

CABINET

MINUTES of a meeting of the Cabinet held at Council Chamber, County Hall, Lewes on 25 February 2025.

PRESENT Councillors Keith Glazier (Chair), Nick Bennett (Vice Chair), Bob Bowdler, Penny di Cara, Claire Dowling, Carl Maynard and Bob Standley

Members spoke on the items indicated:

Councillor Bowdler	- item 13 (minute 62)
Councillor Cross	- item 14 (minute 63)
Councillor Daniel	- items 5, 8, 13, 14 and 15 (minutes 54, 58, 62, 63 and 64)
Councillor Claire Dowling	- item 14 (minute 63)
Councillor Field	- items 11 and 14 (minutes 60 and 63)
Councillor Galley	- item 12 (minute 61)
Councillor Hilton	- items 5 and 13 (minutes 54 and 62)
Councillor Hollidge	- item 9 (minutes 55)
Councillor Howell	- items 5, 9, 12 and 14 (minutes 54, 55, 61 and 63)
Councillor Lunn	- item 14 (minute 63)
Councillor Maples	- items 5, 7, 10, 13 and 14 (minutes 54, 57, 59, 62 and 63)
Councillor Maynard	- items 5, 6 and 13 (minutes 54, 56 and 62)
Councillor Robinson	- items 7 and 13 (minutes 57 and 62)
Councillor Scott	- item 5 (minute 54)
Councillor Stephen Shing	- items 5 and 13 (minutes 54 and 62)
Councillor Shuttleworth	- items 9 and 13 (minutes 55 and 62)
Councillor Standley	- items 5 and 12 (minutes 54 and 61)
Councillor Swansborough	- item 5 (minute 54)
Councillor Taylor	- item 12 (minute 61)
Councillor Tutt	- items 5, 6, 9, 10, 13 and 14 (minutes 54, 56, 55, 59, 62 and 63)
Councillor Wright	- items 13 and 14 (minutes 62 and 63)

51. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 JANUARY 2025

51.1 The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 28 January 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

52. DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS

52.1 Councillor Daniel declared a personal interest in items 5 to 15 as an Associate Hospital Manager for Sussex Partnership Trust. He did not consider this to be prejudicial.

52.2 Councillor Field declared a personal interest in items 5 and 13 as a Member of Rother District Council. She did not consider this to be prejudicial.

52.3 Councillor Hilton declared a personal interest in item 13 as the Leader of Hastings Borough Council. She did not consider this to be prejudicial.

52.4 Councillor Maples declared a personal interest in items 5 to 15 as a Member of Lewes District Council and Lewes Town Council. She did not consider this to be prejudicial.

52.5 Councillor Maynard declared a personal interest in items 5, 13 and 14 as a Member of Rother District Council. He did not consider this to be prejudicial.

52.6 Councillor Robinson declared a personal interest in item 13 as the Deputy Leader of Lewes District Council. She did not consider this to be prejudicial.

52.7 Councillor Stephen Shing declared a personal interest in item 13 as a Member of Wealden District Council. He did not consider this to be prejudicial.

53. REPORTS

53.1 Copies of the reports referred to below are included in the minute book.

54. ADULT SOCIAL CARE 2025/26 PROPOSALS

54.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Adult Social Care and Health together with comments from the People Scrutiny Committee.

54.2 It was RESOLVED to note the background to the Adult Social Care proposals that have been subject to public consultation, when considering the individual proposals found later on the agenda.

Reasons

54.3 The autumn 2024 budget and confirmation of the Local Government Settlement in December 2024 has not created any significant improvement in the Council's financial situation. Adult Social Care and Health still needs to make the savings identified.

54.4 Overwhelmingly, the responses to the consultation process for the 11 original proposals, found later on the agenda, are against the proposals.

54.5 It is clear from the individual Equalities Impact Assessments and consideration of the cumulative impact that many people with protected characteristics (and those people who East Sussex County Council have identified as additional categories requiring consideration e.g. carers and those living in rural areas) will be impacted by the proposals if they go ahead. In many instances there is likely to be a cumulative impact as many people will have more than one protected characteristic and may be impacted by more than one of the proposals.

54.6 Having considered the feedback to the public consultation, the impacts identified through the Equality Impact Assessment and reviewing the original proposals, some significant changes to the original proposals are now being recommended. These have the advantage of mitigating some of the impact on the adults, carers, families and staff affected whilst still delivering the required level of savings.

54.7 Depending on which proposals are agreed, the Council's Property Services Team will make best use of any properties / space that becomes available, looking across the Council's entire estate in order to make the optimum decisions regarding use of properties.

54.8 When considering the more detailed reports on the 11 public consultation proposals found later on the agenda, and making decisions in respect of those, Cabinet will also take into account the report which sets out the overarching information which is relevant to all the proposals.

55. PROPOSAL TO CLOSE THE LINDEN COURT DAY SERVICE FOR PEOPLE WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY AND MERGE IT WITH BEECHING PARK DAY SERVICE

55.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Adult Social Care and Health.

55.2 It was RESOLVED to:

- 1) Agree the proposal to close the Linden Court Day Service for people with a learning disability in Eastbourne;
- 2) Agree to re-provision the existing Linden Court Day Service with the Beeching Park Day Service for people with a learning disability in Bexhill and to revise the days of opening and opening hours, as set out in paragraphs 5.13 to 5.15 of the report;
- 3) Agree to establish a satellite day service in Eastbourne as part of the Beeching Park Day Service offer, to be provided two days per week and to delegate authority to the Director of Adult Social Care and Health, in consultation with the Chief Operating Officer, to determine the final location for this satellite provision; and
- 4) Delegate to the Director of Adult Social Care and Health authority to take all necessary actions to give effect to the above resolutions.

Reasons

55.3 The Council is required to set a balanced budget. The 'State of the County' report presented to Cabinet in June 2024 set out a projected £55m deficit on the 2025/26 budget. Savings proposals requiring public consultation that would help to close this gap were presented to Cabinet in September 2024.

55.4 The total savings proposals for the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2025/26-2027/28 set out in November 2024 were £20.628m, across all Council departments. The Adult Social Care & Health (ASCH) contribution to the savings total is £11.455m. In addition to these savings proposals, in order to achieve a balanced budget, the Council is also drawing on its financial reserves.

55.5 The original proposals put forward were designed to contribute to the savings required for the County Council. It is clear from the contributions to the consultation that the proposal for Linden Court and Beeching Park is not welcomed, with the vast majority of respondents disagreeing. All the feedback to the consultation has been considered and modification and mitigation of the proposal was explored where possible to address the concerns raised.

55.6 Whilst it is recognised that closing Linden Court would cause an element of disruption and potentially increase travel times for some adults that attend the service, and the parent/carers involved, the alternative provision at Beeching Park would be able to meet the needs of most adults, with alternative options to Beeching Park being available where required.

55.7 The Council will take steps to mitigate any adverse impacts of the proposal, by offering bespoke support to adults with more complex needs to help them manage this transition. This is designed to meet the specific needs of adults who would need additional support to access an alternative provision.

55.8 It is anticipated that a satellite service will initially have capacity to support up to 15 adults per week. This would ease the impact for several adults and parent/carers, offering a flexibility to how their day service provision could be provided. In the interim, this satellite provision will be offered from the existing Linden Court site until the Director of Adult Social

Care and Health, in consultation with the Chief Operating Officer, determines the final location for this satellite provision.

55.9 Cabinet members have read and had regard to the Equalities Impact Assessment when making decisions related to this proposal.

56. PROPOSAL TO CLOSE THE MILTON GRANGE DAY SERVICE FOR OLDER PEOPLE

56.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Adult Social Care and Health.

56.2 It was RESOLVED to:

1) Agree to continue to provide day services at Milton Grange, in Eastbourne, for older people with a range of physical and mental health needs associated with dementia;

2) Agree that the service provision at Milton Grange Day Service in Eastbourne be remodelled as set out in paragraph 5.8 of the report; and

3) Delegate to the Director of Adult Social Care and Health authority to take all necessary actions to give effect to the above resolutions.

Reasons

56.3 The Council is required to set a balanced budget. The 'State of the County' report presented to Cabinet in June 2024 set out a projected £55m deficit on the 2025/26 budget. Savings proposals requiring public consultation that would help to close this gap were presented to Cabinet in September 2024.

56.4 The total savings proposals for the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2025/26-2027/28 set out in November 2024 were £20.628m, across all Council departments. The Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) contribution to the savings total is £11.455m. In addition to these savings proposals, in order to achieve a balanced budget, the Council is also drawing on its financial reserves.

56.5 The original proposals put forward by ASCH were designed to contribute to the savings required by the County Council. It is clear from the feedback highlighted in the consultation that most respondents disagree with the original proposals to close Milton Grange and to support people to access alternative service in the community.

56.6 The feedback received has been considered and officers have been able to produce an alternative proposal that maintains day services at Milton Grange in Eastbourne and which still achieves the same level of savings.

56.7 The re-modelled service will operate five days per week instead of six, which will deliver savings of £203,000.

56.8 Cabinet members have read and had regard to the Equalities Impact Assessment when making decisions related to this proposal.

57. PROPOSAL TO CLOSE THE PHOENIX CENTRE DAY SERVICE FOR OLDER PEOPLE

57.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Adult Social Care and Health.

57.2 It was RESOLVED to:

- 1) Agree to close the Phoenix Centre Day Service in Lewes for older people with physical and mental health needs;
- 2) Agree that the Council will support people to access alternative services in the community which, will include the East Sussex County Council run Day Service, Milton Grange in Eastbourne; and
- 3) Delegate to the Director of Adult Social Care and Health authority to take all necessary actions to give effect to the above resolutions.

Reasons

57.3 The Council is required to set a balanced budget. The 'State of the County' report presented to Cabinet in June 2024 set out a projected £55m deficit on the 2025/26 budget. Savings proposals requiring public consultation that would help to close this gap were presented to Cabinet in September 2024.

57.4 The total savings proposals for the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2025/26-2027/28 set out in November 2024 were £20.628m, across all Council departments. The Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) contribution to the savings total is £11.455m. In addition to these savings proposals, in order to achieve a balanced budget, the Council is also drawing on its financial reserves.

57.5 The original proposals put forward were designed to contribute to the savings required by the Council. It is clear from the feedback highlighted in the consultation, that most respondents disagree with the proposal to close the Phoenix Centre Day Service and to support people to access alternative services in the community.

57.6 However, the savings of £191,000 cannot be met unless the Phoenix Centre Day Service closes and alternative options are looked at for meeting the assessed care needs of the 32 people currently using the service.

57.7 Having considered the feedback from the consultation process a potential mitigation has been identified and is set out in the report, namely, to offer adults receiving a service at the Phoenix Centre the opportunity to consider the Milton Grange Day Service as well as other alternative services in the community.

57.8 This will ensure that the eligible needs of these people are still met whilst allowing the Council to achieve the required £191,000 savings.

57.9 Cabinet members have read and had regard to the Equalities Impact Assessment when making decisions related to this proposal.

58. PROPOSAL TO CEASE THE SPECIALIST MENTAL HEALTH COMMUNITY OUTREACH SERVICE

58.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Adult Social Care and Health.

58.2 It was RESOLVED to:

- 1) Agree the proposal to cease the existing Mental Health Community Outreach service in its current format and to provide alternative Mental Health Community Outreach services specifically via the Council's Joint Community Rehabilitation (JCR) Team and Milton Grange

Mental Health Intermediate Care beds (part of the existing Older People Directly Provided Services); and

2) Delegate to the Director of Adult Social Care and Health authority to take all necessary actions to give effect to the above resolution.

Reasons

58.3 The Council is required to set a balanced budget. The 'State of the County' report presented to Cabinet in June 2024 set out a projected £55m deficit on the 2025/26 budget. Savings proposals requiring public consultation that would help to close this gap were presented to Cabinet in September 2024.

58.4 The total savings proposals for the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2025/26-2027/28 set out in November 2024 were £20.628m, across all Council departments. The Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) contribution to the savings total is £11.455m. In addition to these savings proposals, in order to achieve a balanced budget, the Council is also drawing on its financial reserves.

58.5 During the consultation process it was apparent that both JCR and Milton Grange Mental Health intermediate Care beds already offer a service for the cohort of people served by the Mental Health Community Outreach service:

- Older people with depression and/or anxiety who may also be living with psychosis (which is in remission and deemed to be low risk);
- Individuals with 'mild' cognitive impairment, defined as impairment not accompanied by behaviours which challenge or present high levels of risk in the community;
- Older people with dementia.

58.6 It was ascertained that JCR and the Milton Grange Mental Health intermediate care beds can provide services which would mitigate the impact if the Mental Health Community Outreach service were to be ceased.

58.7 This will deliver savings of £318,000 but ensure that those requiring mental health support still have a clear pathway to access services that meet their needs.

58.8 Cabinet members have read and had regard to the Equalities Impact Assessment when making decisions related to this proposal.

59. PROPOSAL TO CLOSE THE STEPS TO WORK SERVICE FOR PEOPLE WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY

59.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Adult Social Care and Health.

59.2 It was RESOLVED to:

1) Agree the proposal to close the Steps to Work Service, including Shine Car Valet based at County Hall in its current format and implement a revised supported employment offer with job coaches aligned to a re-modelled Learning Disability Day Service offer; and

2) Delegate authority to the Director of Adult Social Care and Health to take all necessary actions to give effect to the above resolution.

Reasons

59.3 The Council is required to set a balanced budget. The 'State of the County' report presented to Cabinet in June 2024 set out a projected £55m deficit on the 2025/26 budget. Savings proposals requiring public consultation that would help to close this gap were presented to Cabinet in September 2024.

59.4 The total savings proposals for the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2025/26-2027/28 set out in November 2024 were £20.628m, across all Council departments. The Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) contribution to the savings total is £11.455m. In addition to these savings proposals, in order to achieve a balanced budget, the Council is also drawing on its financial reserves.

59.5 It is clear that the majority of respondents value Steps to Work and the service it provides. Supporting adults into work achieves positive outcomes that would be jeopardised were the service to cease. However the financial position of the Council requires Adult Social Care and Health to make savings.

59.6 In order to mitigate the impacts on those adults currently using the Steps to Work service, and adults who may need the service in the future, a revised employment support provision that retains job coaches as part of a re-modelled day service provision will be implemented. This would retain Council run support and mitigate the risks and impacts identified through the consultation process whilst still achieving the required savings.

59.7 Cabinet members have read and had regard to the Equalities Impact Assessment when making decisions related to this proposal.

60. PROPOSAL TO CEASE THE COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICE FOR ADULTS LIVING INDEPENDENTLY AT HOME AND ADAPT THE SERVICE FOR ADULTS LIVING IN SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION

60.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Adult Social Care and Health.

60.2 It was RESOLVED to:

- 1) Agree the proposal to cease the Council's Community Support Service for adults living independently in the community in its current format;
- 2) Agree to re-model the way care and support is provided by the Council's Learning Disability Directly Provided Service to tenants in the Council's Learning Disability Supported Living Schemes;
- 3) Agree to establish a new community outreach provision to meet the care and support needs of adults living independently in the community, as a replacement for the existing Community Support Service; and
- 4) Delegate to the Director of Adult Social Care and Health authority to take all necessary actions to give effect to the above resolutions.

Reasons

60.3 The Council is required to set a balanced budget. The 'State of the County' report presented to Cabinet in June 2024 set out a projected £55m deficit on the 2025/26 budget. Savings proposals requiring public consultation that would help to close this gap were presented to Cabinet in September 2024.

60.4 The total savings proposals for the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2025/26-2027/28 set out in November 2024 were £20.628m, across all Council departments. The Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) contribution to the savings total is £11.455m. In addition to these savings proposals, in order to achieve a balanced budget, the Council is also drawing on its financial reserves.

60.5 The original proposals put forward were designed to contribute to the savings required for the Council. It is clear from the contributions to the consultation that these proposals are not welcomed, with the vast majority of respondents disagreeing. All of the feedback from the consultation process has been considered in putting together the revised proposals set out in the report.

60.6 It is recognised that ceasing the provision of the Council's Community Support Service (CSS) for adults living independently would cause an element of disruption for those involved and anxiety for the parent/carers involved. It has also become clear that the Personal Assistant market is not in a position to address the care and support needs of all of the adults accessing CSS support in the community. The establishment of a new community outreach service will provide these services instead.

60.7 Re-modelling supported living provision will improve the way that element of the service is delivered and therefore the experience of adults living in Supported Living settings. The remodelled support will improve the consistency of support adults receive and therefore the quality of their care. The remodelled service provision at the Council's Learning Disability Supported Living Schemes means that all tenants' care and support is provided by the accommodation-based staff.

60.8 Cabinet members have read and had regard to the Equalities Impact Assessment when making decisions related to this proposal.

61. HOOKSTEAD DAY SERVICE

61.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Adult Social Care and Health.

61.2 Mr Stuart Martin, a representative of the petition opposing the closure of the Hookstead Day Service facility in Crowborough spoke to highlight the concerns regarding the original proposals that were consulted on, the collaborative work between the Hookstead Parents' Association and the County Council to explore alternative options and spoke in support of the revised proposals recommended to Cabinet.

61.3 It was RESOLVED to:

- 1) Agree to reduce the capacity of Hookstead Day Service by 25%, as detailed in section 5 of the report;
- 2) Agree the revised session times for both Hookstead and St Nicholas Day Services, as set out in paragraph 5.9 of the report;
- 3) Delegate authority to the Director of Adult Social Care and Health to determine the days of the week on which 'Twilight' sessions can continue to be offered at Hookstead Day Service; and
- 4) Delegate authority to the Director of Adult Social Care and Health to take all necessary actions to give effect to the above resolutions.

Reasons

61.4 The Council is required to set a balanced budget. The 'State of the County' report presented to Cabinet in June 2024 set out a projected £55m deficit on the 2025/26 budget. Savings proposals requiring public consultation that would help to close this gap were presented to Cabinet in September 2024.

61.5 The total savings proposals for the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2025/26-2027/28 set out in November 2024 were £20.628m, across all Council departments. The Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) contribution to the savings total is £11.455m. In addition to these savings proposals, in order to achieve a balanced budget, the Council is also drawing on its financial reserves.

61.6 The original proposals put forward were designed to contribute to the savings required for the County Council. It is clear from the consultation responses that the proposal to close Hookstead and merge with St Nicholas is not welcomed, with the vast majority of respondents disagreeing with the proposal.

61.7 Closing Hookstead would cause an element of disruption for adults who attend the service, and their parent/carers. While the alternative provision at St Nicholas in Lewes would be able to meet the needs of most adults if needed, the distance would be a significant barrier for some. The lack of alternative independent sector provision in the north of the county has exacerbated this concern.

61.8 The consultation feedback has been carefully considered and a revised proposal to retain the day service at Hookstead on four days per week and to reduce the capacity by 25% from 45 adults per day to 34 has been developed. The Day Service at Hookstead will be retained, on this basis. As a result of this revised proposal, additional capacity would no longer be required at St Nicholas. No changes to the service at St Nicholas are to be made at this time but the session times will be revised at both Hookstead and St. Nicholas, as set out in paragraph 5.9 of the report.

61.9 Cabinet members have read and had regard to the Equalities Impact Assessment when making decisions related to this proposal.

62. PROPOSAL TO REDUCE THE FUNDING FOR THE HOUSING-RELATED FLOATING SUPPORT SERVICE

62.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Adult Social Care and Health.

62.2 Mr David Chaffey, a petition representative and Mr Paul Goddard, the Lead Petitioner for the petition calling on the County Council to protect and retain the East Sussex Floating Support Service, spoke to highlight the changing political landscape in terms of responsibilities at different local government levels, the impact of the proposals on vulnerable residents in East Sussex and proposed an alternative option to reduce the contract value by £2m instead of £3.8m.

62.3 It was RESOLVED to:

1) Agree to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service from £4.3 million per year to £500,000 per year from October 2025;

2) Agree that the Council serve a contract variation notice on the service provider, BHT Sussex, to give effect to the reduction of funding set out in resolution 1; and

3) Delegate authority to the Director of Adult Social Care and Health to take all necessary actions to give effect to the above resolutions.

Reasons

62.4 The Council is required to set a balanced budget. The 'State of the County' report presented to Cabinet in June 2024 set out a projected £55m deficit on the 2025/26 budget. Savings proposals requiring public consultation that would help to close this gap were presented to Cabinet in September 2024.

62.5 The total savings proposals for the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2025/26-2027/28 set out in November 2024 were £20.628m, across all Council departments. The Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) contribution to the savings total is £11.455m. In addition to these savings proposals, in order to achieve a balanced budget, the Council is also drawing on its financial reserves.

62.6 The Housing Related Floating Support service is a highly valued service that provides support for people with significant, housing related, support needs. The Council has noted the significant concerns raised through the consultation, the potential impacts for those with protected characteristics identified through the Equality Impact Assessment and the potentially significant additional costs and pressures that will be placed on other parts of the system if the proposed funding reduction for these services is agreed.

62.7 It has not been possible to identify any viable alternative proposals that would achieve the required savings from the ASCH budget. The reduction of funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service from £4.3 million per year to £500,000 per year with effect from October 2025 will help to address Council's funding gap and the need to make savings.

62.8 Cabinet members have read and had regard to the Equalities Impact Assessment when making decisions related to this proposal.

63. SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION FOR ADULTS WITH MENTAL HEALTH, AND ADDITIONAL NEEDS

63.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Adult Social Care and Health.

63.2 It was RESOLVED to:

1) Agree that the on-site support provided at three Supported Accommodation services for adults with mental health needs who are homeless or at risk of homelessness (as set out in paragraph 2.4 of the report) cease from 31 December 2025.

2) Agree that the on-site support provided at two Supported Accommodation services for adults with additional support needs who are homeless or at risk of homelessness (as set out in paragraph 2.4 of the report) cease from 31 December 2025.

3) Agree that the contract with Pathways be terminated with effect from 31 December 2025 and delegate authority to the Director of Adult Social Care and Health to serve notice of early termination; and

4) Delegate to the Director of Adult Social Care and Health authority to take all other necessary actions to give effect to the recommendations set out in the report in order to deliver Adult Social Care and Health Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) requirements.

Reasons

63.3 The Council is required to set a balanced budget. The 'State of the County' report presented to Cabinet in June 2024 set out a projected £55m deficit on the 2025/26 budget. Savings proposals requiring public consultation that would help to close this gap were presented to Cabinet in September 2024.

63.4 The total savings proposals for the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2025/26-2027/28 set out in November 2024 were £20.628m, across all Council departments. The Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) contribution to the savings total is £11.455m. In addition to these savings proposals, in order to achieve a balanced budget, the Council is also drawing on its financial reserves.

63.5 The accommodation-based services covered within the report provide support to a range of homeless people with mental health needs and adults with multiple complex support needs. Demand for the services is high, and the unit costs represent exceptional value for money. The impact of withdrawing the funding for the support element of the contract is likely to render the services financially unviable and the providers have informed the Council that as a result they will be forced to close.

63.6 The people currently living within the service will need to move out. These individuals have been referred into the service because they were homeless, or at risk of homelessness, so many will not have accommodation options available to them. This is therefore likely to result in an increase in homelessness, including outcomes that are related to homelessness, including among others, alcohol and drug misuse and criminal behaviour. The Cabinet had due regard to the likely impact of the proposals on crime and disorder in the area, reoffending and the use of drugs, alcohol and other substances.

63.7 Notwithstanding the above, the on-site support provided at three Supported Accommodation services for adults with mental health needs and two Supported Accommodation services for adults with additional support needs who are homeless or at risk of homelessness are not services that the Council has a statutory duty to provide, and therefore ceasing these services will support the Council's legal duty to set a balanced budget.

63.8 Delaying the implementation of these proposals from the initial date proposed in the consultation (i.e. 30 September 2025) by three months, to take effect from 31 December 2025 will allow additional time for people currently living in the services to secure alternative accommodation and for partners to explore alternative funding sources or means of keeping these or equivalent services available. The extension could be funded from an underspend in another ASCH contract which has been generated by a vacancy freeze pending the outcome of RPPR consultations.

63.9 Cabinet members have read and had regard to the Equalities Impact Assessment when making decisions related to this proposal.

64. PROPOSAL TO CEASE THE FUNDING FOR DRUG AND ALCOHOL RECOVERY SERVICES WHEN THE CURRENT CONTRACTS END IN SUMMER 2025

64.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Adult Social Care and Health.

64.2 It was RESOLVED to:

1) Subject to confirmation of sufficient Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Recovery Grant (DATRIG) allocation by 31 March 2025, agree to:

- (i) continue funding a carers drug and alcohol recovery service for an additional year to June 2026 subject to the amendments described in paragraph 5.7 of the report;
- (ii) combine the drug and alcohol recovery support services currently provided by the Seaview Project (as described in paragraph 2.1 of the report) into a single contract and to continue funding these services for an additional year to June 2026 subject to the amendments described in paragraph 5.7 of the report.

2) In the absence of confirmation of sufficient Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Recovery Grant (DATRIG) allocation by 31 March 2025, agree to cease funding for drug and alcohol recovery service (as described in paragraph 2.1 of the report) following expiry of the current contracts on 30 June 2025; and

3) Delegate to the Director of Adult Social Care and Health authority to take all actions considered necessary to give effect to the recommendations set out in the report, including but not limited to, issuing any required contract notices.

Reasons

64.3 The Council is required to set a balanced budget. The 'State of the County' report presented to Cabinet in June 2024 set out a projected £55m deficit on the 2025/26 budget. Savings proposals requiring public consultation that would help to close this gap were presented to Cabinet in September 2024.

64.4 The total savings proposals for the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2025/26-2027/28 set out in November 2024 were £20.628m, across all Council departments. The Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) contribution to the savings total is £11.455m. In addition to these savings proposals, in order to achieve a balanced budget, the Council is also drawing on its financial reserves.

64.5 It is anticipated that the additional funding to be made available to the Council for 2025/26 through the DATRIG makes it possible to achieve the required saving of £319,000, whilst also preserving drug and alcohol recovery services for people in the County for an additional year. The recovery services provided will be at a reduced level to reflect the funding anticipated to be available; however, officers will work closely with the service provider to minimise this reduction through reconfiguring the existing service model.

64.6 If, however, the DATRIG allocation is not confirmed by 31 March 2025 or the confirmed allocation is insufficient to fund these services, the funding will cease for drug and alcohol recovery services with effect from 30 June 2025 when the existing contracts expire.

64.7 Cabinet members have read and had regard to the Equalities Impact Assessment when making decisions related to this proposal.

65. TO AGREE WHICH ITEMS ARE TO BE REPORTED TO THE COUNTY COUNCIL

65.1 There were no items to report to the County Council.