

COUNCIL

16 FEBRUARY 2023

REPORT OF CABINET - SUMMARY OF DECISIONS TAKEN

Request to Consult in Relation to Care and Support

1. The Council's local charging policy for adults receiving care and support was updated and implemented in April 2015 in line with the Care Act 2014. Some aspects of the policy were mirrored from the pre-Care Act Regulations, to ensure continuity for our adult service users.
2. Cabinet has considered a report reviewing how the Council purchases and assesses charges for replacement care, especially in relation to Direct Payments. This is because service users in receipt of a Direct Payment exercise choice and control to decide on the timing and frequency of the replacement care according to their support plan and there is no onus on the service user to let the Council know when this is arranged.
3. To ensure that the Council is fair and consistent in its approach and in line with most other local authorities, it is proposed that all clients in receipt of replacement care services are assessed under the non-residential provisions of the Council's charging policy.
4. Current custom and practice is that the Council only charge a service user for one care caller, even if two carers are required from a service delivery requirement. Cabinet is minded to change this approach in the Council's charging policy to enable charging for both carers.
5. Care Support Statutory Guidance provide principles that local authorities should consider when making decisions on charging. These include applying the charging rules equally so those with similar needs or services are treated the same. Councils should also minimise anomalies between different care settings. The proposal to charge all services users in receipt of replacement care, whether they are in receipt of a Direct Payment or not, under the non-residential charging regime will ensure continuity in approach and minimise any potential anomalies.
6. Cabinet has authorised the Strategic Director for People to carry out a public consultation on the proposals and he will bring forward a final recommendation at the conclusion of the consultation.

Education Sufficiency Annual Update

7. The Cabinet has considered the updated annual sufficiency information for all areas of education to ensure the Council's five-year strategic School Organisation Plan, which provides an overview of school place planning from 2019-24, is revised in order that the

Council can meet its statutory duty and strategic aims to provide a sufficiency of school places for children in Worcestershire.

8. As part of this, Cabinet also considered an update report on progress with delivering the new secondary school in Worcester.

9. Cabinet has:

- noted the updated sufficiency information for mainstream school age and specialist education provision;
- noted the pressure on mainstream and specialist education provision, and sufficiency duties highlighted in the reports;
- approved the publication of the sufficiency report as updates to the School Organisation Plan 2019-2024;
- noted progress on the updated Early Years and Childcare Sufficiency annual report and Post 16 education sufficiency assessment; and
- noted progress update on the delivery of the Worcester City Secondary School.

Digital Infrastructure and Connectivity

10. Cabinet has considered a report updating it on the accomplishments of the Superfast Worcestershire Programme and associated projects to improve digital connectivity within the county. The report also set out the proposed expansion of the digital infrastructure and connectivity agenda to deliver the availability of gigabit capable broadband infrastructure to reach 90% of the county's premises during 2027, and work to further improve the experience of voice and data services for mobile telephone users in Worcestershire.

11. In broadband, there is a planned retirement of the copper network, with some services supported by the old 'analogue switches' already being ceased. Equally, in mobile, 3G services are already being switched off, planned to be completely switched off by 2025 and 2G services are set to follow. Continuing to improve digital infrastructure across Worcestershire will allow business competitiveness and social benefits to be maximised.

12. Cabinet has confirmed the ongoing commitment to delegate authority to the Strategic Director of Economy and Infrastructure in consultation with the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills for reinvestment of underspend and up to £4m of Gainshare from Superfast Worcestershire Phase 1 and Phase 2.

13. In addition, Cabinet has approved the expansion of the scope of the digital infrastructure and connectivity agenda to deliver the availability of gigabit capable broadband infrastructure to reach 90% of the county's premises during 2027, and work to further improve the experience of voice and data services for mobile telephone users in Worcestershire.

Contact Points

Specific Contact Points for this report

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

Agenda and background papers for the meeting of the Cabinet held on 2 February 2022:

[Agenda for Cabinet on Thursday, 2nd February, 2023, 10.00 am - Worcestershire County Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)