

**REPORT FROM THE DEPUTY LEADER
AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE,
INTEGRATION, HUMAN RESOURCES AND CORPORATE
GOVERNANCE TO THE MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL ON
WEDNESDAY, 2 SEPTEMBER 2015**

We are currently experiencing a period of considerable change in adult social care (ASC). Working practices are being reviewed and revised to ensure full compliance with the new regulations contained within the Care Act. This is already reaping rewards for those involved in day to day activity at the coal face. We continue to investigate, alongside our health partners, the full implications of our Vanguard status and the possibilities this affords in terms of system change towards our aspiration for a whole system approach to health and social care for the Isle of Wight. Clearly, this is a huge undertaking, but the degree of co-operation at all levels across the system leads me to believe that significant progress will be made towards full integration within the term of this council.

A recent provider engagement event highlighted some of the difficulties currently experienced in the independent sector and the council continues to work alongside our valuable partners to ensure the long-term sustainability of the sector. Members will be aware of the substantial overspend in ASC this year. We are struggling to manage demand in the face of a growing elderly population manifesting more complex needs and the system is under great pressure as a consequence.

It has been felt for some time that the Health and Wellbeing Board is not realising its full potential for system leadership. For this reason we are currently undertaking a review of the board's remit and objectives with the intention of moving towards a more outcome focused operating model which should deliver identifiable benefits to our population.

Report from Adult Social Care and Community Wellbeing

Welcome to the SPOC Team (Single Point of Commissioning)

The new SPOC Team has been recruited and is now in place at Enterprise House. The team will be finding its feet over the next couple of weeks and will be fully operational shortly.

Changes to the way the council charges for its respite care and sitting service

As part of its support to carers and self-funding people who need care as required by the Care Act 2014, the council is changing the way it charges for its respite care and sitting services. The changes are considered necessary to enable the council to re-invest money to enable carers to be supported on an equal basis to other adult service users, including support through a personal budget to meet a carer's individual needs as part of their caring role.

Following a two month consultation, the council's Executive recently approved the changes that will see the person who receives a respite care or sitting service pay a charge based on their own individual ability to pay. The flat rate charge for respite and two hours of free sitting will no longer apply. The change will be effective from 1 October 2015 although it was agreed that pre-arranged respite care and sitting service arrangements for existing service users must not be negatively affected.

It is interesting to note that all existing users of the respite care and sitting service were invited to respond to the consultation. There were more than 300 responses, which represented a response rate of 32 per cent, of which 65 per cent of those people that responded indicated they were either service users (82 responses) or carers (116 responses). This indicated that people who would be directly affected by the proposals were represented in the survey. The overall outcome was that 64 per cent of people agreed with the proposal to charge for respite care based on the cared for person's ability to pay while 63 per cent agreed to pay for their sitting service on the same basis.

The major impact of the Executive decision will be that self-funders who have savings above the Department of Health threshold of £23,250 will no longer receive a subsidised respite care or sitting service but will have to pay the full cost. The Executive agreed to place a cap on the maximum amount that a person should pay for their respite care in a residential care setting based on the contracted rates the council pays for its residential and nursing care.

It is important to note that the Care Act 2014 clearly determines that charges for respite care and sitting must be made on the financial circumstances of the person who directly receives that care (ie not the carer). Similarly, the Care Act Transformation Board has confirmed that there will be no charges made to carers for services they are assessed as needing in their own right.

The way that the council will financially assess respite care is currently being put together and policies will be updated shortly. All affected service users will be written to informing them of the council's decision and how it will affect them.

Isle Help Strategic Partnership

From 1 July, the council has entered into a strategic partnership with the Isle Help consortium of independent advice and guidance organisations. The council is a provider of advice and guidance and we also recognise the preventative value that good information and advice has on demand for public services. It's also clear that many of the problems of funding and demand faced by the council are also affecting the voluntary and community organisations. A shared approach to these problems has been agreed as the most practical way of dealing with them.

Our strategic partnership with Isle Help members allows us to work to jointly plan and deliver public advice and information that prevents need and responds to crisis. Partners want to ensure that people get the response that they need, from the most

appropriate organisation, as quickly as possible. The partnership enables us to make the best use of each other's skills and resources, by investing in and sharing them where needed. We believe that this is a unique collaboration with great potential. Importantly, it also promotes a very new way of working for council members, officers, and voluntary organisations.

Housing Benefits

A review of the future Local Assistance Scheme is underway with partnership options being considered. A total of 68 applications were received in July, of which 59 per cent of claims were made online and awards totalled £5,794.86.

The Discretionary Housing Policy is currently being reviewed and is with members for consideration. The funding available for discretionary housing payments was reduced to £185,553 (from £217,690 in 2014/15) in the current financial year and, to date, awards total £35,817, with a committed figure of £12,596, leaving £137,140 for the rest of the year

The Landlord Portal went live on 3 August and the four large housing associations have received training, two which have gone live (Vectis Housing and Salvation Army) with Spectrum Housing and Southern Housing to start soon. The system will then be made available to some 700 landlords and all will be able to view data via the portal thereby resolving their own enquiries which will in turn reduce contact with the processing teams.

The Local Council Tax Support Scheme is currently under full review. A range of options are being developed for member's further consideration in light of the reduced funding arrangements from government.

The Fraud Team is due to transfer to the Department for work and Pensions on 1 September and handover work is in progress and advice to agencies that refer to the service. The Fraud Team will still assist with some paperwork collation regarding cases, so liaison will be in place. The Visiting Team is transferring under the benefit changes as a temporary solution until the overpayment team transfer into benefits.

Report from Corporate Governance

Report from Elections and Local Land Charges

The first full electoral canvass to be conducted since Individual Electoral Registration came into effect in the summer of 2014 is now underway, and the new-style canvass forms (also known as household enquiry forms, or HEFs) were sent to every residential property on the Island on 24 July 2015.

It was anticipated that response rates for these new-style forms would be lower than in previous years, as although the forms do not seek any more additional information than

the previous forms did, the layout and amount of information provided may make the forms appear a little more complicated and onerous than they really are.

For the first time, householders are able to provide the information requested in the form online, although to date the online response rate has been muted at 17.27 per cent. Legislation now requires that two further reminder forms are sent, and the first of these will be delivered by post in early September, with the final form door-knocked and delivered from mid-October. The Cabinet Office and The Electoral Commission have commenced a review of the forms used to see if they can be made more user-friendly, and thus hopefully lift response rates.

The turnaround time for local land charges searches of official local authority records has increased in the last few weeks, mainly due to the pressures faced by the Planning Department following its recent service redesign. We are working with officers in the Planning Department to see how best these challenges can be met, and we are informing conveyancers as they contact us of the situation.

The Infrastructure Bill, which was announced in The Queen's Speech 2014, contains a section on the future of land registry and their proposal to assume the duties for local land charges. This process has received Parliamentary approval, and the process commenced in April 2015 with an initial data gathering exercise, although some slippage is now anticipated. At present only local land charges will be affected in the short term, but there are longer-term plans to look at the whole remit of local authority CON29 searches. The possibility of VAT being imposed on local authority searches has also been raised again, and we await further guidance on this matter.

Local land charges income for July 2015 was above our averaged adjusted monthly target, while our total actual income is also higher than the cumulative monthly target.

Report from Human Resources

Equality and diversity

The Staff Equality and Diversity Group has received training on the council's Harassment and Bullying Policy. Group members will now be able to support colleagues with questions and concerns regarding behaviour in the workplace, as well as how to report hate crime in the community. The group has also undertaken to promote and develop its membership over the coming months to ensure that there is a robust mechanism in place to address diversity issues across the whole council.

An important learning programme has been commissioned through in house specialists on our Public Sector Equality Duty. The new programme, starting in September 2015 will raise awareness of the Equality Act, our responsibility as a local authority in respect of the act, and tackling discrimination in the workplace.

Regular updates in respect of the Equality Duty have been appearing every week in the staff newsletter, The Vine. Each article looks at different themes around the nine

protected characteristics, in order that there is much greater awareness of behaviour and responsibility across the council.

Councillor Steve Stubbings

Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Integration, Human Resources and Corporate Governance