

**INTEGRATED PLAN 2011/12: REPORT OF THE ADULTS, WELLBEING AND HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

*To:* County Council

*Date:* 15 February 2011

*From:* Adults Wellbeing and Health Scrutiny Committee

*Electoral Division(s)* All

*Forward Plan Ref:* 2011/001                      *Key Decision:* Yes

*Purpose:* To report the outcome of the Committee's scrutiny of the Cabinet's proposals for the Budget for Adult Social Care as set out in the Council's Integrated Plan 2011.

*Recommendation:* The Council is asked to consider the Committee's report in its deliberations on the Integrated Plan proposals.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Committee met on Tuesday 1st February 2011 and questioned Councillor Fred Yeulett, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing on the Cabinet's proposals for the Adult Social Care (ASC) budget for 2011/12.

Rod Craig, Executive Director Community and Adult Services and Claire Bruin, Service Director, Strategy and Commissioning, Adult Social Care, provided officer input to the meeting.

- 1.2 Councillor Yeulett introduced the proposals, and briefed members on the financial context in which the proposals were being made, and the risks involved.
- 1.3 The Committee's comments need to be read in conjunction with the Council's Integrated Plan 2011, which provides the context and detail of the Budget proposals.

## **2. KEY ISSUES**

- 2.1 The Committee acknowledges the major financial and demographic challenges faced by the County Council in 2011/12 and subsequent years, and the consequent pressures on the ASC budget

Members identified the following concerns in relation to the ASC budget proposals.

### **Impact on and risks to service users and carers**

- 2.2 The Committee is very concerned at the potential negative impact that the proposed substantial ASC budget reductions may have on users of social care services and on carers, who are among the most vulnerable people in the community. We are particularly concerned by:

- The impact of the 25% reduction in the offer under the Resource Allocation System (RAS) to new users. Members are concerned that this could result in real hardship in some instances.
- The risk that the reduction in funding to independent private and voluntary sector providers may result in some services ceasing to be viable, or providing a poorer quality of service.

- 2.3 Members are very concerned that the budget proposals are based on the assumption that major savings can be made across several areas, and there is no alternative plan if this proves not to be the case. Specific concerns include the ability of the reablement programme to deliver savings in the time available; and the viability of independent providers.
- 2.4 The risk that these savings may not be achieved is increased by the fact that changes to the way services are being provided are having to be made quickly

and in the context of considerable financial pressure on both the NHS and the County Council.

- 2.5 Members are concerned that if the savings are not achieved, the consequences for service users and carers could therefore be severe, as remedial action could involve staff cuts or raised eligibility criteria.
- 2.6 Members are also concerned that reductions in support for service users or carers may result in people reaching crisis point, leading to pressures on other parts of the system, particularly the NHS, for example rises in hospital admissions or in demand for mental health care.

### **Monitoring the impact**

- 2.7 Members consider that it is essential that the impact of the proposals on service users and carers is carefully monitored, and action taken to identify and respond where there is a negative impact on service users both in general, particularly in relation to the reduction in the RAS, and in relation to particular individuals.
- 2.8 Members were informed that it is intended to monitor the impact through mechanisms such as complaints, requests for re-assessment, delayed discharge, and close working with the NHS to identify impacts on NHS services. While these steps are welcome, members are concerned that:
- There may not be sufficient capacity to re-assess all service users and carers promptly when they are due. Members note that the Care Quality Commission assessment of performance report for 2009/10 identified reviews of users of mental health services, and assessments and reviews of carers, as areas for improvement.
  - Service users and carers, including new users receiving a reduced offer under the RAS, may not be aware of what they should reasonably expect from the service. They may therefore be slow to complain, or to request a re-assessment, even if they are struggling financially or having difficulty coping with the level of service they are receiving. Generally, many service users may be unwilling to ask for help or for a review. Access to independent advice and advocacy is therefore essential.
  - It may in practice be difficult to attribute increased demand on health services or on other statutory services on the reduction in social care services.
- 2.9 Members are concerned that ASC has the capacity and effective arrangements to:
- identify and respond rapidly to individual cases of hardship, whether this relates to the level of service or to financial hardship
  - identify and respond where the reduction in the RAS or other changes are having a negative impact on service users overall, or on particular groupings of users.
- Members therefore **recommend** that:
- 2.10
- Steps are taken to ensure that all service users and carers are aware of and

have access to independent advice and advocacy, in addition to the information they receive from social care staff about how to complain or request a review.

- Effective arrangements for monitoring the impact of the budget proposals are drawn up and discussed with Cabinet and with Scrutiny.
- Cabinet and Scrutiny receive regular monitoring reports, and reports on what steps are being taken to address any negative impacts, in order that these are subject to member consideration and challenge.

### **Learning disability services**

- 2.11 Members highlighted the importance of recognising that some people with severe learning disabilities would continue to need day centre provision, which was also essential as a respite service for carers. There therefore needs to be a wide range of day services for people with learning disabilities, including both building based and more community based services, to reflect the range of needs and choices of this grouping
- 2.12 The Councillors thanked Rod Craig, Claire Bruin and Councillor Yeulett for their attendance and responses to their questions on the budget proposals.

<b>Source Documents</b>	<b>Location</b>
Agenda and reports of the Adults Wellbeing and Health Scrutiny Committee – 1 <sup>st</sup> February 2011  Integrated Plan 2011	Room 114, Shire Hall Cambridge