Bid proposal of £230,000 (for a period up to 18 months) to fund additional resource for the Financial Assessment team to deliver an enhanced client financial assessments service to apply the revised charging policy and secure the additional income due in 20/21 and future years.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Cambridgeshire continues to face significant financial pressures in delivering Adult Social Care, the main factors being: growth in the population of older people with complex needs and significant financial volatility in the care provider market. Budget setting has proved to be particularly challenging because of continuing and ongoing reductions in Government funding levels. This worsening financial situation coupled with the increasing demand for care and support has increased the need for Cambridgeshire to review its Adult Social Care charging policy.

Therefore Cambridgeshire's charging policy has been carefully reviewed against the Care Act 2014 charging legislation and guidance, plus benchmarked with other councils. The review identified five proposals for charging policy change on how clients can fairly and affordably contribute towards the cost of their care package.

- 1.2 Following consideration of the five proposals by the Adults Committee in September, an extensive public consultation was agreed. At this time the Council had approximately 3,500 clients accessing services that would be impacted by the proposed changes.
- 1.3 On 23rd September the public consultation opened for 12 weeks (closed 15th December). All clients deemed to be affected were identified and personally contacted by letter; additionally a series of informative events took place across the districts throughout the 12 week period. Clients and members of the community were encouraged to complete the client consultation survey which was made available through a number of different forums and widely publicised.
- 1.4 Information collated from the public consultation was included in the Client contribution proposal paper. The board paper was presented and considered by the Adults Committee where it received approval that the Council implement four out of the five proposed assessment changes.

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF PROPOSED ASSESSMENT CHANGES

- 2.1 On 16th January the Adults Committee approved the following assessment changes:-
- a) To change the Minimum Income Guarantee figure used to the level set by the Department of Health and Social Care.
 - b) To include all rates (low, middle and high) of the following disability benefits in the financial assessment calculation:
 - i) Attendance Allowance (AA)
 - ii) Care component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA Care)
 - iii) Daily living component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP – Enhanced rate)
 - c) To introduce a new administration fee to Adult Social Care service users whose social security benefits and finances are managed by the Council acting as their

Department for Work and Pensions corporate appointee.

- d) To charge an annual (recurring) care arrangement fee to those people living in the community who are able to afford the full cost of their own care but have chosen to ask the Council to arrange this for them.

- 2.2 Further intensive data interrogation has identified that these changes will impact on the care charges of around 4,300 clients, and the anticipated additional income that would be generated from the above changes is expected over two years to be £1.7m in 2020/21 and a further £1.7m in 2021/22; totalling £3.4m. This is an estimated calculation as there are a number of variables including the outcome of individual financial assessments, personalised levels of disability related expenditure, the period over which the changes are implemented and the fact that the cohort of people affected will change over the two year period.
- 2.3 For 2020/21, financial reassessments for individuals will be phased throughout the year, hence the increase in revenue will run in parallel with the phasing of assessments. To achieve all revenue predictions through implementing the changes to the charging policy, the Financial Assessment Team (based at Scott House) will require additional resource to facilitate the process.
- 2.4 The Adults Committee have agreed that adult social care clients should where requested or where appropriate have their assessment by home visit – face to face. Whilst this option is the most resource intensive, it is an important method of ensuring that a full, personalised, affordable financial assessment is undertaken, and that the client is fully involved with this and has the opportunity to put forward any concerns they might have as a result of any increased care charge.
- 2.5 It is recognised this implementation will be challenging, and in addition there needs to be some initial preparation to ensure the following:
- Disability Related Expenditure (DRE) guidance and process is refreshed and issued to the Financial Assessment team
 - The complaints and appeals process is clear and easily accessible for clients.
 - Relevant partners are identified to work with clients regarding any increased charges and to assist with any issues raised to avoid debt.
 - Financial assessment staff are fully trained in the how to apply the new changes to the charging policy in the financial assessment process and are fully aware of the support available through the Council's Early help team, relevant partners and other related agencies.
 - Effective, comprehensive and accessible to help clients to access where to find additional support.

3. MAIN ISSUES

- 3.1 The Adult Social Care budget needs to grow by around 5% each year just to stand still and without making savings, due to demographic, legislative and market pressures. There are a number of future financial risks that cannot yet be quantified, in particular reliance on unconfirmed funding sources. Ensuring that all available revenue streams are accessed and maximised is therefore critical.

- 3.2 All new financial assessments will be loaded into the new Adult Social Care database system. The migration of financial assessment data from the Council's legacy systems to the new system has been a lengthy and challenging process, and created some early difficulties in data interrogation and reporting – however these issues have now been resolved.
- 3.3 The decision to bring the Financial Assessment service currently provided by LGSS back in house as a directly provided Cambridgeshire County Council service has now been taken, and a programme of work is currently underway to facilitate this, and also to look in more detail at service structure and consider recruitment preparations, staff retention matters as well as processes and training.

4. PROPOSAL

- 4.1 Currently the Financial Assessment Team services all the County from a central location in Huntingdon (Scott House). To execute the additional assessments and home visits where appropriate, there is a requirement for additional staff to be deployed to deliver this.

4.2 What the team will look like

The additional requirement is as follows: Five Financial Assessment Officers, the officers will sit within the existing service and operate seamlessly with 'business as usual' activity.

5. FUNDING

- 5.1 It is recommended that funding for the additional capacity within the Financial Assessment Team is drawn down from the Transformation Fund for the period March 2020 to September 2021. The total for this period would be up to £230,000 to cover recruitment and employment of: 5 FTE Financial Assessment Officers.
- 5.2 This funding bid meets the criteria of the Transformation Fund under the **Invest to Save** criteria (proposals that require an initial investment to achieve cash savings in future years, in line with Council and Service priorities as determined during the Business Planning process)

6. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

6.1 A good quality of life for everyone

A good quality of life for everyone - The recommended changes have been considered alongside the need to support people to live healthy and independent lives, and continue to fully comply with the requirements of Government guidance on financial assessments for service user contributions to care and support packages.

6.2 Thriving places for people to live

There are no significant implications for this priority.

6.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's Children

There are no significant implications for this priority.

7. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Resource Implications

- If the Transformation Fund bid is approved, this will result in a drawdown of up to £230,000 with the aim of the team becoming absorbed into business as usual aligning the growth of the team with the forecast adult population growth (see more detail in **Appendix A**) taking into consideration natural attrition.
- Beyond this, the Financial Assessment Team will continue to operate business as usual.
- Recruiting into this area has its challenges in the current labour market.

7.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

There are no significant implications with this category

7.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

There are no significant implications with this category

7.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

There are no significant implications within this category

7.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

There are no significant implications within this category

7.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

There are no significant implications with this category

7.7 Public Health Implications

There are no significant implications with this category

Implications	Officer Clearance
Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?	No significant implications Name of Financial Officer: Stephen Howarth
Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the LGSS Head of Procurement?	No significant implications: Name of Officer: Gus De Silva
Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by LGSS Law?	No significant implications: Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillan
Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?	Not applicable
Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?	No significant Implications: Communications lead with overall Client engagement: Lead Officer - Matthew Hall
Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact?	Yes Name of Officer: Charlotte Black
Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health	Not applicable

Source Documents	Location
Agenda and Decision Summary Adults Committee - 16 January 2020	https://cambridgeshire.cmis.uk.com/ccclive/Meetings/tabid/7gPublic/mid/397/Meeting/1112/Committee/3/Default.aspx >

APPENDIX A

Population figures are produced by Cambridgeshire County Council Insight team, their work assists Local government authorities plan their service activity for the future. With regards to the aging population demand on Adult Social Care the table below forecasts age 65+ population growth for the next 20years from 2016 – 2036

	Year	65-74	75-84	85+	Total	% increase	Total Population
Cambridgeshire	2016	65,200	36,600	16,900	118,700		653,400
	2021	70,500	44,800	21,000	136,300	14.83%	713,800
	2026	72,500	56,400	26,000	154,900	30.50%	752,800
	2031	82,700	60,400	33,200	176,300	48.53%	779,300
	2036	89,200	63,000	43,000	195,200	64.45%	801,100