

**County Council Business Plan 2014/15
Comments from the Adults, Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny
Committee**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Adults Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the Council's draft Business Plan proposals for Adult Social Care and for Public Health at its meeting on 5th December 2013.
- 1.2 In attendance to present the report and respond to members' questions and comments were:

Adult Social Care

- Councillor Fred Yeulett, Cabinet Member for Adult Services
- Adrian Loades, Executive Director: Children, Families and Adults (CFA)
- Charlotte Black, Service Director: Older People's Services, CFA
- Claire Bruin, Service Director: Adult Social Care, CFA
- Meredith Teasdale, Service Director: Strategy and Commissioning, CFA.

Public Health

- Councillor Tony Orgee, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing
- Dr Liz Robin, Director of Public Health

Members agreed to submit a report to Cabinet of their conclusions as follows.

2. Adult Social Care

General comments

- 2.1 The Committee considered that the Business Plan was theoretically coherent, and that the approach being taken to make savings was already achieving results. However, in view of the demand-led nature of the service, and the history of overspends in previous years, the Committee had little confidence that the savings envisaged in the plan would be met. In particular, although the projected 2013/14 overspend was a relatively low percentage of the overall budget, and less than in 2012/13, the overspend in Older People's services continued a trend.
- 2.2 In particular, members noted that much of the transformational and preventative work could have been started some time ago, and as a result it was necessary for the Council to race to catch up with the increasing demographic pressures.
- 2.3 The Committee recognised the recent improvements that had been made to the service, for example in reablement, but considered that there was still significant room for improvement in both Adults and Older People's services.

- 2.4 Members particularly welcomed the fundamental review being undertaken to develop a model of social care to make it more proactive, preventative and personalised, aimed at enabling residents to exert choice and control. Members noted that the transfer of social care staff from CCS NHS Trust gave the Council more control over service delivery.
- 2.5 The Committee noted that the Government's Integrated Transformation Fund (now renamed the Better Care Fund) will provide more resource to enable the Council to undertake transformational change. Members emphasised the importance of the resource being used for transformation wherever possible rather than for filling gaps in service budgets, and welcomed the emphasis on preventative initiatives within the planned spend of the fund.
- 2.6 In view of the scale and range of proposals for savings contained in the Business Plan, members were concerned that the Adult Social Care management team was trying to achieve a great deal very quickly, and highlighted the importance of prioritising those areas where results could be delivered.
- 2.7 The Committee recognised that there were considerable risks in the proposed reductions in funding, and emphasised the importance of managing and monitoring risk where major savings were being sought. Councillors were also concerned that the inflation estimates in the Business Plan might be over-optimistic.
- 2.8 Members were concerned that the urgency of the budget situation was communicated to the general public.
- 2.9 It was noted that it would be helpful to know the unit costs of activities that parish councils might fund.

Specific issues

Older People

- 2.10 The Older People's Programme which is being led by the Clinical Commissioning Group represented both an opportunity and a threat, and contained a risk of increased demand for the authority's services.
- 2.11 It was important that the Council engaged early with potential service providers, in order to ensure that any risk to the Council was minimised, and the benefits of better integration were realised quickly.

Reviews

- 2.12 Members noted that the Council's performance in relation to service users receiving a review needed to improve, and were concerned that some people might be receiving services that were no longer required. They suggested that there could be a business case for making savings by employing extra staff to address the backlog of reviews, and welcomed the agreement that this would be considered.

Services for people with disabilities or sensory needs

- 2.13 Members were concerned at the impact of the proposed budget reductions on people with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and sensory needs, and the risks associated with this, including that of legal challenge.
- 2.14 In relation to the proposal to maximise the use of community transport for people with physical disabilities, members emphasised the importance of this being taken into account in the Council's Environment, Transport and Economy Directorate budget for community transport, especially as Government grant funding for community transport was coming to an end.

The role of the voluntary sector

- 2.15 Members highlighted the importance of investing in voluntary and community sector support in order to mitigate the effects on service users of reduced funding, including the risk of people becoming more isolated as a result of reductions in access to activities.

Services for single homeless people

- 2.16 Members were concerned at the risk that proposals to reduce Council housing-related support for single homeless people might compromise the viability of a hostel for single people in Cambridge City, if the required savings cannot be achieved or alternative funding identified. The Council's Community Impact Assessment states that " The implications of closure would be the potential for more street homeless and the knock on effect of more being taken into custody or admitted to Accident and Emergency which their current support helps prevent.

Members have requested further information about these proposals.

3. Public Health

Members made the following comments:

- 3.1 The Council should take a more transformational approach to public health in future, in which public health worked with other directorates, particularly the Children Families and Adults Directorate, to ensure that the public health budget and other Council budgets were used to best effect, while recognising

the ring-fenced nature of the public health budget. The Committee would welcome work of this kind.

- 3.2 Officers should consider whether it would financially benefit the Council to approach the Department of Health to rectify a mistake which had led to the Council not being specifically funded to provide childhood vision screening for 2014/15.

The minutes of the meeting provide a full record of the discussion. They can be found on <http://tinyurl.com/ccc-awh-051213>.