
ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING 12 July 2011

Answers to Questions (Standing Order 17.11.3)

Agenda Item 14b)

Questions (Standing Order 17.11.3)

1. By Councillor John Baugh of the Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Community Wellbeing.

'There has been much discussion on a national and local level concerning the funding of dementia services. In this regard could the Cabinet Member advise on the total cost to Essex County Council of caring for people with dementia who occupy dementia beds in care homes within the county and what percentage this represents of overall expenditure on people with dementia?

What financial saving could be realised – for re-distribution on care in dementia patients' own homes – if entry to a care home was universally delayed by two months?'

Reply

The Council spends just over £31 million on caring for people with dementia in placements registered for dementia care in care homes. To put this into context, in 2010/11 Essex spent just under £92 million on registered care for all older people; and a total of £180 million on all social care for older people. Of the total adult social care budget for older people 17% is spent supporting people with dementia in registered dementia care placements.

We know that the prevalence of dementia is under-reported. People with dementia, particularly if their primary needs do not relate to dementia, can be supported in placements that do not specialise in dementia care. The National Dementia Strategy estimates that "at least 50% of people in long term registered care have dementia". The condition of dementia is also under-reported for people who are supported in their own homes. Practitioners have been reluctant to record a diagnosis of dementia on our social care systems until a

formal diagnosis by a medical practitioner has been made. This masks the many people who will be experiencing the first stages of dementia, but are still to receive a formal diagnosis.

The average weekly cost (before client contributions are taken into account) of supporting someone with dementia in a registered care home is £471 per week. The average cost of supporting someone with dementia with community-based services is £207 per week. This does not mean however that the same person with dementia could be supported in the community for £264 less than in registered care. There are two main reasons for this.

1. Dementia is a continuum ranging from the early stages which may have a limited impact on a person's ability to care for themselves, to the later stages where people need support with all their daily living and personal care tasks. People only tend to be admitted to registered care when their condition has progressed to the extent that they need 24-hour on-going support. People who need registered care will have greater needs than those that are supported in their own homes.
2. National charging policies mean that people in registered care tend to contribute more to the cost of their care and support than people supported in their own homes.

The Council's strategy is to support people to live at home for as long as possible. The pledge to support people with dementia and their carers through the use of technology and personal budgets builds upon the preventative work that the Council has undertaken for many years. Nearly 6,000 older people received telecare in 10/11 - providing them with the security and support to remain living in their own homes for as long as possible. This builds upon last year's pledge to offer telecare to all people over 80. As a result the total number of older people receiving telecare increased by 30% between 2009 and 2011, compared to the two-year period before the pledge.

Re-ablement supports people, particularly following a traumatic episode such as a hospital admission, to regain their independence and remain living at home. Our reablement service supported 2,900 people during 2010-11 - a 12% increase compared to the previous year with considerable success. The latest figures from our reablement service show that over 60% of people who received reablement regained their independence to the extent that they either needed no further social care support from the Council or were able to reduce the amount of support they received. Whilst the focus of the reablement service has primarily been on supporting people

discharged from hospital, it is being expanded this year to support more people with dementia, and to take a higher number of referrals from community-based settings.

For those people who do require social care support to remain living at home, the number receiving personal budgets has more than doubled since 2009/10. Personal budgets allow people to have greater choice and control over the support they receive. Over 900 people with dementia were using personal budgets in 2010/11 and this will increase over 2011/12 as the programme of work to deliver the pledge takes effect.

2. By Councillor David Kendall of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation

Brentwood was one of the first Borough Councils in Essex to embrace the Highways Localism project three years ago. The initial budget for Brentwood was £2.5 million, but that has now shrunk down to £129,275 for this year's allocation. Out of this £129,275 only £38,575 is available to spend on locally determined schemes. If the Localism agenda is going to be taken seriously in places like Brentwood, what steps are the County Council going to take to ensure that a realistic funding stream is put in place to deliver the schemes that have been outstanding for sometime?

Reply

The budget for Brentwood for 2011/12 is £2,318,087 compared to £2,710,154 in 2010/11. The specific amount referred to for the Highways Rangers Service (previously known as the locally determined budget) has remained the same as the previous year. The Highways Panels are able to discuss and influence all areas of the budget and in particular prioritise resources within the overall funding available to the Brentwood area.

3. By Councillor David Kendall of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation

Essex had 3,000 over running road works last year. How much was collected from the utility companies in fines? Was the County Council partly to blame for any of the problems? What steps has the County Council put in place to address this issue going forward?

Reply

Essex had 3,000 over running road works last year.

In the period from January to December 2010 there were approximately 3,000 instances of overrunning road works by utility companies. These are a combination of works that actually overrun on the ground (i.e. the notice gives a finish date that has been exceeded)

as well as works that have been completed on the ground but the noticing process has not been properly completed and so the EToN system (EToN – Electronic Transfer of Notices system) shows that the works are continuing.

How much was collected from the utility companies in fines?

The amount that the Council has received from overruns in the period Jan - Dec 2010 is £505,040. The amount still outstanding from same period is £21,810.

Was the County Council partly to blame for any of the problems?

The Council is exercising the powers it has in relation to the activities of utilities, undertaking sample inspections as defined in legislation. The issue of utilities works overrunning is a more a symptom of the way in which utilities manage works; we need to work closely together to ensure that they are fully aware of their duties in relation to noticing and the need to set realistic timescales for works. The Council is also working with utilities to ensure that they also understand and take on board the Council's aim of minimising congestion, delays and inconvenience to the travelling public.

What steps has the County Council put in place to address this issue going forward?

We are continuing to carry out regular performance meetings with all utilities and we are starting to see the benefits, especially with National Grid whose overruns have now reduced dramatically.

The Council continues to work with Essex Highways and Utilities Co—ordination Group (Essex HAUC) to share performance information and discuss weaknesses/failures.

The Council has also started to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to utilities for inaccuracies/errors that the utilities make on the EToN system with regard to their work: this is delivering a reduction in alleged overruns (where the works are complete on site but the EToN system still shows the works as continuing).

4. By Councillor Mike Mackrory of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation

On 22 February I presented a petition to the Chairman of the Council, requesting a pedestrian crossing in New Nabbotts Way, Springfield, Chelmsford.

The petition was duly passed to the Cabinet office and acknowledged by the Governance Officer by letter on 31 March.

On 11 May my constituent received a letter from Customer Liaison Team, but not copied to me, saying that they no longer deal with such highways improvement requests where a Parish Council exists, as that is a matter for them.

On 1 June I wrote back querying that assertion and asking for some flexibility where a local Member supports such a request for a highways improvement.

On 13 June at the Chelmsford Localities Panel, as I had not received a reply, I raised the issue with the Highways representative who requested copies of the correspondence in order to pursue the matter for me. These were provided that day.

As of to-day's date I have received no further communication, or indeed since 31 March.

My question therefore is: now that 20 weeks has elapsed since handing in the petition does the Cabinet Member agree that this delay in communicating with a Member is unacceptable and will she urgently pursue the matter?

Reply

Yes, this delay in communication with the local member is absolutely unacceptable and is something that I am currently investigating.

I understand that the lack of communication with Councillor Mackrory was the result of a number of administrative errors and miscommunications and that this is being investigated.

The feasibility of the proposal is also being investigated and I will personally ensure that the outcome is reported to Councillor Mackrory when completed.

5. By Councillor Mike Mackrory of the Cabinet Member for Education and The 2012 Games

Would the Cabinet Member inform me of the number of Science, Mathematics and Literacy Consultants (formerly known as Advisors) who will be made redundant from 1st August, and how many more, including Early Years Consultants, will be made redundant from April 2012?

Reply

Science, Mathematics, Literacy, ICT and Early Years Consultants have been part of the national support programmes of the National

Strategies, which first began with English and Maths support to primary schools in 1996.

The Council has used consultants to provide support for improvements in educational attainment. The majority of the staff and activity costs for the consultants was paid for by grant by Standards Fund.

The work and funding of the national support programmes was ended by the previous Labour government from 1 April 2011. With the decision to remove the funding and cease national support programmes, local authorities needed to reduce staffing directly employed to provide these programmes. As a result, there were 19 primary consultants at risk of redundancy from 1 September 2011 plus three ICT consultants.

The Council has worked hard to assist those affected with finding posts back in schools. So far eight consultants have been supported in finding alternative employment. Three people on secondments have returned to their schools and these posts have been made redundant, along with three other vacancies. There are eight consultants at risk of redundancy covering Science, Mathematics, Modern Foreign Languages, and social and emotional aspects of learning. There are no further redundancies planned as a result of these reductions from September 2012.

Early Years consultants are funded from the new Early Intervention Grant (EIG), into which various ring fenced grants were incorporated. However, the total funding from EIG is a reduction overall and the impact of this reduction on Early Years' consultants has not been finalised.

With a continued shift to increasing autonomy of schools and the shift towards mainstreaming grant funding into school budgets, the decision to allocate funding for support to learning through consultants is now the responsibility of schools. Where schools choose not to allocate funding to ICT consultants, Essex County Council has to adjust the provision of this resource. As a result, two part-time advisors have been affected by this change and will be made redundant from 1 September.

1.4 Healthy Schools Advisors previously funded by the ended Area Based Grant have also been affected; however, the Council will retain two posts having identified another funding stream. Two advisory posts for the Achievement for All pilot project also funded by the ended Area Based Grant have been removed.

The education landscape, including how it is funded, will continue to change considerably. The Council will continue to mitigate the effects of funding changes to ensure educational attainment is improved in every school. This will include the continuation of advice and support to schools, which will continue on a traded basis.