



Minutes of the meeting of the BUDGET AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held on TUESDAY 9 OCTOBER 2018 AT 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor R Bradburn (Chair),
Councillors Cannon, Darlington, Ganatra, P Geary, Miles, Gilbert,
Rankine and C Wilson

Apologies: Councillor K Wilson (Miles substituting)

Officers: M Bracey (Acting Chief Executive), V Collins (Acting Director (Adult Services)), M Hancock (Assistant Director (Joint Commissioning)), N Hutchin (Strategic Finance Business Partner – People), S Hattle (Senior Finance Business Partner), S Watts (Senior Finance Business Partner) and E Richardson (Overview and Scrutiny Officer)

Also Present: Councillor Nolan – Cabinet Member (Children and Families) and 2 members of the public

Other Apologies: Councillor O'Neill

The detailed notes on individual pressures are included as Annex A of these minutes.

BR21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

BR22 PEOPLE DIRECTORATE: ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH

The Committee received a presentation from the Acting Director (Adult Services) on behalf of Councillor O'Neill, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, then scrutinised and commented upon the financial pressures in relation to the provision of Adult Social Care and Health services for the residents of Milton Keynes which had been identified during preparation of the 2019/20 draft budget.

These pressures would be further considered at the meeting scheduled for 23 October 2018 and any recommendations included in the Committee's report, which would be submitted for consideration by Cabinet on 6 November 2018 as part of the 2019/20 budget setting process.

BR23 PEOPLE DIRECTORATE: CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

The Committee received a presentation from Councillor Nolan, Cabinet Member for Children and Families, then scrutinised and commented upon the financial pressures in relation to the provision of services within her portfolio by the Council which had been identified during preparation of the 2019/20 draft budget.

These pressures would be further considered at the meeting scheduled for 23 October 2018 and any recommendations included in the Committee's report, which would be submitted for consideration by Cabinet on 6 November 2018 as part of the 2019/20 budget setting process.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Acting Director (Adult Services) be thanked for presenting the pressures identified for Adult Social Care and Health to the Committee on behalf of Councillor O'Neill.
2. That Councillor Nolan be thanked for discussing the pressures in her portfolio identified as part of the 2019/20 draft budget preparation process.
3. That officer colleagues attending the meeting be thanked for the support offered to the Cabinet Members during the budget setting process and for the clarification of various issues raised by the Committee.
4. That any recommendations the Committee may have arising from the evidence taken at this meeting be included in the report on its work which will be presented to Cabinet on 6 November 2018.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 08:10 PM

People Directorate: 09 October 2018

a) **Adult Social Care and Health: Councillor O'Neill (P4 – P10 & OP11)**

P4 – Learning Disability Services – (£647k)

This was a carry forward from last year. The pressure was modelled on the number of known young people (23) who would be transferring from Children's Services to Adult Services this year. Future years' modelling was based on 15 young people per year transferring.

Estimates were built on a lot of data. Adult Services started to work with young people and their families who would need to transition from Children's Services from the age of 14. This meant that individual plans were in place by the time the young person was 18; Adult Services knew who would be transferring and when, which gave a robustness and accuracy to the figures.

P5 – Learning Disabilities (£110k)

Support of aging parent carers - again this was a carry forward from last year. There were a number of people with learning disabilities who were cared for by their parents who may also need support from Adult Services as they got older. The model was based on 3 additional clients per year needing the extra support.

P6 – Older People (£472k)

This was a standard demographic growth pressure based on the continuing general growth of Milton Keynes and that the number of older people requiring services would continue to increase.

P7 & P8 – Physical Disabilities (£111k)

Two pressures combined into one with two strands. General demographic growth forecast, based on an average of 4 new service users per year. Pressure in 2019/20 was lower than in subsequent years as the demand pressure built in for 2018/19 had not been required. This was based on 3 additional service users per year.

P9 – Mental Health and Autism Services (£236k)

Support packages for young people with autism or mental health problems moving from Children's Services to Adult Services. This was modelled on 20 new service users per year.

P10 – Older People (£1,100k)

This was a new pressure as there had been an in-year increased demand for direct payment/homecare packages. Increase required in order to align the base budget with the existing number of Adult Social Care users.

OP11 – Learning Disability Residential Care Review (£100k)

This was a one-off piece of work to carry out a learning disability residential care review to assess and assist those people currently in placements outside Milton Keynes to return to their local area.

Once the review was complete and service users started to move back to Milton Keynes there would be some savings, although the full benefit probably wouldn't be felt until 2020/21.

This was the end of a 3 year transformation programme for the provision of residential care for those with learning disabilities, including the *Shared Lives*¹ service which had been rated outstanding. The Council worked sensitively with parent carers and service users to develop tailor-made plans for each individual and had not received any complaints. All decisions were made within the regulations in the Mental Capacity Act.

There were about 60 people in out of area residential care and the aim was to get at least 18 of these moved back to Milton Keynes for supported, local care.

General – longer life expectancy was a demographic pressure built into the forecasting of future Adult Services requirements, but its effects varied depending on the service. A lot of work was being done on prevention (eg falls) and reablement (after a stay in hospital) to keep people fit and well for longer. The number of dementia cases in Milton Keynes was lower than the national average due to the “young” population, but as the local population aged, the number of cases would increase.

Adult Services no longer held reserves in the way it used to and the estimated cost of all of the above pressures was the best judgement which could be made at the time, based on current information and historical data. The department did not want to ask for reserves which would not be needed.

Whilst confident of the number of young people who would need support from Adult Services, the number of older people who may or may not need support was much more of an unknown. Older people did move into the Milton Keynes area, often to be nearer younger members of their families, and the Council had a duty to assess and meet their needs.

The Council did provide some residential care for out of area service users, but these remained resident in their home local authorities who had to provide the funding for their care.

b) Children & Families: Councillor Nolan (P11 – P13)

P11 – Children's Social Care (Looked After Children and Children in Need)
(£315k)

Children and family practices providing support for children's social care. The Council worked hard to keep families together by providing the right support for individual cases and Milton Keynes had fewer children in care than the national average.

¹ <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/adult-social-care/learning-disability/shared-lives-information-for-service-users>

P12 – Special Education Needs (SEN) (£80k in 2020/21)

Funding for two additional caseworkers and a social work assistant to support growth in number of children requiring an Education Health Care plan (EHC). Current pressure was being managed by use of the SEN Reform Grant which provided short term mitigation; however grant funding was scheduled to cease in September 2020.

Committee enquired whether the extra staff resource was sufficient? The Committee was advised that this was to cover the process of moving children from a purely educational needs assessment to an educational health focus. The staff resource in **P12** was providing a funds assessment hub, rather than an SEN service. These staffing costs would be added into the base budget in future years.

P13 – Home to School Transport (£156k)

Remains an on-going pressure but was now in a much better state than it had been a few years ago. Significant savings had been made through better management of the service and better tender / contract procedures for service providers but it remained a pressure due to the increasing number of children with complex physical and mental needs who were eligible for travel.

The Committee understood why growth of 2% had been allowed for but thought the financial estimate of £156k each year for the next 4 years seemed very precise, particularly as taxi fares were likely to rise by an unknown amount during that period. Committee was advised that one of the issues was that the academic year did not coincide with the financial year, which meant that 1 years' service provision cut across 2 financial years.

General – the future of the Walnuts residential facility was still only at the pre-consultation stage.

Staff should be commended for the progress being made with children's social care.

Allocation of school places – this was not identified as a pressure but the Committee raised concerns as to whether this area of the service was adequately resourced. Members of the Committee cited various examples of casework where parents had faced delays in finding out whether their child had a school place. Problems were thought to be particularly acute during the summer break for those moving house or moving into the area after the main bulk of the placements had been made in the spring. The Committee was advised that some temporary resources had been allocated to the placement team but that there could be a backlog of applications when (primary) schools were closed during the summer break. However, the service delivered a high level of customer care with each application treated on its individual merits.

The Committee also noted that the Appeals process could also slow down how soon a final placement could be made.

The Committee was told that some local authorities had moved to a contact hub in order to deal with school admission enquiries and this was perhaps something the Council should consider in the future.

The Committee felt that if staff were tied up answering telephone queries rather than dealing with the work to ensure places were allocated then there was a need to consider increasing the staffing resource. It also suggested that consideration be given to schools being open for part of the time during the summer in order to speed up the process.

The Committee requested that Children's Services look at the issue and work up figures for the cost of increasing the staff resource.

As a counter-point, members of the Committee also reported from first-hand experience that they had received excellent service from the school placement team in what were difficult circumstances, given the wide variety of schools with which they now had to deal.

Children's Services said they would welcome any recommendations from the Committee on how they could change gear on some of these issues.

DRAFT