

HEALTH AND ADULT CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

27 July 2023

Present:-

Councillors S Randall Johnson (Chair), J Bailey, R Chesterton, D Cox, I Hall, L Hellyer, P Maskell, R Peart, D Sellis, C Whitton, M Wrigley (Vice-Chair), J Yabsley and C Hodson (representing Devon District Councils)

Councillors P Crabb and R Scott (remote attendance).

Apologies:-

Councillor Y Atkinson

Member attending in accordance with Standing Order 25

Councillor J McInnes

* 117 **Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

No item was raised as a matter of urgency.

* 118 **Public Participation**

In accordance with the Council's Public Participation Rules, the Committee received and acknowledged oral representations from (i) Daniel Martins, (ii) Si Johns; (iii) Peter Stephenson; (iv) Rebecca Harrison; (v) Councillor Terry Elliott (remote), (vi) Councillor Martin Pearce (vii), and (viii) Gareth Sorsby, in regard to the Homelessness 18+ Contract (Integrated Adult Social Care Consultations) (Minute *119 refers). All Speakers were in objection to any proposed reduction in the grant and referred to the consultation process and response with a clear view that no reductions should be made, accuracy of some content within the report, statutory duties, the limited sum involved relative to the overall Integrated Adult Social Care budget, the impact of the proposed grant reduction and the need for its retention; and reference to full and comprehensive Impact Assessments.

The Chair thanked the Speakers and indicated that their views would be taken into account when the item was considered.

* 119 **18+ Homelessness Prevention Contribution and Contract, and Proposal for the future Council contribution to the Wellbeing Exeter Partnership Fund**

In regard to the 18+ Homelessness Prevention Contract the following Councillors declared a personal interest: Councillors M Wrigley (by virtue as Leader of Teignbridge District Council), C Whitton (by virtue as a past voluntary fund raiser for the YMCA), D Cox (by virtue as a Member of Teignbridge District Council and Trustee of a local foodbank and homeless charity), J Bailey (by virtue as a Member of East Devon District Council), P Maskell (by virtue as a Member of North Devon District Council) and C Hodson (by virtue as Deputy Leader of Torridge District Council and Lead for Housing and Homelessness); D Sellis (by virtue as a Member of West Devon Borough Council) and I Hall (by virtue of as a Member of the Eastern Local Care Partnership).

(Councillor J McInnes attended in accordance with 25 (1) and spoke to this item with the consent of the Committee and referred to the budgetary context and the limited options available; his role today in listening to all views; and acknowledgment of the Speakers' concerns).

(a) Covering paper for reports on Proposal for the future of the Integrated Adult Social Care 18+ Homelessness Prevention Contribution and Contract, and Proposal for the future Council contribution to the Wellbeing Exeter Partnership Fund

The Committee received and noted the Report of the Director of Integrated Adult Social Care (ACH/23/176) on the consultations that had concluded. These consultations were (i) Proposal for the future of the Integrated Adult Social Care 18+ Homelessness Prevention Contribution and Contract; and (ii) Proposal for the future Council contribution to the Wellbeing Exeter Partnership Fund.

Draft reports (for the Cabinet meeting on 23 August) on Adult Social Care 18+ Homelessness Prevention Contribution and Contract and the future Council contribution to the Wellbeing Exeter Partnership Fund on the background, consultation responses and options in detail were subject to consideration by this Committee.

The consultations in regard North Devon Link Services proposals had been extended to allow consultees additional time in which to respond to further requested detail.

Three other consultations relating to (i) Proposals for Learning Disability day centres; (ii) Proposals for Learning Disability respite centres; and (iii) Proposals for changes to Carers Services had been halted pending development of a new approach in these areas which involved re-evaluating the proposals and undertaking additional engagement in identifying next steps, following which further updates would be provided.

(b) Proposal for the future of the Integrated Adult Social Care 18+ Homelessness Prevention Contribution and Contract; and

(c) Proposal for the future Council contribution to the Wellbeing Exeter Partnership Fund

The Committee considered the reports of the Director Integrated Adult Social Care (ACH/23/177) and (ACH/23/178). Report (ACH/23/177) detailed the proposal and five available options in regard to the Homelessness Grant. The Report included context which included financial sustainability and the overarching development of the savings strategy, funding for District and City Councils with statutory responsibilities for preventing and relieving homelessness; and the annual cost (£1,454,478.48) of the discretionary grant met through the Adult Social Care budget to support hours for people to help prevent homelessness and promote recovery. The Report also referred to the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 and award of grants from Government to Local Housing Authorities (LHAs), additional funding for the Right Sleeper Initiative to LHAs, and the Government Strategy '[Ending Rough Sleeping for Good](#)'

Report (ACH/23/178) related to a proposal to withdraw discretionary funding for Wellbeing Exeter. The funding was primarily used to support social prescribing that connected people to opportunities to support their broader and less complex needs than set out in adult social care legislation. The Report covered context including financial suitability considerations, continued working in partnership with the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) and the Exeter City Council; and the development of the Wellbeing Exeter, options and alternatives, the consultation exercise launched in March 2023 and feedback it had received, and reference to the Council's Strategic Plan and summary.

The Members had also received written representations from Councillor Y Atkinson and from the YMCA.

Members' discussion points with the Chief Executive, Director of Integrated Adult Social Care; Head of Integrated Adult Social Care Commissioning; and Director of Legal and Democratic Services included:

- the current Impact Assessment (available at this Committee) was a live document and would be updated for Cabinet to reflect the outcome of ongoing discussion and collaboration with District/City/Borough Councils and other parties noting the inter-dependencies of the statutory and other non-statutory agencies involved across local authority boundaries; and the need for analysis within the IA to the wider costs and impacts of the proposed cuts for housing authorities and other agencies;
- outline of current and ongoing discussions and meetings with all District/City/Borough Councils (second tier housing authorities) at Chief Executive level involving senior Member and Officer housing and commissioning leads and the complexities involved across the diverse areas in the County; and the need for a place - based approach; and including discussion through the developing Local Care Partnerships;

- the need for a 'One Devon' approach and available mechanisms and assistance for the homeless community via, for example, the Devon Home Choice [Devon home page](#) | [Devon home choice](#);
- the need for clarity, accuracy and appropriate use of terminology within committee/cabinet reports in terms of, for example, the available resources from central government for upper and second tier authorities and their differing purpose in relation to rough sleepers, widespread and increasing and chronic homelessness across all Districts, and support for vulnerable young people and supported housing;
- the relatively small sums involved within the context of the overall Integrated Adult Social Care budget (noting that other significant consultations and proposals which totalled circa. £30m (referred to at (a) above) had been paused;
- sufficiency planning by the County Council for younger people and care leavers and prevention work with, for example, Early Years, and MASH provision;
- need for 'Best Value' in commissioning (noting that Directors of Finance nationally were developing a clear definition of the term); and
- the need for additional time for partners if any proposed reduction in grants was to be made in order to allow them to prepare and make alternative arrangements.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor S Randall Johnson, **SECONDED** by Councillor R Peart that

Cabinet be recommended to agree to maintain the Council's 18+ homelessness prevention contribution as per option 4 in section 4 of the Cabinet report and the contribution to Wellbeing Exeter PF; and funding would be tapered in 24/25 financial budget by 50% and withdrawn entirely in 25/26 and subject to the following:

(a) consider encouraging District's/City Authorities to pool their funds within a potential wider 'One Devon approach forum' this would encourage and enable District/City Councils to work differently as current arrangements are not enabling more creative solutions to prevent homelessness. It be aligned to the Government 'Ending Rough Sleeping for Good strategy' to ensure both strategic thinking and prevention remain paramount at both the county and district level;

(b) work as 'One Devon' to deliver temporary 'living pods' or explore other methods of delivering temporary accommodation on both land and waterways;

(c) Combined District Housing Review Boards would be best placed to work with NHS/Police/Social Care/Devon County/Fire Authorities to establish 'root causes' of homelessness and to foremost prevent homelessness;

(d) Team Devon to formulate a county wide housing plan to deal with homelessness and put prevention at the forefront of planning development for housing; and

(e) Team Devon/One Devon to agree a holistic Devon wide approach to addressing homelessness outside of statutory responsibility; and engage fully as partners in addressing the issue outside of Care Act eligible needs and prevention as the core responsibility of all councils in addressing the issue of homelessness.

Councillor J Bailey then **MOVED** an **AMENDMENT, SECONDED** by Councillor M Wrigley:

that no reductions in the grants (both 18+ Homelessness and Wellbeing Exeter Partnership Fund) be made in the current financial (2023/24) and the next financial year (2024/25) (and the remaining Motion detailed above (a - e) to stand).

The **AMENDMENT** was put to the vote and declared **LOST**.

Councillor I Hall **MOVED** an **AMENDMENT, SECONDED** by Councillor R Chesterton:

that funding be maintained in the current financial year (2023/24) and that the position be reviewed at Scrutiny and Cabinet by the year end (and the remaining a - e above motion to stand).

The **AMENDMENT** was put to the vote and declared **CARRIED** and thereafter as the substantive motion, outlined below for clarity:

RESOLVED that Cabinet be recommended that funding be maintained in the current financial year (2023/24) and that the position be reviewed at Scrutiny and Cabinet by the year end and subject to the following:

(a) consider encouraging District's/City Authorities to pool their funds within a potential wider 'One Devon approach forum' this would encourage and enable District/City Councils to work differently as current arrangements are not enabling more creative solutions to prevent homelessness. It be aligned to the Government 'Ending Rough Sleeping for Good strategy' to ensure both strategic thinking and prevention remain paramount at both the county and district level;

(b) work as 'One Devon' to deliver temporary 'living pods' or explore other methods of delivering temporary accommodation on both land and waterways;

(c) Combined District Housing Review Boards would be best placed to work with NHS/Police/Social Care/Devon County/Fire Authorities to establish 'root causes' of homelessness and to foremost prevent homelessness;

(d) Team Devon to formulate a county wide housing plan to deal with homelessness and put prevention at the forefront of planning development for housing; and

(e) Team Devon/One Devon to agree a holistic Devon wide approach to addressing homelessness outside of statutory responsibility; and engage fully as partners in addressing the issue outside of Care Act eligible needs and prevention as the core responsibility of all councils in addressing the issue of homelessness.

***DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**

The Meeting started at 2.15 pm and finished at 4.45 pm