

Council – 18 September 2017

Portfolio Brief – Adult Social Care and Money, Home, Job Councillor Diane Coughlan

1. Staffing

In the 2016/17 year the Directorate will complete a re-structure reducing management layers by three tiers. This creates a new management structure, delivering financial and organisational efficiencies.

Part of the change has seen the appointment of a permanent Executive Team, creating the much needed stability to the directorate.

In February 2017, Team Managers and Advanced Practitioners were restructured on revised job descriptions that focus their accountability on practice improvement, financial and performance management, staff development, and compliance with the Care Act.

Absence levels are still improving, reducing costs in this area by a rolling average of 23% and saving over £150,000.

The new model for Adult Social Care sees our teams working within localities, clustered around GP practices, working alongside partner services. Workers will hold case responsibility for a known caseload making it easier to maintain continuity and respond to changes in needs for service users.

Several front line staff are currently being recruited to.

2. Developments Underway

We have just agreed a significant business case to improve intermediate care. This will totally reconfigure the model of the health and care services which support hospital avoidance and discharge. It has stringent performance improvements for service users and delivers savings for Adult Social Care and the CCG. It is encapsulated in the Better Care Fund and forms the first organisational partnership for the Walsall Alliance.

Adult Social Care and the CCG had a longstanding Joint Commissioning Unit. We reviewed and dis-established it in early 2017. We are now working on a place based commission which will potentially see the Council as a co-commissioner of community health, adult social care and primary care services

The Better Care Fund is a Joint Health and Care plan and pooled budget between Walsall CCG and WMBC ASC to focus on those who are most in need. We are looking to further enhance this in 2017/18 by aligning the fund to bring together the budgets relating to the four integration work streams of the Walsall Together programme:

- Integrated Health and Care Teams
- Integrated Intermediate Care
- Integrated health and Care Access
- Resilient Communities

We have a Provider Board in Walsall which reports to the Walsall Together Board and it is scoping a business case to develop integrated health and care for the whole of the Walsall population. The first development for this alliance is the intermediate care service. It is intended to commence the alliance in April 2018.

3. The Sustainability and Transformation Plan

In December 2015, the NHS shared their plans of a new approach to help ensure that health and care services are built around the needs of local populations.

Cabinet has noted the development of the Black Country Sustainability and Transformation Plan and the Walsall Together Programme, which is the local delivery of the STP.

4. The Budget

As at end of June 2017, the initial forecast position for Adult Social Care is an over spend of £2.179m. After the net use of reserves (£0.588m) this would result in an overall forecast over spend of £1.591mm at year end. An action plan is fully operational which is reducing this forecast overspend.

Cases continue to be reviewed at panels to ensure that the Care Act is applied fairly and equitably for all clients. However, this does not fully remove the ongoing pressure of all savings and the current identified pressures, and risks.

Work is ongoing to ensure that the contributions that people make towards their care charges are collected more effectively. Walsall has been slow to charge people in the past. We are working to improve the ease of the financial assessment and way we charge people who make a contribution towards their care. This enables people to decide what care they require, based on what they will pay, and will stop large bills and debts being accrued.

The team are also embarking on phase three of Mosaic implementation in order to introduce the financial elements of the system to the care record.

5. Successes

In recent months there has been some good partnership work supporting citizens who hoard. Neighbourhood Community Officers are working with partners to support people who need an assessment and action plan to help to reduce the risk either to themselves or for health and safety (including the risk of fire) reasons. Often people self neglect or are subject to eviction if this isn't tackled effectively.

There has been some excellent work within the community by Goscote Greenacres who have well and truly linked with local organisations and local people by allowing continued access to allotment plots on site. The gardeners work with a team of volunteers to grow and sell fruit and vegetables to the local community. There is also a vibrant fishing club at Goscote too.

We have redesigned our front of house duty system. This has worked well, with a significant reduction of people awaiting an initial assessment, and all cases now responded to quickly.

6. **Money Home Job**

Staffing

The Money Home Job service has reduced in size significantly over the last three years and will continue to do so in the coming three years. In line with savings proposals, the number of management posts has now reduced, and front-line officers are being supported to develop new skills that more closely align to the needs of our most vulnerable residents. Changes in shift patterns, roles and responsibilities are now providing greater flexibility in service delivery whilst assisting our staff to get a better work-life balance.

7. **Developments Underway**

As part of the Council's "Channel Shift" transformation programme, officers are reviewing opportunities to improve system resilience and develop new self-help tools with the aim of allowing residents to access information, report changes in circumstances and claim benefits on-line.

Latest research into the poor housing conditions in Walsall, proved so compelling, that we have taken the decision to undertake Statutory Consultation on whether to introduce a Selective Licensing Scheme in two parts of the borough.

Next financial year brings a fresh challenge, with the implementation of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 expected in April 2018. This new legislation places increased duties on Council's to help prevent homelessness across all client groups. Despite the uncertain times we are being proactive.

The DCLG has already recognised our homeless prevention pathway for young people as good practice. We want to build on this success, and are now working to re-design our homelessness pathway for older single people and families. As part of that re-design, St Basils have agreed to help us to implement a 'Psychologically Informed Environment' across our housing and homeless support services. In the future we want our service to be designed to meet the emotional and psychological needs of our clients. Staff will have a greater understanding of the impact of trauma on people's behaviour and learn new skills to enable them to help more. To complement this we are also in the process of procuring a 'Housing First' Pilot for Walsall which is set to launch in December 2017.

Last year, in response to the increasing numbers of people rough sleeping, the Council provided funding to allow the YMCA Black Country Group to deliver a night shelter for a complete month (covering Christmas and into the new-year). This year we want to build on that success by doing it again, hopefully for a longer period of time. Many local faith and community groups have already offered their support in making this happen. I would ask anyone else who wishes to get involved in helping the homeless to contact the YMCA who have kindly agreed to coordinate the project again this year.

8. **Successes**

I am proud to announce that the service has also just been shortlisted by the National Charity for Home Improvement Agencies for an award of 'Adaptations Service of the Year'.

The housing standards and improvement team has had a great year, obtaining the Council's first Compulsory Purchase Orders on three long-term empty homes. This action, which was taken as a last resort, will help rejuvenate neighbourhoods blighted by properties in disrepair and bring much needed housing back into use for local people.

Joint work with West Midlands Fire Service has proved particularly successful in identifying poor housing conditions and promoting the need for landlords to provide relevant smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.

We implemented a scheme where our looked after children receive 100% discount on their council tax until the age of 25.

Councillor Diane Coughlan

Portfolio Holder for Social Care/Money Home Job

8 September 2017