

## **People Scrutiny Committee - Summary of comments to Cabinet**

### Adult Social Care and Health

The Board welcome that no new savings are proposed for the coming year financial year but remain concerned that any further savings could lead to significant reductions in the services provided by the Adult Social Care and Health Department. The Board are also supportive of using the Adult Social Care 3% precept and recommend it is used over a two-year period and that the impact of the additional funding is closely monitored.

The Board also reviewed the contents of the Draft Adult Social Care and Health Portfolio Plan. Key discussion points included:

- the long-term impact of reduced access to face-to-face sexual health services (caused by the need to have in place Covid-19 service model restrictions). Given its concern, the Board requested further information about the support being provided.
- with regard to the Performance Measures and Targets section of the draft portfolio plan, and in response to a query about how targets are set, the Board were provided with clarification about the Department's approach to developing targets which are challenging and realistic in the context of the pandemic.
- the scale of food poverty in the county and how the Department gathers data which enables it to understand the level of need. Given its concern about the long-term impact of food poverty, the Board requested further information about the support being provided.
- the Board are keen that new ways of working are developed in response to the challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Members therefore welcomed the department's ASCH Programme, an initiative that aims to build on the lessons learnt from responding to the pandemic and ensure new working practices which deliver improved customer service and efficiencies are embedded.

### Children's Services

The Board are particularly concerned about the potential impact of planned savings and the pandemic on services provided by the Children's Services Department. This includes a concern that there may be 'hidden impacts' which may only become apparent in the medium to long term. In particular, the Board are concerned about savings relating to elements of Early Help and Safeguarding Services. The Board therefore welcomed the proposal to defer for a further year savings relating to these areas of activity. However, Councillors Ungar and Webb requested that their opposition to any planned or other savings are noted in the comments to Cabinet.

The Board also reviewed the content of the draft Portfolio Plan for Children's Services and sought clarification regarding a number of issues. This included clarification about the department's approach to helping families with the most

complex needs and the reasons for considering whether to develop increased capacity at children's homes.

#### General comments

The Board expressed regret that it again had not been possible for the Council to develop budget proposals within the context of a three-year financial planning process. The Board also agreed to emphasise the importance of achieving a balanced budget which recognises the pressures on both the Adult Social Care and Health and Children's Services Departments.

In the context of the unprecedented challenges the pandemic has presented, the Board also agreed to report to Cabinet its acknowledgement of the high-quality nature and range of services provided by staff in both the Adult Social Care and Health and Children's Services Departments. The Board also commended the work of other partner organisations such as borough and district councils and the voluntary sector.