

Adult Care and Well Being Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Thursday, 28 January 2021, Online - 2.00 pm

Present:

Minutes

Mrs J A Potter (Chairman), Mrs M A Rayner (Vice Chairman), Mr R C Adams, Mr T Baker-Price, Mr A Fry, Mr P B Harrison and Mr R C Lunn

Also attended:

Mr A I Hardman, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

Mrs E B Tucker

Derek Benson, Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Board

John Taylor, Healthwatch Worcestershire

Gail Greer, Speakeasy N.O.W

Paula Furnival (Strategic Director for People), Michael Hudson (Chief Financial Officer, Chief Executive Unit), Steph Simcox (Head of Finance), Hannah Perrott (Assistant Director for Communities), Rebecca Wassell (Assistant Director - Commissioning), Sally Baldry (Principal Management Information Analyst), Korrina Campbell (Interim Day Opportunities Review Manager), Bridget Brickley (WSAB Manager, Quality & Safeguarding, People Directorate), Kerry McCrossan (Operation and Integration Manager, People Directorate), Samantha Morris (Scrutiny Co-ordinator) and Emma James (Overview and Scrutiny Officer)

Available Papers

The members had before them:

- A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated);
- B. Presentation handouts for item 7
- C. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 November 2020 (previously circulated).

(Copies of documents A and B will be attached to the signed Minutes).

377 Apologies and Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

378 Declarations of Interest

None.

379 Public Participation

None.

380 Confirmation of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the Meeting on 18 November 2020 were agreed as a would be signed by the Chairman.

381 Performance, In-Year Budget Monitoring and 2021/22 Budget

In attendance for this item were:
Paula Furnival, Strategic Director for People
Rebecca Wassell, Interim Associate Director, Commissioning
Kerry McCrossan, Service Manager
Michael Hudson, Chief Financial Officer
Steph Simcox, Head of Finance
Sally Baldry, Principal Management Information Analyst
Cllr Adrian Hardman, Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Social Care

The Chief Financial Officer and Head of Finance summarised the main points of the presentation which was included in the Agenda.

Draft Budget 2021/22

The Council had started the current 2020/21 budget year with a net settlement of £345million, and at Period 8 a very small underspend was predicted, which indicated progress with budgetary control and was also tremendously encouraging given the context of the Covid pandemic.

One of the ways in which the Council managed expenditure was by looking at projected demand for services, which indicated £26.5million of funding pressures. Clearly the Council needed to work within the financial envelope received from the Government and the council-tax raising ability. The net government grant increases totalling £9million was encouraging, however this was largely Covid related, and the effects of the pandemic would extend beyond quarter 1 of the budget year.

The Government's Fair Funding Review had been deferred and two grants which were originally planned as one-off had continued to be rolled-forward; the additional Social Care Grant (of c£2.2m) and the Better Care Fund, however the New Homes Bonus had reduced by just over £1million. After applying a council tax increase of just over £6million, this left a shortfall of just over £10million, however £7.1million of savings had been identified. £3million of reserves were earmarked and it was explained that an element of bridging was needed

because the figure of Council Tax collected by district councils and possible additional support from the Government for the impact from the pandemic remained uncertain and figures would not be fully confirmed until August/September.

The Directorate of People planned to work within its budget through demand management and partnership working.

In terms of the budget planning timeline, the 2021/22 Draft Budget report had been considered by Cabinet on 7 January and following consultation including with the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board, would be reconsidered by Cabinet on 4 February and Council on 18 February. One change to the Cabinet papers was further investment in public rights of way.

The Head of Finance summarised the key points from the budget report relevant to Adult Services, including:

- recommendation for a 1% increase in the Adult Social Care Levy for 2021/22 (which could be increased up to 3%)
- additional Social Care Grant for 2021/22 of c£2.2million
- pressures (£10.2million) were greater than the value of grant and recommended value of levy - £7.5million of demand including increased care costs, £2.7million inflation
- figures in the budget report for inflation were across People Services and included £1.3million relevant to Communities and Public Health.
- Services would need to continue to deliver efficiencies, transformational change and increase levels of income generation to remain within the overall recommended budget
- £11.5million of pressures had been identified for 2021/22 including £2.7million additional costs for complexity/acuity for over 65s, £3.1million growth in price and complexity of care packages for adults with learning disabilities, £0.8million growth in complexity of care packages for adults with physical disabilities, £0.9million greater cost of mental health packages of care, and inflation increases across People Services of £0.6million for pay and £3.4million general inflation.

With the lack of any future budgetary certainty for local authorities, the Council was taking a prudent approach. Growth and pressures on spend were expected to continue at similar levels although it was anticipated that

the adult reform programmes would cover annual pressures and prevent costs rising as quickly as they had.

The Chairman invited discussion and the following main points were raised:

- The Fair Funding Review was still due to take place in 2020/21, although in view of the pandemic this may indeed change. The Chief Financial Officer confirmed that the Council would continue to lobby for the Review to take place and had responded to a recent consultation.
- When asked whether the budget increase for mental health was realistic in view of the impact of the pandemic and the Council's responsibilities, the Director explained that the main commissioning responsibility was discharged largely through Herefordshire and Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), therefore the Council played a fairly small but important part with Care Act responsibilities to respond to people in crisis and ensure access to support and recovery; the fact that Worcestershire was a mental health transformation site was very positive and provided more funding. The Council was in a process of changing its mental health model, bringing it back in house, which would enable better oversight and ensure services were embedded in the community.
- Further detail was provided about the increase in complexity of care for adults with learning disabilities, which was a national trend and resulted from increased survival rates of babies born with disabilities. There were also implications from Covid, since support could not be provided in the same way, resulting in higher unit costs in some cases. Over time, funding for this user group was increasing and at some point, would exceed the proportion of spend on other services.
- In view of ongoing pressures, the Director was asked whether savings programmes which had not been implemented due to Covid, would continue in 2021/22 and the Panel was reminded about streams of work taking place as part of the new Strategy for the People Directorate. Overall, adult social care needed some modernisation to bring commissioning and delivery of services into line with high performing local authorities, which was likely to take three years and it would be important to maintain traction.

- The new Directorate of People meant adult services was much better placed to maximise use of wider community services to prevent higher costs elsewhere, for example using libraries as hubs to help people navigate services earlier on.
- When asked why the Adult Social Care Levy which could be up to 3% was being set at 1%, and whether this would be increased the following year, the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care acknowledged this was a political decision to some extent and advised that it was planned to consider the option of using more the following year. There was some financial benefit in taking 1% this year as there was an element of compounding the 2% for the following year. It was also important to transform services before investing additional money.
- Cllr Tucker, who was not a member of the Panel expressed shock about the decision not to give an inflationary increase for fees to domiciliary care providers, which had been criticised in the local media by Crossroads, a provider. Increased costs had been evident during the recent scrutiny 'Care Work as a Career' which she had led and whilst appreciating the principle of reforming a service first, services needed to continue. Whilst explaining that budget figures would need to be approved by Council, the Director provided more context and explained that fees and provision for domiciliary care were being looked at in conjunction with neighbouring authorities and the Council was about to go to market with a tender, which would help with the setting of cost/price. A response had been prepared to Crossroads and she also outlined the Council's support to care providers during the pandemic. The CMR also cautioned against blanket increases and whilst he was aware of discontent from Crossroads, pointed out that in comparison with rates across the Midlands, the Council was not underpaying by any stretch. At the Chairman's request, it was agreed that a copy of the response be provided to the Panel once advice had been taken about any commercial sensitive information.
- The Director and CMR explained that all care providers had been written to (over 600) as part of consultation and partly in response to feedback from providers that council systems were opaque. While the response rate of 7% was very poor, consideration of rates and the Council's role in the care market would continue and it was an evolving

position.

In-Year Budget Monitoring (Period 8)

The Panel had been provided with the latest available figures and although these showed a slightly worsening position, indicative figures for period 9 showed improvement. The slight overspend of c£357k (0.3%) was a significant improvement from Quarter 1, the main reasons being tighter budget control, managing accountability, a 30% drop in new admissions to residential and nursing care (when comparing October 2020 to October 2019) and a decrease in projected numbers of people coming into the care system although higher average costs of those being placed in care.

There were variations between the different client groups:

- Older People Services included a saving relating to implementation of 'Liberty Protection Safeguards' and staffing costs
- Learning Disability and Mental Health Services were forecast to overspend due to increases in average unit costs
- Physical Disabilities Services was forecast to underspend due to lower activity numbers than budgeted for
- Provider Services were overspending due to agency and overtime costs

The forecast position excluded the impact of Covid-19, which was assumed to be funded from external funding sources, which were significant, for example the Covid-19 grant of £33.4million. Areas where Covid related spend/loss of income had been funded which were relevant to this Panel included supporting care providers with additional costs, personal protective equipment, loss of income from clients, delay in implementation of change programmes, infection control measures and support for vulnerable individuals.

The Chairman invited discussion and the following main points were raised:

- The Chairman congratulated the Directorate on the significantly improved budget position, although it would remain to be seen how things evolved after Covid.
- Regarding the potential impact of the review of Learning Disability Services for adults, the Director explained that costs for this client group would not necessarily be impacted due to spread of types of care for this group and the increases in unit costs were broadly related to nursing

placements particularly for mental health, as a result of being more confined during Covid.

Performance Monitoring

The Principal Management Information Analyst provided a summary of the performance information for quarter 3 (October to December 2020).

Regarding the number of adults whose long-term support needs were being met by admission to care homes, the rate for 18-64 year olds was 14.08 per 100,000 at the end of November, with 48 admitted over the rolling year. Numbers had been very low in June/July, had since started to rise very slowly but remained below average, significantly lower than the previous year and all cases were scrutinised to ensure admission was appropriate. The rate for older adults had dropped, was expected to further reduce and was much lower than the previous year.

The proportion of people with no ongoing social care needs following reablement after hospital discharge had dropped slightly but improved steadily to 77% for December 2020. Performance for the number of older people staying at home following reablement was good linked to good reablement services and a reduction in numbers of people going into nursing and care homes.

Annual reviews of care packages had a performance target of 95%, and performance at the end of December had dipped to 83.7%. Performance varied across the different services with the area social work teams being on target, with the issue being with mental health and learning disability teams, however action plans to improve were in place.

Discussion points:

It was agreed that further detail about the percentage of annual reviews completed for the mental health and learning disability client groups would be circulated to the Panel. The Director confirmed that Covid was the main reason for recent underperformance, due to staff having to work differently and to a certain extent by families, but that percentage numbers were in the high 70s. She reassured the Panel that people were absolutely not left unsupported and that where reviews had not yet occurred, health and wellbeing checks had taken place.

The Director responded to a question about the potential long-term impact on budgets from the reduction in

**382 Safeguarding
Adults**

admissions to care and nursing homes and increases in reablement, advising that the cost difference if current rates of support continued could save the Council around £6m. Reablement costs could increase but the overall outcome was very positive for the Council and in particular for the individuals concerned.

In agreeing comments to be highlighted to the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board, the Chairman referred to the current financial forecast which was a significant improvement for which the Directorate was congratulated. It would be important to see how shifts during the Covid pandemic evolved, for example whether the drop in numbers entering care and nursing homes continued.

It was noted that a 1% increase in the Adult Social Care Levy was proposed in line with inflation for 2021/22 and the additional Social Care Grant for 2021/22 c£2.2m was welcomed.

Maintaining an appropriate level of financial reserves was important in order to have sufficient resilience and this was something the OSPB could explore as part of its budget discussion.

Derek Benson, Independent Chair of Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Board
Bridget Brickley, Board Manager
Paula Furnival, Strategic Director for People
Adrian Hardman, Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Social Care

The Independent Chairman of Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Board (WSAB) introduced the Board's annual report which covered the period up to the end of March 2020 and was included in the Agenda. He briefly highlighted the main themes in safeguarding.

Clearly the world was now a very different place due to Covid, and the Board had sought to rationalise its priorities in order to deal with the increased pressure and had scheduled additional meetings to maintain oversight of safeguarding. A high number of Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs) had been completed, as well as a review around homelessness. The WSAB continued to work with the Children's Safeguarding Partnership around cross-cutting areas for example domestic abuse.

Questions were invited and the following main points arose:

- There was no right answer for the number of SARS to be expected and the WSAB Chair explained that referrals were assessed by the case review group, which in his view had been correct each time. While some areas around the country had not completed any this year, the process was event-led. The Board Manager added that different areas may interpret the procedure differently. Currently, Worcestershire applied the full SAR process, however the Board was reviewing approaches and considering whether some repeated issues may be better tackled by reviewing progress rather than by a review.
- Areas which had been in the spotlight known as the 'wicked issues' included care homes, rough sleepers, exploitation and the challenge of identifying the lead professional to deal with those issues which sit just beneath the threshold before they reached a level requiring statutory intervention - the Board Manager explained that safeguarding budget reserves may be used to consider this latter area as well as work on handling of complex cases and how organisations could work better together.
- The Board representatives were asked about the envisaged long-term impact of Covid and advised that this was a huge question with more reflection needed, but what was evident was the significant and sustained pressure across so many sectors. There would be an impact on the younger generation, and a change in people's living habits and communication. Partnerships had moved to another level with greater willingness, and the potential to tackle long-term issues such as rough sleeping and admission into care homes from hospital. Analysis of referrals had revealed an initial drop at the start of the pandemic with numbers then increasing, for example about financial scams. Analysis suggested that while referrals were not necessarily Covid-related, general awareness had been heightened.
- The Strategic Director for People added that research indicated the pandemic was exacerbating inequalities present in society which may lead to increased demand in future.
- A Panel member asked whether gender played a role in perceptions and reporting of safeguarding concerns, however the Board Manager explained that previous analysis pointed to the fact that higher numbers of cases meeting the criteria for

**383 Council
Provided Day
Services for
Adults with
Learning
Disabilities**

women than for men was due to the fact that women tended to live longer.

- The low figure (14%) of concerns dealt with under safeguarding was acknowledged, however looking at the quality of referrals, a high proportion were inappropriate. The Board was looking at which organisations may need targeting or may be underrepresented. A new framework which had just been issued may also require changes. A lot of referrals came under the Section 42 threshold, perhaps because people did not know where else to go to, therefore more signposting may be required.
- The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Social Care felt Worcestershire had a good system for assessing referrals which was similar to other counties, however there were a couple of outliers for example Staffordshire, whose approach he suggested would overwhelm the WSAB. The Board Manager stressed that even when referrals were assessed as below the threshold this was not to say that they were disregarded since quite a lot of work and signposting took place.

Comment was invited from John Taylor, the Healthwatch Worcestershire representative present who sought clarification on the following two areas:

- Regarding the number and source of safeguarding concerns, why was there a lack of those classed as high risk for 2019-20, compared to 69 for 2018-19. The WSAB Manager would check with data analysts since data supplied this year was different due to the migration from one system to another.
- Regarding wicked issues, was there a trend of concerns coming through related to self-neglect and domiciliary care?

For both these areas, the WSAB Manager would check and the information would be circulated.

In attendance for this item were:

Paula Furnival, Strategic Director for People
Hannah Perrott, Assistant Director: Communities
Korrina Campbell, Interim Day Opportunities Review Manager
Adrian Hardman, Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Social Care

Hannah Perrott, Assistant Director for Communities referred to the presentation slides included in the Agenda which summarised the report going to Cabinet on 4 February on the review of Council provided Day Services for adults with learning disabilities. The context for the review was around the Council's duties under the Care Act 2014, to meet the care and support needs of adults and support needs of carers who are assessed as eligible under the Act's eligibility criteria.

Korrina Campbell, Interim Day Opportunities Review Manager explained that there was a mixed market of day opportunities (40% internal and 60% external), with the Council providing two different types (Resource Centres for those with more complex needs which were more buildings based and Connect Services which mainly supported those with less complex needs).

Covid had impacted on day opportunities which had had to close or be delivered differently, and this had triggered a review of provision in order to continue to meet assessed need in the most efficient, cost-effective way that promoted independence, social inclusion and importantly, positive outcomes. The preferred approach was to move to a position where internal day opportunities would only be provided where there was not capacity within the external market.

The report to Cabinet provided an update on the first phase of the review which focused on provision for individuals with more complex needs. Officers were very conscious that those involved may be anxious, therefore a Communications and Engagement sub-group had been set up to ensure engagement with stakeholders and carers across all key areas of the review. Desktop exercises had been very important in establishing the picture pre and during Covid and the level of assessed need within the service and proportion of those with health needs. Staff had been included as well as a review of the market and transport.

Profiling of existing service users at the four Resource Centres was concerning for the future in terms of the older age of service users and duration of service, since 74% had used services for over 15 years.

Regarding the location and level of support provided by external providers in Worcestershire, only two services specialised in working with people with profound and multiple disabilities (PMLD) in the Worcester/Droitwich areas. The Resource Centres had been reviewed to

assess whether they were fit for purpose. Interestingly, only 14% of individuals were identified by centre staff as being suitable for just a Resource Centre service and 45% as being better supported through attending a combination of both Resource and Connect Services.

Engagement feedback and options for future consideration were set out in a slide which would be used for further engagement with staff and carers, which generated questions about the service user journey and whether doors were being opened to all potential service users, including elements such as shared lives, supported accommodation, education/employment and replacement.

Key findings included:

- service user journey was limited
- for some the Resource Centre became a 'service for life'
- the Council may be 'over providing' for some and was the Council providing a truly strengths-based approach?
- significant variance in numbers attending the four Resource Centres, with only a small proportion of younger adults and a large number identified as having health needs yet only 5% were receiving Continued Health Care funding
- 127 individuals who were 17 years old identified as potentially needing some sort of day care opportunity
- similar unit costs across both types of centre when you would expect specialist services to be higher
- Covid meant that new ways of working had already started to be explored
- lack of provision for PMLD needs in the external market
- heavy reliance on transport to attend Resource Centres
- overwhelming feedback that some of specialist day opportunities buildings could become 'hubs' for an extended service, offering support for people in their homes as well as during the day and overnight.

In terms of next steps, the key areas needing further exploration during the next phase of the review were consideration of the long-term and future offer of the Resource Centres to ensure an equitable approach, how to ensure a clear difference between the Resource and Connect Centres, understanding the make-up of Connect

Service users, considering the GOLD element of service users in both Resource and Connect Services, understanding the variance across the four Resource Centres and exploring alternative/complementary options for specialist and complex services.

The Chairman invited discussion and the following main points were made:

- Overall, Panel members supported the aim to have a service which was relevant, future-fit and facilitated independence.
- The Strategic Director for People highlighted that while current services were highly valued, it was important to have good services for those with complex needs and the Council had a statutory responsibility to ensure that individuals had choice and control and that services were fit for purpose for the future.
- A Panel member sought reassurance around the reference to some individuals expecting a 'service for life', since he envisaged that this would in fact be the reality for many individuals because of their needs - the Officers acknowledged this point although it was important that service users had the opportunity to consider other options along the way. Officers felt passionately about having good quality services for those who needed them.
- Gail Greer, the representative from Speakeasy N.O.W was invited to comment, who said that she was very reassured by the discussion and fully understood the fact that people often remained in the same services for years and it was important to encourage them to embrace change and younger people coming through also had very different aspirations. Covid had prompted change and it was important to grasp that.

The Chairman asked about timings for the second phase of the review, and Officers advised they were planning for the Summer.

The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Social Care observed that at this interim stage, the review findings were different to those expected, and he believed the work would be more around service delivery than policy.

It was agreed that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman would review the current work programme before the Council's next administration.

2020/21

The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Social Care suggested that it would be helpful to look at the process of how safeguarding concerns are looked at by Worcestershire's Safeguarding Board in comparison with other areas, to give reassurance that issues were not being missed.

The meeting ended at 4.10 pm

Chairman