

## **County Council**

**15 February 2019**

### **Agenda Item 6 (a) – Notice of Motion by Dr Walsh**

#### **Public Health Budget - Briefing Note**

##### **Background**

The County Council has embraced a whole system approach to Public Health, embedding it across the authority. This approach ensures a robust approach to delivering public health statutory duties, functions, and outcomes, in line with the parameters set by the ring-fenced Public Health Grant, is achieved.

The approach focuses on the Care Act definition of prevention (Prevent, Reduce, Delay), and activity across partners at three intervention levels – Place level solutions, Community level solutions, and Individual/Service level solutions.

This devolved model of public health includes a core team of public health specialists, public health posts embedded across the Council's directorates, devolved public health contracts, and a devolved public health budget across key areas of the authority. These include Children's, Adults', Families, Education, Communities and Environment.

The Public Health Directorate is further enhancing this approach through a number of areas including introducing Health in All Policies across the Council and with partners, focusing on enablers such as aligned strategies, collaborative partnerships, systematic workforce development, embedding prevention into care pathways, and launching a refreshed governance structure to bring public health to the forefront of all Council activity. This includes the implementation of a Public Health Board, chaired by the Chief Executive, and membership including key directors across the Council.

##### **Public Health Grant**

Local authorities receive an annual ring-fenced public health grant from the Department of Health and Social Care. The core condition of the grant is that it should be used only for the purposes of the public health functions of local authorities. Duncan Selbie, Chief Executive of Public Health England, is the national accounting officer to Parliament in relation to expenditure of the grant.

The County Council's ring-fenced Public Health Grant is shown below:

- 2017/18 - £34,858,000 (-2.5%)
- 2018/19 - £33,962,000 (-2.6%)
- 2019/20 - £33,065,000 (-2.6%)

In December 2018, it was confirmed that the ring-fence and grant conditions will remain in place until 31 March 2020. From April 2020, it is proposed that the Public Health Grant will be replaced by retained business rates, with new assurance arrangements in place to account for the delivery of local public health responsibilities.

## **Challenges – National Cuts to Funding**

National cuts to public health funding have been incurred over the last five years. This is particularly challenging in West Sussex due to its vast geography and scale and range of deprivation across the county.

Louise Goldsmith, Leader of the Council, recently wrote to Matt Hancock, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, calling upon him to allocate a significant proportion of the recent additional funding allocated to the NHS at the autumn budget to be invested in preventative services, led by social services authorities. She highlighted the ongoing reduction in funding for public health as an example of spending decisions not supporting preventative activity.

## **Steps to mitigate the impact of national cuts to public health funding**

Considerable work has taken place across the Council to review public health spend against public health outcomes to ensure that quality of services remain high and are effective for our residents. Our focus has been to ensure that we make the best use of our resources through strategic alignment of services and functions, for example by embedding public health staff across the council directorates, and focusing on achieving outcomes.

The Chief Executive of Public Health England visited the County Council's Public Health team on 21 January. Following his visit he praised the work of the Council and said: "It is frankly inspiring to hear of the positioning of the public's health and community engagement at the heart of everything you do, the Council, Boroughs and NHS together, with public health expertise embedded across the whole of the Council".

Emphasis has been placed on protecting frontline services by building upon existing partnerships across the wider health and social care system, finding innovative ways to support our communities. For example, the West Sussex Wellbeing Programme is a partnership approach with the seven districts and boroughs across West Sussex delivering our joint adult prevention public health agenda focused on modifiable lifestyle risk factors and supporting wellbeing; the Healthy Child Programme is integrated within Children's Services to ensure the greatest reach to families; and, through cross-directorate working, the public health team is ensuring that sexual health services reach a range of settings including schools. Furthermore, the public health team, County Council catering services and primary school meal provider Chartwells, have achieved a 73% reduction in sugar in primary school meals over the last four years at no extra cost to the County Council - 30,000 pupils a day benefit from this.

The Council will continue to look for opportunities to modernise services, for example, identifying digital opportunities, whilst still providing services for specific needs, such as people with learning disabilities or those that may not have access to digital services.

The Health and Wellbeing Board will lead the partnership commitment to deliver the aims of the public health agenda and achieve the benefits for all of our communities.

**Anna Raleigh**

Director of Public Health