

The Leader's Report of Cabinet Issues

This report details the main issues considered by the Cabinet at its meetings on 21 February and 21 March 2017.

1. Extension of the NHS Health Checks and Senior Health Checks

From 1 April 2013, local authorities took over responsibility for public health, including the national NHS Health Check programme, previously the responsibility of Primary Care Trusts. The provision of NHS Health Check risk assessments is a mandatory requirement for all local authorities in England. It is a public health programme for people aged 40 – 74 which aims to keep people well for longer. In Essex, a similar programme of Senior Health Checks is offered to people aged 75 – 84, based on evidence confirming the associated benefits.

The Cabinet has agreed to extend the contract for Lead Provider of NHS Health Checks and Senior Health Checks, currently held by Anglian Community Enterprise (ACE), for an additional two years (2018 – 2020). The extension will help to improve the health and wellbeing of residents in Essex and address key public health issues. Cabinet has also agreed to vary the terms of the contract to enable the achievement of savings of £250k per annum for three years.

2. Changes to Housing Related Support Services

The Cabinet has approved proposals to extend by 12 months the existing contracts for the provision of floating support to prevent homelessness, support provided at shelters and other accommodation for the homeless and supported living schemes for adults with disabilities. It has also agreed not to replace or re-procure contracts for a number of sheltered support, community alarms, home improvement agencies and intensive housing management contracts following their expiry on 31 March 2017 and 30 June 2018.

The changes had been designed to improve the effective use of public funds by facilitating the targeting of provision on individuals with the greatest need.

3. Expansion of Secondary Schools in Chigwell and Loughton

In the light of growing demand for additional secondary school places in the Chigwell and Loughton areas, the Cabinet has agreed proposals for the expansion of West Hatch High School, Chigwell by two forms of entry (300 pupils) from a seven form entry school (1,050 pupils) to nine forms of entry (1,350 pupils) from September 2018.

Proposals have also been approved to expand Roding Valley High School, Loughton by one form entry (150 pupils) from an eight form entry school (1,200 pupils) to nine forms of entry (1,350 pupils), including the establishment of new Post-16 provision with a further 150 pupil places (75 per year group) for September 2018.

4. Procurement of Residual Waste Disposal Services

The Cabinet has approved arrangements for the procurement of short and medium term contingency waste disposal services for residual waste. This forms part of business as usual contingency planning measures, in place to mitigate any risks to the Council's ability to meet its statutory obligation as the Waste Disposal Authority.

It has been agreed to procure frameworks for the disposal of residual waste in the short term (using the Accelerated Open Procedure) and the medium term (using the Open Procedure). Authority to implement arrangements under the Frameworks has been delegated to the Executive Director for Corporate and Customer Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste.

5. Procurement of Semi-Independent Accommodation for Young People in Care

The Cabinet has agreed to procure a framework contract for the provision of accommodation and support for children and young people, and their families, in the following circumstances where the Council is obliged to provide accommodation:

- Semi-independent accommodation;
- Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children; and
- Persons with no recourse to public funds.

The framework contract will replace the current spot-purchasing arrangements to deliver a compliant framework incorporating suitable terms and conditions that enable the Council to manage suppliers to deliver better outcomes for young people. It will also provide optimal value for money from public funds.

6. Education Transport Contract Extensions and Awards 2017

Cabinet has approved proposals in relation to the extension and procurement of education transport contracts totalling £21.86m which are due to expire in July 2017. These contracts represent 100% of the total value of home to school transport contracts currently in place and required for September 2017.

Authority has been given to carry out the necessary contractual and procurement processes to ensure that suitable transport arrangements are in place for September 2017 onwards, to fulfil the Council's statutory and policy-based obligations to provide transport to school for children.

7. Day Opportunities Re-procurement

Day Opportunities are services that provide a chance for adults with disabilities and older people to take part in activities outside their home, as well as enabling a break for unpaid carers. The Council currently spends around £19m for about 1,800 people to access Day Opportunities each year as part of care and support packages.

Some aspects of the current, traditional, delivery model are not working well and the Cabinet has therefore approved proposals which will move towards a whole system change to enable a shift to a person-centred, progressive model of provision. A framework of providers will be procured from 1 October 2017 to deliver services that support vulnerable adults to improve employability, maintain and develop skills, reduce isolation and enable breaks for unpaid carers. These new contractual arrangements will offer improved support for a total investment of £17m in 2017/18, representing a saving of £2m.

8. Southend, Essex and Thurrock Dementia Strategy

The UK population is ageing; people are living longer and, as a result, the number of people experiencing ill health and being diagnosed with long term health conditions such as dementia is growing. This has potentially significant implications for expenditure on Adult Social Care.

Extensive engagement across Essex has shown that the current system is failing to support people to live well with dementia and retain independence, resulting in more people spiralling into crisis and being admitted to acute or long term care settings. In order to address this, a new pan-Essex, multi-partner Strategy for Dementia has been developed, which outlines the strategic direction of travel for the dementia system in Essex over the next five years.

The Cabinet has adopted the Strategy, which sets out a plan, developed around nine priorities, with the aim of using existing resources differently to improve outcomes for people living with dementia, thereby reducing demand on the wider health and social care system. Partners will work together to approach the challenge of dementia collectively, which will not only ensure a better experience for people living with dementia, but also avoid duplication across organisations and ensure a more effective use of resources.

9. Direct Award of a new Short-Term Support in the Community Service

After an injury or illness, or as people get older, some may find it difficult to regain and maintain their independence. Reablement is a short-term service that helps people to regain their independence by supporting them with activities such as personal care and daily living tasks. At present, there are some adults with complex health and social care needs, such as dementia or challenging behaviour, who may not have the same potential to regain their independence, and for whom the current Reablement service is unsuitable. These people are currently supported by a patchwork of interim services across the County.

With a view to replacing the existing, disparate provision with a consistent, Essex-wide service, the Cabinet has agreed to the direct award of a contract for

Short Term Support in the Community to Essex Cares Ltd (ECL) from 1 July 2017 for a maximum period of 46 months. This arrangement will ensure that the Council continues to meet its statutory duties in relation to intermediate care and reablement, as set out in the Care Act 2014.

10. Agreement of Indicative Expenditure Plan for NHS Commissioned Services within the Essex Better Care Fund Plan for 2017/18

The Better Care Fund (BCF) was announced by NHS England in 2013. It was intended to provide an opportunity to transform local services through better integrated care and support. Health and Wellbeing Boards have been obliged to submit BCF Plans since then to cover the 2015/16 and 2016/17 financial years that met mandated minimum financial values and demonstrated achievement of a series of NHS England National Conditions.

The next BCF Plan will be required to cover the next two years (2017/18 and 2018/19), with a likely expected publication date around June 2017. There has been a delay in publication of the relevant formal NHS England policy and guidance, and the announcement of the financial allocations, and this has posed a risk to providers being commissioned from 1 April 2017.

In order to mitigate this risk, and in view of the Council's role as the Pooled Fund Holder for all BCF funds, Cabinet has approved the indicative expenditure within the BCF financial plan and agreed the issue of purchase orders for the provision of NHS Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) commissioned BCF services in 2017/18. This is conditional upon the receipt of funding from the CCGs and the receipt of letters of confirmation that the CCGs will make the necessary payments to ECC.

Cabinet has also authorised the Executive Director of People Commissioning to agree the final BCF Plan.

Councillor David Finch
Leader of the Council