

Strategic Decisions Supporting Information

1. Review of in-house residential services £640,000

Proposal:

- In 2018 'Choices for the Future' transformation programme for in-house services was approved by the Adults Cabinet Member. Within the programme there was a commitment to review the in-house residential services. The County Council is developing an accommodation strategy, and this will be an ideal opportunity for the in-house to be part of this piece of work. There are significantly fewer referrals being made to residential services due to initiatives like Home First. It is anticipated there could be opportunities to redevelop some sites into extra care housing or release for a capital receipt.

Key Risks:

- Public opposition to changes to services, which might include decommissioning residential establishments.
- The need to promote the County Council's independence priorities and to achieve public acceptance of the diminishing role of buildings-based facilities

2. Review of Shaw day services - £250,000

Proposal:

Shaw day services are provided at six of the 12 care homes that are operated by Shaw Healthcare as part of a block contract on behalf the County Council. Before Covid-19 pandemic closed the services on the 25th March 2020, 92 people were registered to attend the six services which were operating at an average of 45% attendance against capacity. This meant that the County Council was paying for places that were not being used. Since March operational staff report that now only 50 people are either able to or want to return to the same day service provision meaning that demand has significantly reduced further.

A review of the services was already in train as part of a previous savings plan relating to a Cabinet Member decision taken in May 2018 (AH02 18/19). It is proposed to extend this to assess whether all the Shaw Healthcare day services are required, whether they provide the best use of public money, and if not, what should change in order to deliver better outcomes for people.

Key Risks:

- Need to ensure appropriate support available for customers to make choices around their individual outcomes
- Public opposition to perceived loss of services

3. Review of Lifelong services day services - £2,240,000 (£1,120,000 in 21/22)

Proposal:

The County Council has a clear strategic intent to reduce dependence on building based day services for people with learning disabilities and to ensure that people, wherever possible, are able to access local community provision.

There is a renewed focus on enabling independence and increasing employment opportunities. There is therefore an intention to significantly reduce the spend on building based services to create the savings above. This will be phased, in part due to the reduced use of day provision during Covid and the emergence of new ways of offering support; the opportunities afforded by the re-procurement of services at the end of the current contract in March 2022; and continued development of the Council provided day services. The new models of support are being worked up collaboratively with current providers and wider stakeholders including customers and families.

Key Risks:

- Public opposition to changes in provision
- The need to promote the County Council's independence priorities and to achieve public acceptance of the diminishing role of buildings-based facilities
- The need to make alternative arrangements for some customers, which will be dependent on commissioning activity and the availability of supply in the community. Elements of it are likely to require market and/or community development and implementation of the Supporting Lives Connecting People model.

4. Public Health Grant - £508,000 (£370,000 in 2021/22)

The proposed savings from the repurposed public health grant will be repurposed to help fund other services provided by the county for public health outcomes.

a.) Social Care Support Contracts - £408,000 (£270,000 in 2021/22) for all social support contracts

Help at Home proposal:

The Help at Home contract has provided a subsidised home support service to people since 2013. It provides help to vulnerable older people who do not meet the Care Act threshold with basic household tasks, i.e. cleaning, shopping etc. Customers are provided with up to a maximum of 1-2 hours per week at a subsidised hourly rate. The current overall contract delivers to a customer base of approximately 677. The existing customer base is static in nature meaning that many customers have remained in the service on a long-term basis.

The model is not aligned with the current model of community led support for adults and as part of the current WSCC Social Support recommissioning programme, this service is being decommissioned. The current proposed plans for decommissioning aim to minimise risk to service users, minimise additional demand for adult social care and minimise any potential reputation damage. It involves a tapered withdrawal of the service with delivery actually ceasing in April 2022 and will be accompanied by ongoing assessment of service user needs and integration with community support.

It would be possible to speed up the decommissioning process so that the service ceases to deliver in July 2021 when the new contract period commences, resulting in 9 month savings in 2021/22 of £0.22m.

Key Risks:

In order to mitigate the risks of ceasing service delivery in July 2021 work will need to be carried out with the providers to assess and support service users.

Additional social support contract savings have been identified including through reducing variation in unit costs. This has resulted in an additional £50k savings resulting in overall social support contract savings of £0.27m in 2021/22.

b.) Reduction in Wellbeing Programme - £100,000 (total budget £2,116,000)

Proposal:

The West Sussex Wellbeing Programme is the flagship partnership between public health in West Sussex County Council and District and Borough Councils. With a total budget of £2,116,000, it is the main, large scale prevention programme in the county and the contact point for adults to access a wide range of support via self-referral or following signposting from a front line professional. It takes forward a number of commitments set out in the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Most of the activity within the programme is concentrated on tackling overweight and obesity in adults of all ages. A Cabinet Member decision (effective from 12/11/18) endorsed the three-year partnership agreement which is now in its second year. That report stated that the budget would be set annually. The Cabinet Member wrote to District and Boroughs (April 2019) committing to maintaining the funding levels for three years. At a later date additional resources were allocated to wellbeing to support service developments (smoking cessation and NHS health checks) the savings, referred to here, impact on the latter sum so the commitment in the letter remains unaffected.

The programme has been significantly disrupted during COVID and will take time to recover, it is expected to underspend this financial year. There are aspects of the business plans which have ceased or not started due to COVID which would be halted permanently to achieve the savings. For example, NHS health checks have not been taking place during the pandemic so additional resource for them is underspent. Public health intend to develop proposals with the partners regarding where to take this money from (both geographically and across the interventions offered) in order to minimise the adverse impacts on the health of local population, on reducing inequalities and on the strength of the partnership.

Key Risks:

The savings risk damaging the established partnerships, impacting the rate of recovery of the service (which was severely disrupted by community hub workload in some areas). This reduces investment in interventions which prevent or reduce the serious consequences of Covid for those with lifestyle risk factors (linked to deprivation and BAME). It should be noted that the national obesity strategy launched in July makes reference to these services and pathways.

5. National House Project – £1,000,000 (2022/23)

Proposal:

The National House Project is a social enterprise built with young people leaving care, providing sustainable homes and a community of support that enables young people to have confidence in themselves and their future. Although all attempts are currently made to register young people's local connection (housing register) where there is duty from a District/Borough, the response and success has historically (and to date) been inconsistent and very rarely provides Care Leavers with the offer of accommodation when they need it, therefore, the Council largely relies on the private rental sector to provide Care Leavers with independent accommodation. The private rental market is buoyant, and landlords will often choose other applicants over and above Care Leavers leaving little or no appropriate option for West Sussex young people. The cost of accommodation for young people represents one of the highest challenges to local authority budgets. National House Projects deliver improved outcomes for young people at lower costs and reduces demand on wider local authority and partner agency budgets with fewer tenancy breakdowns, improved emotional, physical and mental health and less contact with criminal justice services.

Savings of up to £0.2m per annum could be achieved for every residential placement avoided, meaning maximum savings potential of £2m per annum based on a cohort of 10 young people. However, in reality not all young people will be stepped down from residential placements, but potentially foster placements which cost significantly less, therefore savings are more likely to be in the region of £1m to reflect this mix.

Key Risks:

Partner agencies do not agree or commit to the project, resulting in the Council being unable to offer this to Care Leavers. Dependency on care planning to deliver the savings linked to this project. Social Work practice will need to change to encourage planning for adulthood and independence.

6. Increase in Council's top slice of Early Years DSG to compensate for lost Central DSG grant funding used for wider benefit of children and young people - £450,000

Proposal:

To compensate for the continued reduction of DSG grant for the Central Services Schools block used to fund support to the MASH, Early Help services and Education Area Inclusion and Improvement Boards the council could increase the total funds to be topsliced from the DSG Early Years block. Under the Early Years funding regulations 95% of the Early Years funding for 3 and 4 year olds must be passed through to Early Years providers, but the remaining 5% can be topsliced by the County Council towards the overheads incurred in running the service. Since we are currently only topslicing 4% of this budget, we can under the national regulations look to increase our share by a further 1% (£0.450m).

In order for the County Council to increase its topslice a reduction in the level of payments currently paid to Early Years providers will be required. Following the introduction of the new Early Years National Funding Formula (EYNFF) in 2017/18, the DSG funding rates paid to the Council remained frozen until the current year when they were increased by 8p per pupil. This increase was passed on in full to providers last year. It is estimated this proposal would

effectively mean that the hourly rate being paid to providers would be 5p per pupil lower than that paid during 2020/21 prior to considering any increase in funding for 2021/22.

Key Risks:

The impact on the financial resilience of nursery schools will need to be evaluated.

Schools Forum will need to be consulted and likely to be critical of the proposals.

7. Delayering work on management layers in the children's services department - £tbc (2022/23)

Proposal:

In response to the Commissioner's report and recommendations made in 2019 we continue to improve our services to ensure the best outcomes for children and young people. Their needs are at the heart of all our decisions.

An important part of this work is to make our management structures clearer and in line with industry standard to ensure we have streamlined reporting lines and responsibility levels. Some savings may be possible though it is unclear how much until the modelling work is complete

8. IT service redesign - £500,000

Proposal:

The current contract for IT services concludes at the end of September 2022 and work on options demonstrate the benefits to the council by moving to a new provision model at an earlier date and the council and Capita have mutually agreed to seek an earlier date. The proposed approach will better support the delivery of council services and the ability to transform its services to provide a modern, responsive and flexible digital, data and technology service.

Key Risks:

- Migration to multi supplier model results in fragmentation of service model with reduction in quality due to lack of end to end accountability
- Delays to overall programme result in an extension of the Capita contract with inflated costs/risk transfer
- Technical ICT constraints over the transition period leads to either a reduction in service quality or a cost overrun in terms of implementation

9. Not reopening the Public Cafe (removal of budget pressure) - £Nil

Proposal:

The use of the Martlets has been in decline and last year the restaurant had a £60k budget deficit. This decline has been due to a number of factors, but in particular:

- A thriving high street that features a high number of modern eateries and café venues, including mainstream chains and local businesses.
- The Martlets is old and has tired décor and equipment. To modernise the facility would take considerable funds, without a guarantee of increasing profitability as well as a long pay-back period on the investment.

If we keep things as they are then forecasts show that the budget deficit will continue to increase, and trade continue to decrease.

Currently with the majority of county hall staff working from home, the restaurant is closed and the staff are not at work. The restaurant is therefore costing the Council £2.7k per week in wages.

Future use of the building will be decided under a separate project that will be led by the Corporate Landlord. The building could continue to be used as meeting space /developed as meeting space, car park, additional office accommodation, etc.

Key Risks:

If this decision is taken there will need to be further more detailed work undertaken to identify the local provision of catering for meetings.

Not having a staff restaurant on campus will allow for staff to support the Chichester high street café and restaurant scene, adding additional trade value to those businesses, and encouraging staff to be healthy by taking a break from their work station and having a regular daily walk.

The campus is also well stocked with kitchenettes that allow staff to bring their own lunches, re-heating and storage facilities, and access to making their own hot and cold drinks.

10. Introduce measures to reduce the amount of DIY waste presented at Household Waste Recycling Sites (HWRS) - £500,000 (£250,000 in 2021/22)

Proposal:

Only certain types of waste are legally defined as 'household waste'. The Council must provide facilities with reasonable access for residents to dispose of this type of waste on a free of charge basis. Other types of waste such as soil, hard-core, plasterboard, and car/van tyres are legally defined as 'non-household waste' for which a collection or disposal charge can be applied. Currently the Council charges for tyre disposals but not the other defined chargeable waste.

The County Council did approve the charging of non-household waste in the changes to the services, opening hours and charges at Household Waste and Recycling Sites and the introduction of two enforcement officers to tackle fly-tipping report in 2016/17 - Key Decision RS08 (16/17); however following a statement by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in the Spring of 2017 that the government was going to review its guidance with regards to the charges that can be made at local civic amenity sites and with specific reference to the disposal of DIY materials, the disposal charges were suspended. Currently, other local authorities charge for this type of waste disposal including Hampshire, Dorset, Surrey and East Sussex.

Key Risks:

Further discussions with the contractor would need to take place to fully understand the impact on the contract and therefore the level of savings available.
11. Review of the HWRS network - £190,000 (£95,000 in 2021/22)
<p>Proposal: To reduce the Household Waste Recycling Site (HWRS) network in West Sussex by the closure of two permanent sites. It is anticipated that these closures would save around £0.190m per year, with £95k deliverable in 21/22. The saving anticipates that these closures take effect from 1st October 2021.</p> <p>Key Risks: Further discussions would need to take place with the contractor before firm figures could be agreed. There is a change process within the Recycling and Waste Handling Contract (RWHC) that would need to be adhered to. This process will allow more accurate calculation of the savings that could be made by closing certain HWRSs, taking into account any fixed costs that would still need to be paid, the impact on the contractor and any associated financial adjustments, and the displacement of the waste to other sites.</p> <p>As a PFI, the County Council must also discuss these proposed changes with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). The County Council must not, without DEFRA's prior written approval, agree or make any material changes to the terms of the PFI contract the consequence of any relevant change may, in certain circumstances, result in suspension, reduction or removal of revenue support. Any plan for any such changes must be raised in advance and confirmed either by submission of a Variation Business Case or confirmed as non-material by DEFRA (and, where appropriate, HM Treasury) before the changes are agreed with the PFI contractor or implemented. Early engagement with DEFRA on this proposal will therefore be required.</p> <p>The timing of the closures would impact the saving profile.</p>
12. Working with parish councils in specific areas to review the library service offer available in communities - £70,000
<p>Proposal: Certain Parishes have expressed an interest in using the library buildings as a Parish Hub. The opportunity exists to discuss Parishes potentially taking over the building and maintaining a small library self-service offer which they oversee. The way in which this might work would be dependent on discussions with the individual Parish. Depending on those discussions, savings could also be made on stock, deliveries, IT and supervision.</p> <p>Key Risks: Communities preferred model is that Parish-run libraries remain part of a network of libraries and therefore there could be resistance to this change.</p>
13. Removal of Community Initiative Fund (CIF) and amendments to CLC arrangements - £248,000
Proposal:

a. To abolish CIF and the crowdfunding platform and remove supporting post.

b. To remove CLCs and to delete the posts and resources (e.g. venue hire, member/staff travel and subsistence) required to support them. The loss of a three per year forum for community engagement by local members to be replaced with more flexible and responsive arrangements to maintain local democratic links to communities:

Community Forums:

- Meeting twice per year, as a forum for the public to ask questions and debate local issues or enable consultation.
- Resources available between meetings to facilitate ad hoc community links, feedback and consultation.

Seven District based forums:

Coterminous with district/borough councils, each meeting 3 times per year.

Key Risks:

a. None, community support to local causes and projects and promotion by local members can be achieved through other arrangements without the need for additional or pump priming grants from County Council resources.

b. None, local member community engagement can be achieved, and decisions can be processed in a more cost effective but equally transparent way.

14. Reduction in discretionary bus passes - £200,000

Proposal:

WSCC is an outlier in that it provides additional free travel options for disabled users and their carer on buses.

This change would result in concessionary travel no longer being provided for disabled people outside of the core hours of the scheme (off peak during the week and all weekend) and ceasing to provide passes to carers/companions who are not of an age to qualify for an older persons bus pass. Removing this benefit would have an impact upon those people who fall into the criteria for passes and choose or need to travel outside of the core hours.

Key Risks:

Risks are primarily around the ability of certain groups to travel for employment and education.

There is a risk that the removal of the bus passes will lead to additional costs within Adult and Children Services which would need to be explored before implementation. For example, within Adults additional costs for travelling to employment or education would need to be considered when calculating means tested income, potentially reducing the amount due to the County Council.

15. Ending community highways schemes - £50,000

Proposal:

The County Council currently promotes community highway schemes (CHS) and community traffic regulation orders (CTROs) as a way for local communities to access funding to provide changes to the highway network that they feel will enhance their locality. This is a discretionary function of the highway authority.

CHS and CTROs are primarily capital funded but the initial assessment of bids has to be carried out with the local highway teams as a revenue cost. This will result in reducing the total resource available across the local highway teams.

Key Risks:

Likely to have an impact on the reputation of the authority and generate poor public reaction to the change.

16. Review highway and transport fees and charges - £200,000

Proposal:

In addition to existing fees and charges a number of areas have been identified where there is opportunity to charge. These include:

- Charging for S59 agreements (excess traffic on highway) - helping us protect our asset
- Charge for licences – various
- Non-refundable fee for assessment of vehicle cross overs
- Pre S278 access to development sites
- Increase inspection and enforcement of compliance of utilities activities with legislation

Key Risks:

- Reputational
- Impact on levels of activity

17. Reduce public transport support - £150,000

Proposal:

Reducing supported bus services will have an impact particularly in rural communities. Whilst usage is low for many services this is also the only mode of transport for many and would be difficult to fully back fill with community transport universally. Contracts are held with operators and these would be terminated to implement the saving.

Key Risks:

- Risks include
- Public perception for some elements
- Impact on levels of activity
- Willingness to proceed to prosecution for failure to comply

18. Review of the Property Estate - tbc

Proposal:

The impact of Covid 19 has demonstrated that we do not need all of the corporate assets that we currently hold in order to deliver frontline and administrative services. Whilst this forms part of a bigger piece of work there is scope to significantly reduce property holdings with the corresponding costs.

Key Risks:

Failure to get agreement to relocate staff to either working from home or other sites. Failure to reduce office based working at other assets to free up space. As yet unquantified costs of alternative accommodation and relocation pending decisions by Services on their post Covid office dependency.