

## **Report to Cabinet**

**1 February 2022**

### **Adult Social Care Strategy (2022 – 2025)**

**Report by: Executive Director of Adults & Health (DASS)**

**Electoral division(s): All**

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#### **Summary**

This report sets out the proposed West Sussex County Council (WSCC) adult social care strategy (2022-25).

The strategy has been co-designed with staff, customers, carers and partners through a process of engagement to ensure their voices are heard. The strategy is part of wider work underway to adopt a single integrated approach to improving adult social care outcomes in West Sussex, effective delivery of agreed programmes and projects, management of change, quality assurance, clear governance and managing business as usual.

#### **Recommendation**

Cabinet is asked to:

- (1) Approve the strategy 'Life you want to lead –Adult Social Care in West Sussex'.
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## **1 Background and context**

1.1 Our Council Plan (2021-25) sets out four key priorities for WSCC, underpinned by a cross-cutting theme on tackling climate change:

- Keeping people safe from vulnerable situations
- A sustainable and prosperous economy
- Helping people and communities fulfil their potential
- Making best use of resources

1.2 This strategy outlines how WSCC will deliver adult social care to meet each of these priorities. It sets out what people want to keep them safe from vulnerable situations; the importance of the local economy in delivering adult social care to local people; and the importance of the role of communities including the voluntary and community sector in supporting people with care needs. Finally, the strategy sets out priorities that will shape the way services are delivered making the best use of resources, while collaborating with partners to offer the

best value to people with care needs and their carers. The cross-cutting theme of climate change underpins this strategy, with a focus on future service delivery meeting the Climate Change Strategy (2020 – 2030).

1.3 Our Council Plan (2021-25) also makes a commitment for WSCC to build upon the strong relationships it developed with communities during the early waves of Covid-19, by:

- Putting residents and communities at the heart of everything we do
- Creating strong and visible leadership
- Working closely with communities and partners
- Investing in and valuing the WSCC staff
- Making the way we work as a Council as straightforward as possible for the communities we serve

1.4 As part of this commitment, work has been underway since September 2021 to build a longer-term vision and strategy for adult social care, co-designed with staff, customers, carers and partners. As such, the draft strategy covers the key themes that emerged during a series of workshops, focus groups, interviews and a survey.

1.5 This work has been undertaken now for three key reasons:

- i. Firstly, as the country continues to live with the Covid-19 pandemic, it is important to understand better what has changed for people and what they want from their lives, so the care and support provided can be shaped to meet the needs and expectations of the people the County Council supports.
- ii. Second, although the County Council will not be able to do everything that people ask for, particularly given its limited resources, it does mean, however, that the Council can reflect on what is most important to people and look to commission, deliver or enable services to be delivered in a way that meets people's expectations.
- iii. Third, the recent publication of the Government's ASC White Paper sets out a commitment to person-centred care, with the voices of customers and carers at the heart of their own care and support. Furthermore, it clarifies the role of the CQC in relation to the forthcoming inspection of local authority adult social care responsibilities, more in section four below.

1.6 The strategy will inform the WSCC setting of adult social care priorities with all decisions about future service configuration and budget being made through the Council's planning and budget setting process. This will ensure alignment with the Council Plan and Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

## **2. Co-designing the strategy**

2.1 The strategy has been co-designed with local people who are currently receiving care, their carers and VCS partner organisations between September and November 2021. The co-design activity focused on what people who access services see as their vision of a good life, using a question framework that focuses on important factors in every person's life, that is money, home, help,

health and wellbeing, relationships, community, freedom, purpose and giving. The workshops, focus groups and the survey have sought to treat people equally regardless of their care and support needs, and gain insight into what is important to them.

## 2.2 The co-design activity included:

- Eight workshops with VCS partners and provider organisations: an opportunity to hear from the local organisations that support people across the county. A workshop was held for each cohort, i.e. people with learning disabilities, autism, physical disabilities, mental health challenges, sensory impairment, older people with frailty, and people with memory and cognition challenges including dementia. The workshops also took into account the voices of carers for all of these groups. An additional workshop was also held focused on people facing multiple disadvantage and diverse communities, for example organisations representing and working with minority ethnic communities. Annex B provides a list of the organisations who participated. The initial draft was also shared with these organisations with several providing comments. There were also additional conversations with specific organisations and boards, such as the Learning Disabilities and Autism Partnership Boards.
- Fifteen focus group discussions: in-depth conversations with smaller groups of customers and carers, with more opportunity for personal stories to come through.
- Six 1-1 interviews: more detailed dialogue with customers and carers who requested more personalised conversations.
- Public survey: a survey for people who access care, their carers, wider public (including those without social care needs) and local organisations. The survey was published in easy read format (with the help of the Learning Disabilities and Autism Partnership Boards) and yielded almost 1,000 responses, including 79 responses to the easy read version.
- Extensive staff engagement: a 'co-design' team was established to shape the approach and deliver the co-design events listed above. It was made up of 10 members of WSCC staff covering a range of management levels, skills and service areas. In addition, two workshops were held with social care managers and over 200 members of staff at all levels responded to a survey which ran alongside the public survey.
- All-member briefing: held on 20 December 2021, more than 30 elected members attended a briefing to provide comment and feedback on the strategy. All elected members were also sent a copy of the draft strategy ahead of the session, with comments and feedback incorporated into the strategy.

## 2.3 As part of the work, a new informal Sounding Board group has been formed made up of local Voluntary and Community Sector organisations. The Sounding

Board has met three times through the process and has shaped the co-design activity and provided input on the draft strategy. The organisations on the Sounding Board are:

- Carers Support (West Sussex)
- Community Works
- The Aldingbourne Trust
- 4Sight
- Age UK (West Sussex and Brighton and Hove)
- Stonepillow
- Southdown
- Impact Initiatives
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Independent Lives

### 3. Priorities

3.1 Given the Council’s financial challenge and the increased demand on Council services, it is important to ensure we are making the best use of limited resources and are focusing on what is important to people who access services, as well as their carers. Therefore the strategy prioritises key areas for further work, which will require WSCC to work efficiently to either enable, commission or deliver services to meet the expectations of local people.

Table 1 – Priorities and what people told us is important

<b>Priority</b>	<b>What people told us is important</b>
Relationships and connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close personal relationships with family and friends.</li> <li>• Relationships between people and paid support.</li> <li>• Community connections.</li> </ul>
Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Putting people at the centre of care – choice, control and flexibility.</li> <li>• Information, advice and guidance</li> <li>• Paid work</li> <li>• Decision making power of frontline staff and role of positive risk taking</li> </ul>
Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Living in their own home</li> <li>• Living with others</li> <li>• Moving out of the family home</li> </ul>
Addressing gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addressing the shortage of care workers</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential gaps in understanding and support for autistic adults and adults with acquired brain injury.</li> <li>• Transitions - moving from Children's to Adult Services</li> <li>• Funding</li> </ul>
Inclusion and tackling inequalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognising multiple disadvantage</li> <li>• Diversity</li> <li>• Digital inclusion and technology</li> </ul>

3.2 Supporting the priorities, the strategy sets out commitments for what the County Council will do to support people with care needs. These are presented as 'we will' statements and range from what WSCC will do itself as well as what it will do working with others (e.g. local VCS partners).

#### **4. Alignment with the 2021 Government ASC White Paper and Health and Care Bill**

4.1 In September 2021, the Government published a White Paper on Adult Social Care. The content of the White Paper and the current draft of the strategy have good alignment with a number of the priorities, including person-centred care, the importance of relationships, the role of housing, prevention and the increasing role of technology. Having a strategy that connects with the expectations of local people and the Government's direction of travel for adult social care will put the County Council in a strong position going forward, as it will have a framework for future decision making.

4.2 In addition, when agreed by Parliament, the current Health and Care Bill will place a new duty of care on the CQC to independently review and assess local authority performance in delivering their adult social care duties under Part 1 of the Care Act 2014. The white paper lists some of the criteria which assessments may look at, including factors such as leadership, prevention strategies, transitions between services (children's to adult social care), safeguarding, assessments, support for unpaid carers and commissioning. It is widely expected that local authorities will need to have set their long-term direction of travel for meeting the new standards, and so this strategy will act as a basis and framework for plans to meet those standards.

#### **5. Delivering the strategy**

5.1 The strategy has been designed collaboratively with customers, carers, WSCC staff and partners. Once agreed, the next stage of work will be to agree with the people who have been involved in developing the strategy how they will be involved in progressing our future.

- 5.2 This will involve using the Council's core processes for planning and budget setting to agree programmes and projects, with key performance indicators, needed to deliver WSCC priorities and the strategy. The outcome will be included within the WSCC Council Plan and annual budget and will address how best to use the resources available to the council, given the tight financial constraints in which it operates. Outside the Council, the next stage will include working with partners to better understand the role they want to play in delivering the strategy. The overall approach will be one of co-production. A process that involves people in how the commitments in the strategy will be achieved with everyone playing their part.
- 5.3 The strategy sets out priorities for adult social care for the future but remains flexible enough to respond to changing needs of communities and the demands on WSCC. This is especially important in the current climate as factors such as the trajectory of Covid-19 and the future of adult social care remains uncertain. The strategy and the implementation plan will therefore need to remain 'live' flexible enough to respond to changing circumstances.

## **6. Consultation, engagement, and advice**

- 6.1 The strategy has been co-designed with WSCC staff, customers, carers and partners. The strategy itself is a product of what people have told us they want from their lives.
- 6.2 Further consultation, engagement and advice will take place as the implementation plan is developed.

## **7. Finance**

- 7.1 There are no additional costs associated with the adoption of the strategy. It will require changes to the way that the budget is spent in future years, so that a maximum amount is directed towards the priorities in the strategy. In that respect its ambition is fundamental to making adult social care in West Sussex more financially sustainable by delivering better care outcomes for people in order to make the best use of limited resources.

## **8. Risk implications and mitigation**

- 8.1 It is critical that there is a robust strategy in place for adults who access care and their carers which clearly articulate what the role is of adult social care and the priorities which we will be focusing on.
- 8.2 Crucially, it will also inform how adult services spend its money (from 2023/24) and therefore will be aligned to the budget and medium-term financial strategy. The following risks have been identified and mitigations put in place:

Table 2 – Risks and mitigating action

Risk	Mitigating Action (in place or planned)
Lack of detail of possible changes as a result of the Government’s adult social care white paper.	The strategy provides a solid grounding for what is important to people in West Sussex but remains flexible enough to adapt to any future changes. Regular period of review will ensure this remains live.
Budget is not aligned to the adult social care strategy.	Recognise that budget for 2022/23 will not fully align to the strategy, but planning will begin in April 2022 to ensure alignment from 2023/24 onwards.
People resources to deliver an ambitious strategy	It will be critical that the implementation clearly breaks down what is to be achieved and by when, throughout the lifetime of the strategy. Including clearly identifying and managing resource requirements at each stage.

## 9. Policy alignment and compliance

9.1 The strategy aligns with the Our Council Plan (2021-25) in terms of the principles underpinning it (set out in 1.1 above). It also provides further detail on how adult services, working with partners and other teams in the Council, will contribute to the Our Council Plan commitments:

- Keeping people safe from vulnerable situations
- A sustainable and prosperous economy
- Helping people and communities fulfil their potential
- Making best use of resources.

9.2 Linking back to Our Council Plan, the strategy will become the foundations for future decision-making including policy development and governance. It will be compliant with all statutory responsibilities.

**Contact Officer:** Keith Hinkley, Executive Director Adults and Health (DASS), [keith.hinkley@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:keith.hinkley@westsussex.gov.uk), 03302 224751.

### Annex A

- Annex A – The life you want to lead – Adult Social Care in West Sussex (2022-25)
- Annex B - List of organisations involved in co-design activity