

Agenda Item 3

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HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES AND OLDER PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

10 JANUARY 2017

(19.15 20.40)

PRESENT: Councillors Councillor Peter McCabe (in the Chair),
Councillor Brian Lewis-Lavender, Councillor Laxmi Attawar,
Councillor Mary Curtin, Councillor Suzanne Grocott,
Councillor Sally Kenny and Councillor Abdul Latif

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Tobin Byers (Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health) and Mark Allison Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance)

Caroline Holland (Director of Corporate Services), Simon Williams (Director, Community & Housing Department) and Dr Dagmar Zeuner (Director, Public Health) Stella Akintan (Scrutiny Officer).

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Marsie Skeete and Mr Saleem Sheikh, Co-opted Member.

2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

None

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record.

4 IMPACT OF THE SAVINGS IN ADULT SOCIAL CARE (Agenda Item 4)

Simon Williams gave an overview of the report stating that this is an update on the previous report from October 2015 and outlines progress to date.

A panel member asked about the relationship between reduction in the use of residential care, delayed transfers and care home closures. The Director reported there was only one care home closure last year. The reduction in residential care use is intended and planned as a policy and financial objective. This does not lead to delayed transfers of care and it is better for people to be in their own homes.

Panel members referred to page 8 of the agenda and asked for why examples could not be given on the effect of the savings. A query was also raised about the impact of the decommissioning of the meals on wheels service. The Director for Community and Housing reported that he cannot discuss the impact on individuals for reasons of

confidentiality. He also highlighted that the department are sensitive to the impact that the savings could be having on individual people even though they are being discussed in general terms. In regards to meals on wheels it was reported that alternative solutions had been found for all users of the service and no complaints had been received. It is too early to conduct a survey on the impact of the change but this could be carried out at a later date and findings brought to the panel.

A panel member referred to the table on Page 9 of the agenda and noted that there has been a large drop in home care unit costs. The Director of Community and Housing reported that this includes the average cost of the in-house re-ablement service surplus capacity has been removed and this is main reason for the reduction.

A panel member asked what improvements we are expecting in adult social care with the new Mosaic system. The Director of Community and Housing said the new Mosaic system will increase productivity and mean social workers and therapists can spend more time with patients than previously and the financial interfaces will run more smoothly. The Director of Corporate Services said the new system will be better supported by the supplier. There will also be a more streamlines transition between children and adults services.

RESOLVED

The report was noted and Director thanked for his report

5 BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE (Agenda Item 5)

The Director of Corporate Services gave an overview of the reported and stated that an update on the Medium Term Financial Strategy was taken to Cabinet in December. The report highlights that there is built in growth for adult social care of £9.3 million in 2018, £252,000 in 2018/19 and a reduction in monies thereafter. There is now an overall budget gap of:

£1.6 million in 2017/18
£14.3 million in 2018/19
£15.1 million in 2019/20
£21.4 million in 2020/21

Ahead of the final settlement an additional 1% precept for adult social care has been announced.

A panel member asked what the impact will be if the 3% levy is taken up by the council. The Director of Corporate Services reported that the additional 3% means the gap in 2018/19 reduces to £11.1 million.

A panel member asked if we can use growth in adult social care budget to demonstrate improvement. The Director of Community and Housing said the growth brings the budget in line with current spend, and so no service or quality enhancement can be funded and no savings can be set aside. There will be more rather than less pressure on the department to be thrifty with management of the budget. The Director of Corporate Services said we are waiting for central

government to define what 'improvement ' means in relation to the additional 1% allocated within the Adult Social Care precept.

Councillor Brian Lewis Lavender moved a motion stating that:

The Panel urges Cabinet to apologise to Merton's most vulnerable residents for not accepted the proposed 1.7% Adult Social Care precept in the 2016-17 Budget, which would not have cost Merton's taxpayers a penny more, especially given the higher increase that is now required in 2017-18 in order to recover this lost revenue.

This was seconded by Councillor Abdul Latif. Councillors: Suzanne Grocott, Abdul Latif and Brian Lewis Lavender voted in favour of the motion and Councillors: Peter McCabe, Mary Curtin, Sally Kenny and Laxmi Attawar voted against the motion.

The motion was not carried

A panel member asked if it is appropriate to be concerned about the current situation in the adult social care sector. The Director of Community and Housing confirmed that this is not a pessimistic view point, even with the growth there are significant pressures on the sector. The Director of Corporate Services said in the short term we need to make savings and address the gaps we also need to continue to drive savings including through the procurement processes.

The Chair asked the Panel to agree that the following reference to Cabinet via the Overview and Scrutiny Commission in regards to the budget proposals:

The Healthier Communities and Older People Overview and Scrutiny Panel noted Cabinet's budget proposals and expressed grave concern about the forecast gap in the financial years 2018/19, 2019/20, and 2020/21 (As set out in appendix one of the 12 December Cabinet report) . A majority of panel members indicated that central government must address the problem and provide additional funds for health and adult social care as a matter of urgency.

The Panel voted on the reference and Councillors: McCabe, Curtin, Attawar and Kenny voted in favour and Councillors: Brian Lewis Lavender, Latif and Grocott voted against.

The reference was agreed.

A panel member asked the Director of Community and Housing if the concerns around Adult Social Care are being raised with government. The Director reported that this is the case, The Association for the Directors of Adult Social Services , along with the Local Government Association are making the case to government that more funding is needed for Adult Social Care.

The Director of Corporate Services reported that the savings in home care for 2019/20 was based on an outcome based commissioning approach and working with providers to find efficiencies within the system.

6 SAVINGS PROPOSALS CONSULTATION PACK (Agenda Item 6)

7 MAKING MERTON A DEMENTIA FRIENDLY BOROUGH (Agenda Item 7)

The Director of Public Health gave an overview of the report stating that a lot of good work has already happened in Merton including the dementia hub. The Director reported that councillors can play an important role on this work given their important links with the local community. The Senior Public Health Principal reported that dementia rates are increasing. Surveys have shown that people with dementia want support with safety and navigation and help to access services. Panel members were informed that a launch invite was due to take place and all councillors would be invited.

A panel member said this is an issue that could be discussed at group meetings, and emailed to all councillors as well as sent to resident associations.

A panel member asked if group training would be available and it was reported that this would be rolled out in a few months.

RESOLVED

The Panel thanked officers for their work in this area.

8 WORK PROGRAMME (Agenda Item 8)

The work programme was noted.