

PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14 MARCH 2023

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

(1) QUESTIONS FROM JAMES MILLER TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE & HEALTH INTEGRATION

- (a) It is vital that people who depend on others to be able to get by day-to-day, receive the support they need to live their lives as best they can, as any one of us would hope for if we were in their position. With this in mind, it is concerning that costs for adult social care are around 25% to 30% of the £20m total monthly costs for October and November 2022 was the direct reason for the 1.99% of last year's 3.99% council tax rise; was said to be £9m of the reason for the council's projected budget overspend of £14m late last year; and has been identified as the primary reason for the 4.99% increase in council tax and 10% increase in all council fees and charges in the forthcoming budget. Because there cannot be a compromise in adult social care, if this continues, there will not be a lot left for anything else.**

What are the causes for the increase and are there people that currently receive support that could have, with the right preventative support, avoided needing it in the first place?

Thank you for your question Mr Miller. We agreed that people who are eligible under the Care Act for adult social care support should receive that care that they need to live their lives as best as they can.

The overall financial position for adult social care is challenging, but we are confident that we are managing this well as an authority. Adult Social Care makes up a third of the original council budget set in February 2022. As at end of November (period 8) the Adult Social care & health integration portfolio reported a £1.9m over spend, which equated to a 4% over spend on the budget for the portfolio. This was about a quarter of the project £7.3m projected over spend.

In line with most authorities in England for 2023/24, a 2% increase will be applied to council tax for Adult Social Care. This means that for 2023/24 the ASC budget will make up 38% of the overall budget. Payments for providers will be increased by an average of 9.7%. This increase is to ensure that our providers are able to pay our vitally important social care staff in line with the increase in the National Living Wage. Fees and charges in relation to adult social care will be increased in line with national guidance and depend on individual financial circumstances.

The Care Act sets out the expectation on Council Social Services departments to provide information and advice to enable continued positive wellbeing and control over their care and health needs. It also sets out the need to ensure a preventative approach to delay and or avoid a deterioration in the care and health of our communities. We deliver this predominantly through our information approaches and use of a strong community and voluntary sector. In addition, we operate a strengths-based model via our Social Workers and Occupational therapists.

We are committed to further enhancing this approach to try avoid a deterioration in care and health needs of individuals as well as supporting individuals to make positive

choices that will maintain their health and keep them engaged with the people, communities and activities that are important to them.

- (b) Is there a specific problem in Southend that has resulted in drastic numbers of people requiring care or is it simply a financial issue, that the number of people are the same, but the costs to support them have increased? If so, what are those costs and what can be done to address this without comprising the level of care?**

Thank you for your question Mr Miller. There is an actual reduction in the number of both referrals to Adult Care services and the number that subsequently go onto receive a formal Care Act assessments from our social work and occupational therapy teams. However, in line with our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment available on our website (<https://adults-social-care-southend.hub.arcgis.com/>) we will see a demographic increase in need linked to population changes. The change is broadly down to increasing numbers of older people and an increasing level of need in the adult of work age population. This is replicated nationally.

The cost of care that people receive has increased for two reasons - due to demographic changes people need more care then previously as they have more complex needs, and services cost more - primarily due to increases in staff costs by National Living Wage costs but also by other costs. We are looking to run a number of tender opportunities that will improve the number of providers in the care market that can provide more specialist and preventative services that will allow for the right care and support rather than over provision of services.

We are unable to set out the effect on cost of complexity with robust figures. However, despite having a decreasing number of referrals we will continue to work on further developing our strengths based and preventative approach and understanding of the cost associated with increased complexity where evidenced.

- (2) QUESTION FROM DAVID WEBB TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE & HEALTH INTEGRATION**

Obesity amongst our residents in Southend. What ways are the Council addressing this situation in improving residents' overall health both adults, children?

Thank you for your question Mr Webb. Southend has a higher prevalence (68.8%) of adults that are overweight or obese than nationally 64%. For school age children 21.5% of reception age children are overweight or obese and 37.8% of year 6 pupils.

Public Health is actively working in Southend on a range of programmes with partners such as the NHS services, A Better Start Southend and Everyone Health (Wellbeing Services) to support families and residents to maintain healthy lifestyles including Healthy Start, Southend supports breastfeeding, Active Southend, Healthy schools programme and weight management.

Additionally, the Council has developed a Southend Poverty Strategy to help address food insecurity in collaboration with the Southend Food Alliance.

Key work plans include developing a scheme to help residents identify healthy options on menus when eating out and exploring how we make Southend a healthier city, looking at the food environment.

(3) QUESTION FROM DAVID WEBB TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, LEARNING & INCLUSION

What youth services did Southend City Council put on during 2022 and how many attended and how much did the youth service cost compared to 2021?

Thank you for your question Mr Webb. During 2022 the Targeted Youth Service had a membership of 641 individual children and young people.

From January 2022 to the end of December 2022 they attended 7533 times across the youth groups.

The service provided 17 free targeted youth group sessions run Monday to Saturday across five venues within the City every week during term time. These included sessions for Young Carers and those with Special Educational Needs and/or a disability.

Sessions provided were - junior sessions for 8 -11 year olds, Intermediate for 8-14 year olds and Senior for 11-18 year olds with our Special Educational Needs and/or a Disability groups up to age 25. The definition of the groups and what is provided is very much determined by need and the children and young people themselves.

Spend on the service for 2021/22 was £466,000.

As spend for services is calculated on a financial year basis we cannot conform the final spend on the service for the 2022/2023 financial year.

This activity is in addition to the holiday youth activities which was the subject of a question you asked Mr Webb at the People Scrutiny in November 2022 for which a response was provided then.