

Board of the People Scrutiny Committee

Comments to Cabinet on the 2018/19 Adult Social Care Budget Proposals



Background

The People Scrutiny Committee held a Scrutiny Board meeting on 22 June 2018, open to all Members of the Committee, to examine the proposals relating to the 2018/19 Adult Social Care budget and to make comments to Cabinet.

The Board examined the impact of the proposals and considered any potential mitigation, as well as how the proposals would be implemented. The comments below represent a summary of this wider discussion.

All Members of the Board expressed considerable regret that the County Council is in the position of having to consider the savings proposed.

The Board also expressed thanks to the officers who have contributed to the very detailed and thorough reports which provided Members with a good understanding of the proposed savings and their impacts.

Comments to Cabinet

Agenda Item 7 - Adult Social Care 2018/19 Proposals

The Board welcomed the extensive response to public consultation and recognised the strength of feeling in relation to the proposals. The Board was assured that responses had influenced the final proposals being presented to Cabinet, particularly in relation to the recommended deployment of the additional £1.6m of one-off Government funding, and in relation to how some services would be remodelled and refocused.

The rationale for focusing savings on areas outside the Community Care budget was understood, as was the focus on defining a core service offer which seeks to minimise the immediate impact of service reductions on pressures elsewhere in the system. The Board expressed concern about the potential impact of the range of savings on other services but acknowledged that that it is no longer possible to protect services which are likely to reduce demand in the medium to longer term. The Board acknowledged that mitigations have been identified wherever possible.

The unpredictable situation regarding future Adult Social Care funding and significant future challenges were noted. The Scrutiny Committee will examine the implications of the forthcoming Adult Social Care Green Paper in due course.

The Board welcomed the honest assessment of risks associated with each proposal outlined in each of the individual reports.

Agenda Item 8 – Older People’s Intermediate Care Beds and Directly Provided Day Services

The Board agreed that, although the overall number of day places and beds will be reduced, the constructive proposals for remodelling services at Milton Grange mean that it should be possible to continue to meet existing levels of need.

The Board recognised the scale of remodelling required but received assurances regarding the department’s track record of service redesign, particularly transfer of services into the community and reducing reliance on bed-based care. The Board also noted that the local NHS is supportive of the proposals in terms of their ability to maintain flow in the wider health and social care system and that there was not expected to be a negative impact on delayed transfers of care.

The Board thanked officers for the considerable work put into developing a proposal which achieves a significant saving without a reduction in the number of residents receiving a service.

The Board recognised the additional travel, disruption and potential stress for current users of Warwick House day services but noted that the service had been under-occupied for several years and that the proposed remodelling would enable current day service demand to be met at Milton Grange.

The Board felt there was an opportunity to create an innovative day service model for rehabilitation, particularly for those with functional mental health needs.

The Board highlighted the need to be alert to any extra stress on the voluntary and community sector arising from the service changes.

Overall the Board was supportive of the proposed remodelling of services when seen in the wider context of the savings requirements on Adult Social Care. However, Cllrs Ungar, Field and Webb had reservations regarding the proposals.

Agenda Item 9 – Older People’s Commissioned Day Services

All Members of the Board were supportive of proposals in relation to the Phoenix Centre.

Members of the Board expressed regret in relation to the closure of the Charter Centre, but noted the challenges in relation to unit costs and sustainability, and the availability of alternative services within the independent sector. **Overall the Board was supportive of proposals in relation to the Charter Centre.**

Members of the Board expressed regret in relation to the closure of the Isabel Blackman Centre, but noted the similar challenges in relation to unit costs and sustainability, and the availability of alternative services within the independent sector. **The majority of the Board were supportive of proposals in relation to the Isabel Blackman Centre. However, Cllrs Webb and Ungar opposed the closure and would prefer the Centre to continue operating as a much valued community resource.**

The Board hoped that a constructive alternative use could be found for the buildings.

Agenda Item 10 – Learning Disability Directly Provided Services

The Board recognised that the proposal will result in a reduction in service levels for a significant number of current service users with eligible need and that the impact will differ based on individually assessed needs. The Board examined the impact of this reduction and was assured that the department would take a fair and equitable approach to deploying the reduced level of resources.

The Board expressed concern about possible increased need for other care services as a result of the service reductions, and the potential cost of this, but received assurance that this risk would be mitigated through individual assessments which would seek to avoid a build-up of need.

The Board stressed the importance of effective individual reviews in making the best possible use of resources. The Board also recognised the likely impact on carers.

The Board regretfully accepted these changes in the wider context of the savings requirement on Adult Social Care.

Agenda Item 11 - Affinity Trust Service

The Board recognised the likely disruption to current service users and welcomed the assurance that friendship groups both within and across the homes would be taken into account in the transition process.

All Members of the Board supported this proposal, given vacancies in the current facilities and the potential for redevelopment of Cregg Na Ba as a supported accommodation model to support a different client group.

Agenda Item 12 - Stroke Recovery Service

The Board recognised that the NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups would continue to fund a remodelled stroke recovery service but that this would not be a like for like replacement for the existing service. There will be an element of triaged entry to the service due to the reduction in available resources.

The Board expressed concern about the reduction in service, particularly in relation to rural areas, those without the financial resources to seek alternatives and the potential impact in terms of increased isolation and loneliness. The Board also highlighted the likely increased demand on other services such as Adult Social Care assessment and the NHS Stroke Community Rehabilitation Service.

Overall, the Board regretfully accepted this proposal in light of the overall financial challenges facing Adult Social Care.

Agenda Item 13 – Discretionary East Sussex Support Scheme (DESSS)

The Board expressed grave concern in relation to this proposal due to the particular vulnerability of those residents making use of the DESSS. However, the Board recognised the discretionary nature of the scheme and the lack of direct funding to provide it.

The Board acknowledged the work undertaken with partners, including District and Borough Councils, to refocus the scheme on the most critical aspects. All Members of the Board supported the proposed focus on rent schemes and noted that there is partial mitigation in some of the other areas the scheme currently supports.

The Board acknowledged the work undertaken with regard to the proposed restructuring of staff and absorbing the service into Health and Social Care Connect as a way to maximise the use of the remaining resource.

The Board requested that there must be ongoing work with Districts and Boroughs and Registered Social Landlords to make best use of the fund with regard to establishing and supporting tenancies, and therefore reducing homelessness.

Overall, the majority of the Board reluctantly accepted the rationale for making this saving. However, Cllr Ungar and Cllr Webb remained opposed to the proposal.

Agenda Item 14 – HIV Support Service

The Board recognised that these services are well regarded by those using them, and that this can include marginalised groups. The Board also recognised that people living with HIV continue to experience both actual and perceived stigma and that these services have fulfilled a supporting role in this regard.

The Board also noted that NHS England has recently taken on responsibility for commissioning HIV support services.

All Members of the Board agreed to support this proposal in the context of NHS England commissioning alternative support services and the availability of mainstream NHS services. Cllr Liddiard expressed particular concern about this saving due to the impact on potentially marginalised and stigmatised groups.

Agenda Item 15 – Carers' Services

The Board expressed their appreciation and recognition of the significant role of carers in the county. Members acknowledged that a number of other savings proposals are likely to impact negatively on carers in addition to this specific proposal.

The Board expressed concern about the potential knock-on impact on other services if carers withdraw from their role. However, the limited capacity to make savings which will not have such risks was acknowledged.

The Board was assured that clients will be able to continue to make choices about use of personal budgets/direct payments to support their carer, and that the full range of options will continue to be highlighted as part of care planning.

The Board acknowledged that there may be some positive impacts from the proposed remodelling of services but that the proposal does represent an overall reduction in the level of service.

All Members of the Board agreed, in the circumstances faced by Adult Social Care, to support the proposed remodelling of services in order to maximise the ongoing offer to carers.

Agenda Item 16 – Supporting People Accommodation Based Housing Support Services

The Board recognised the vulnerability of the groups supported by these services and expressed concern about the potential risks and impacts highlighted by the report. It was

noted that these risks would be mitigated through the proposed use of the one-off Government funding to reduce the savings requirement.

Members noted that these services are generally in areas of increasing demand linked to wider pressures around changes to benefits, demographics and reductions in core services.

The Board received assurance that discussions are ongoing with providers to consider the impact of the remaining savings requirement. This includes looking at increasing throughput via, for example, a more robust approach to supporting people to move on in liaison with District and Borough Councils.

The Board was assured that current funding arrangements would stay in place until new arrangements had been agreed and implemented with providers. This will involve defining a core offer based on prioritising services which prevent an immediate impact being seen elsewhere in the system. The Board understood that it would not be intended to make further savings from this reduced core offer next year.

All Members of the Board supported the use of additional one-off Government funding to reduce the savings requirement on these services and also supported the focus on the five areas highlighted in the report.

Agenda Item 17 – Supporting People Community Based Housing Support Services

The Board again recognised the vulnerability of the groups supported by these services and expressed concern about the potential risks and impacts highlighted by the report, particularly in light of the challenging housing market in East Sussex. It was noted that these risks would be mitigated through proposed use of the one-off Government funding to reduce the savings requirement.

The Board was assured that judgements on levels of risk will be based on assessment, and that the consultation and Equality Impact Assessment will inform this and feed into discussions with providers. This will identify the key cohorts of people on which to focus ongoing support. The Board was also assured that there will be an ongoing monitoring process.

All Members of the Board supported the use of additional one-off Government funding to reduce the savings requirement on these services.

Cllr Angharad Davies
Chair of the Scrutiny Board

Scrutiny Board Members

Cllr Bob Bowdler (substituting for Cllr Laurie Loe)
Cllr Charles Clark
Cllr Martin Clarke (substituting for Cllr Roy Galley)
Cllr Angharad Davies (Chair)
Cllr Michael Ensor
Cllr Kathryn Field
Cllr Tom Liddiard
Cllr Jim Sheppard
Cllr John Ungar
Cllr Trevor Webb
Cllr Francis Whetstone

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