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Bryan Turner  
Chairman of the Health and Adult  
Social Care Select Committee

11 January 2019

Dear Bryan,

### **Strategic Budget Options 2019/20**

Thank you for forwarding the recommendations of the Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee meeting of the 12<sup>th</sup> December 2018. At this meeting the Committee considered the Adults' Services Strategic Budget Options 2019/20, including housing related support, the local assistance network and the minimum income guarantee for working age adults.

I have taken into account both the extensive consultation feedback and the Committee's recommendations when making these decisions. As the Committee is aware the Council faces an increasingly difficult budget position which necessitates that spending is focused primarily on supporting County Council statutory duties and the prevention of demand for such services.

As you will recall, under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 which was implemented in April 2018, the district and borough councils, as housing authorities, are obliged to update their Homelessness Reduction Strategies and I would like to reassure the Committee that I am keen to continue close working with the district and borough councils on this and to ensure a coordinated strategy for the County. There is funding available through this pathway and the County Council can assist with applying for this. A county-wide approach is also encouraged under the Act as other related and impacted services, such as social care, are delivered at county level. With this in mind, I wish to continue the engagement that took place during the consultation with stakeholders and providers so that maximum benefit can be gained for those in need of our co-ordinated help and support. Please see the attachment which gives more detail of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

## **a) Housing Related Support/Local Assistance Network**

The Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee's recommendations mirror those set out in a report presented by the district and borough councils during the consultation period. These proposals put forward by the district and borough councils had already been considered and reflected within the proposed decision.

The majority of these recommendations will be responded to through the approach to the implementation period. The exception to this is the request for a twelve month moratorium and I will outline my consideration of this issue as it relates to each decision.

**Housing Related Support** - The recommendation to delay the implementation until 2020/21 had previously been made and fully considered during the review of the consultation and the work with provider partners. The expressed concern around the ability to remodel services within the timescale is understood. I had already responded positively to the request by extending the timetable for the changes by six months, but I could not see good grounds to extend it further. I believe the progress made during the consultation period is testament to the ability of the partners to work constructively within this timeline.

The approach to the impact assessment is to address the plans and consequences of options within the work we must now do within the specific service areas and the review of current arrangements. Only by working together in this way on a shared objective can we understand and manage impact on other services and demand pressures. Working on impact as a discrete piece of theoretical planning would not be effective. Having considered this during the consultation process, each service and contract review area will be looked at individually so that the Council and its partners can continually review the viability of the change plan and implementation timetable. Implementation can be adjusted case by case as required. It is not felt that a general delay for all changes can be justified. Most issues should be resolved within the timetable set out in the decision report. To add additional assurances, the Council will be carrying out a period of continuous review from January to September 2019 to address the underlying concerns regarding the timescale for the implementation of the contracts. I am sure that the Committee will wish to see the progress of this work.

**The Local Assistance Network (LAN)** - The rationale for this delay was expressed in terms of the challenging time scale for the development of commissioning plans, letting of contracts, as well as the impact on staff working within the sector. However, in the case of the LAN, providers are not contract-based. This is an annual grant which can be used for the procurement of goods and services to relieve need. In contrast with the consultation on funding for Housing Related Support, the proposals for LAN have reflected a greater degree of clarity as the consultation has been on the basis of a clearly identified budget of £200,000 (with effect from 2019/20) since the outset of the process in September 2018.

Whilst accepting that the reduction in funding available represents a very serious challenge it should be acknowledged that, by April 2019, providers will have had seven months in which to adjust their operations in the light of the reduced

funds available. It is therefore not proposed to offer a moratorium and I have consequently not accepted this proposal.

**b) Minimum Income Guarantee for Working Age Adults**

The recommendation to consider implementing a transition period was explored at the Committee's request. Contextually the County Council has worked over many years to protect Adult Social Care Services budgets and consistently set a minimum income guarantee over and above statutory requirements for these customers. Adult Social Care budgets continue to be protected, but in a time of financial rigour and a growing demand for services then the discretionary elements, i.e. those local decisions which are over and above the statutory offer, need to be reviewed.

Following further consideration, the request for a transitional arrangement has not been agreed due to the following factors:

- There is a potential to increase the inequity in the system between new and existing customers and customers of different ages.
- The exact contribution is based on individual assessment and means tested on ability to pay.
- Contributions will not reduce the amount of income an individual has below a statutorily set minimum level.
- There would be an increase in cost to the Council to collect this income as the adjustments would need to be undertaken manually.

As part as the response to call-in I note members' comments regarding the final decision and the impact assessment. As explained above this assessment work will continue to inform the joint work on future plans and impacts will be mitigated where feasible as part of the implementation process. I will be happy for the work to be shared with the Committee

I would like to thank the Committee for its consideration of these issues and the detailed feedback it has provided through this process and please be assured that I will continue to work with stakeholders and providers to ensure we find the best solution for those concerned.

Yours sincerely



Amanda Jupp

Cabinet Member for Adults and Health