

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee	Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee
Date:	24 May 2022
Title:	SP23 Consultation HASC Working Group: Outcome's report
Report From:	Adult Social Care Grants and Social Inclusion Task and Finish Group

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Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the work undertaken by the Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee (HASC) Working Group in relation to the SP23 consultations.
2. The Working Group can confirm that the savings recommendations will be submitted to the Executive Member for consideration and approval at her June Decision Day. The final decision report will include the key elements of HASCs deliberations of the savings proposals.

Recommendation(s)

3. The Task and Finish Group ask HASC to:
 - a) Acknowledge that a robust Working Group process, Chaired by Councillor Penman, and consisting of 7 members of HASC in total was established and worked to throughout the past 6 months.
 - b) Note that Member participation was strong, regular and consistent throughout.
 - c) Note that 5 meetings took place in total including 3 prior to the public consultation, 1 during the consultation and a final meeting in late April to discuss the outcomes of the consultation
 - d) Acknowledge that Members were kept fully informed throughout the process by officers and were given every opportunity at each of the meetings to fully debate the issues and ask relevant questions.
 - e) Note that Members were properly updated on the outcomes of the consultation exercise including being notified of the concerns raised by those who responded.
 - f) Note that following the Working Group process, the savings recommendations are going to be taken forward to the Executive Member

in June with the report to include the main points that result from the HASC debate of the draft Executive Member report.

Executive Summary

4. In October 2021 the Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee initiated a Task & Finish Group to review savings proposals totalling £725,000 in relation to the future of the Adults Social Care Grant Schemes and reductions to Social Inclusion services, as part of the wider Adults' Savings Programme 2023 (SP23). The objectives of the Working Group are outlined in the HASC Working Group Terms of Reference, appendix 1.
5. This report outlines the work of the Working Group, including their final conclusions.
6. The Group has met 5 times over the last 6 months and each meeting has given Members the opportunity to question and scrutinise the approach being taken and provide input to support the development of final proposals. The Group first met on 16 November 2022 in person.
7. The Group met 3 times prior to the Public Consultation which was held for 6 weeks 7 February 2022 ending on 21 March 2022. The Working Group then met midway through the consultation (1 March), with the final Working Group being held on 25 April to consider the outcomes of the public consultation exercise.
8. After the initial meeting and very much linked to the increasing threat of Covid-19 at the time, the meetings moved to virtual for the sessions held between December and March. The Working Group were consulted after the first virtual meeting for their views on how the session had gone. They were very comfortable with the way the meeting was conducted and the format and as such agreed to continue to meet virtually during the heightened Covid period. The final Working Group held on 25 April was held face to face.
9. The Working Group meetings have enabled valuable discussions to take place. The sessions have been structured and very well organised, allowing time and opportunity for Members to ask questions, raise issues and to scrutinise the work of, and the approach taken by, officers. In turn, the officers have answered questions openly and competently and have taken away any actions as necessary, bringing updates and any requested further information to the subsequent meeting.
10. The HASC Working Group has progressed well over the 6 months period, with generally good attendance, and very open and robust Member and officer engagement and discussion throughout.
11. At the final meeting of the Working Group there were 3 Members absent for different reasons including Covid and holidays. Subsequent to that meeting the absent Members were given the opportunity to send their comments by email to best ensure that all Members of the Working Group were able to contribute at each of the different stages and particularly following the results of the public consultation exercise.

12. Regularly updates were provided to HASC during this 6 month period via Chairman's Announcements.
13. The final proposals for changes to services are outlined in section 2 of the Adult Social Care: Outcome of the Savings Programme to 2023 Public Consultation report.

Membership

14. The Task and Finish Group was a cross party group and included the following Members: Cllr Neville Penman (Chair) Cllr Ann Briggs, Cllr Kim Taylor, Cllr Andy Tree, Cllr Lesley Meenaghan, Cllr Nick Adams-King and Cllr David Harrison.

Contextual information

15. The Serving Hampshire - Balancing the Budget consultation, published in June 2021, proposed a number of reductions in Adults' Health and Care budgets, subject to Cabinet approval on 12 October and approval by Full County Council on 4 November 2021. Two proposals are stated as being subject to stage 2 consultations; Local and County wide grants funded by Adult Social Care to voluntary, community and partner organisations in relation to Demand Management and Prevention, and Social Inclusion Services which provide support for vulnerable people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to maintain independent accommodation.
16. Local and county-wide grants funded by Adult Social Care to voluntary, community and partner organisations in relation to Demand Management and Prevention currently support a range of activities designed to help prevent and manage demand for Social Care services. The proposal was to cease to provide such grants representing a target saving of £365,000. If implemented, voluntary and community organisations would need to reshape their services or seek alternative funding.
17. Social Inclusion Services provide support for vulnerable people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, to maintain independent accommodation. These services support a range of partners to achieve positive outcomes for these clients. The proposal related to a target saving of £360,000 from the budget for these services.
18. The County Council committed to working with all partners and stakeholders in planning for future service delivery.

Considerations of the Working Group

19. At the initial face to face meeting on 16 November, the terms of reference and role of the Working Group were discussed and agreed. An overview of Social Inclusion services and Adult Social Care grants was shared by officers, along with the detail of the work proposed to be undertaken in advance of a consultation to ensure required due diligence is undertaken, partner engagement arrangements and the likely options for the two service areas

considered. All Working Group Member's engaged well and the approach, as set out, was supported.

20. The second meeting took place on the 8 December 2021, at which we reviewed the work undertaken by Officers. This included an update on work with partners and a service mapping exercise and gap analysis and options considered for both Social Inclusion services and Adult Social Care grants. The group also looked at the emerging proposals in more detail by reviewing the initial options developed and their potential impacts, identifying risks and associated mitigations.
21. The 3rd meeting was held 17 January and as a group we further examined the Social Inclusion options that have been put forward, the risks and mitigations and the preferred option with the associated financials. In relation to Community Grant Funding, alternative funding sources or organisations were outlined as well as current services being offered.
22. The 4th meeting was held on 1 March and provided an opportunity to present a high level update on the consultation findings at a point half way through the consultation window.
23. At the final meeting held on 25 April 2022, the Group had an opportunity to review the process undertaken to date, the actions taken during the consultation to ensure any individual who wished to comment, reasonably had the opportunity to do so. The group further discussed the findings of the consultation, how the issues raised matched the concerns and risks raised during the pre-consultation due diligence, and the proposed way forward for the proposals under consideration. High level plans for the implementation, and monitoring of the proposed changes should they be approved by the Executive Member on 16 June 2022 were also discussed.

Consultation and Equalities

Adults Social Care Grants

24. For Adult Social Care Grants, 1663 responses were received to the consultation of which:
 - a) 1565 were individual responses
 - b) 76 were organisational responses
 - c) 8 were from elected Members
 - d) 928 individual responses were from current service users
 - e) 91 individual responses were from former service users
25. 97% of responses disagreed with the November 2021 Balancing the Budget proposal to cease three grant schemes saving £320,000. 88% of responses strongly disagreed with the proposal. It was noted that while a large proportion disagreed with the decision to reduce the funding, most respondents did not challenge the principles or proposals put forward upon which those reductions could be made.

26. It was noted that the responses to the consultation did not raise any significant new issues that had not formed part of the initial due diligence work undertaken by officers. This was in relation to both the potential impacts identified and the individuals identified as likely to be most impacted, including the identification of the protected characteristics in terms of age and disability, as well as additional characteristics including poverty and rurality, as likely being most impacted.
27. It was noted that County Council Staff are already seeking to identify and share other suitable funding opportunities that can help both support organisations to continue their work to support the individuals targeted to benefit from existing funding and to utilise other funding to support these targeted individuals more directly.
28. While the impact of the proposed reductions in funding cannot be fully known until after implementation, officers offered assurance that engagement with the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector will continue to understand and help mitigate any future impact. Officers noted that work will continue with Health, including the Integrated Care Partnerships, as well as the District, Borough and City councils to both better align existing funding, streamline processes and identify potential additional sources of funding.
29. During the process it was noted by members of the working group that cessation of these grants will not impact the delivery of community transport.
30. Members agreed that the process had been thorough and that the consultation had been carried out in a robust fashion, but noted that the proposals should be considered both in the light of the County Councils statutory duties with regards to a balanced budget and ensuring care needs can be met, but also in the light of the decision taken on 4 November 2021 to reduce funding in this area.

Social Inclusion (Homelessness) Services

31. For Social Inclusion services, 509 responses were received to the consultation of which:
 - f) 473 were individual responses
 - g) 27 were organisational responses
 - h) 6 were from elected Members
 - i) 33 individual responses were from current service users
 - j) 16 individual responses were from former service users
32. 90% of responses disagreed with the November 2021 Balancing the Budget decision to reduce the funding by £360,000. It was noted that while a large proportion disagreed with the decision to reduce the funding, with some highlighting a preference for increasing funding; the majority of respondents did not challenge the principles or proposals put forward upon which those reductions could be made.

33. It was noted that a number of forums that were set up initially as part of the Covid response have aided joined up working. Adults' Health and Care, Housing services and Health have regular contact and meetings to identify areas of concern. Further work is taking place to look at how this can be developed at a more local level which will increase knowledge of all of the services available. Further work is required to ensure services can continue to work collaboratively in this space and continued investment in the accommodation-based services could help with ensuring those most vulnerable continue to be looked after.
34. It was noted that the responses to the consultation did not raise any significant new issues that had not formed part of the initial due diligence work undertaken by officers. The proposed model consulted on, alongside work with the aim of improving cooperation between services operating in this space, may help to mitigate the issues identified, particularly in relation to potential impacts on protected characteristics in terms of disability, as well as additional characteristics including poverty and rurality.
35. During the process, members of the Working Group were given information on the wide range of relevant community services that are commissioned by a range of partners including public health, districts, health and the County Council. These include services such as mental health wellbeing centres, drug and alcohol services, community response and outreach services. It was noted that by continuing to improve collaboration and awareness between services, a greater number of people could be successfully supported to avoid homelessness.
36. While the impact of the proposed reductions in funding cannot be fully known until after implementation, officers offered assurance that due process will be followed in respect of re-tendering and monitoring services. Officers noted that work will continue with District, Borough and City Councils to identify potential additional sources of funding.
37. Members agreed that the process had been thorough, and that the consultation had been carried out in a robust fashion but noted that proposals should be considered both in respect of the County Councils statutory duties with regards to a balanced budget and ensuring care needs can be met, but also in the light of the decision taken on 4 November 2021 to allocate savings requirements to these areas.

Conclusions

38. Members considered the information they had received over the 6 months of the SP23 Consultation Task and Finish Group period.
39. Members of the Working Group acknowledged the concerns raised by the consultation with regards to the decision taken by Full Council of 4 November 2021 to allocate savings requirements to these areas.
40. Members of the Working Group acknowledged the mitigations and assurances provided by Officers regarding the two savings areas, and whilst agreeing that reducing grant and social inclusion spend is not without its issues there was an acceptance that pursuing savings in these areas is

legitimate and that Officers will be taking proposals forward to the Executive Member in June with the report to include the main points that result from the HASC debate of the draft Executive Member report.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	no
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	no
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	yes

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:	
<u>Title</u> Medium Term Financial Strategy Update and Savings Programme to 2023 Savings Proposals Agenda for County Council on Thursday, 4th November, 2021, 10.20 am About the Council Hampshire County Council (hants.gov.uk)	<u>Date</u> 4 November 2021
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents	
<p>The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)</p>	
<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

A full Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed for the decision-making report.