

Portfolio Observations

1. Adult Care & Health

- Strong working relations are needed between the NHS and Adult Care Services (ACS) as an inability to work together could negatively impact service users (i.e. delayed discharge due to a lack of social care). Reassurance was provided that this relationship is currently strong.
- A proposal for ACS to work with school transport to save costs by using the same buses for transport to both day services and schools would be difficult as both services require vehicles at the same time.
- Sufficiency of the revenue budget for mental health. Members were assured that compared to other counties, Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) is investing satisfactorily in mental health.
- Concern was raised with regard to ACS' aim to reduce reliance on residential care and whether this would increase the costs incurred by ACS. The department is working to help people remain in their own homes for as long as possible and out of residential care. This is the preferred option for people and will help the department make savings.

2. Children's Services

- There are major challenges but the Children's Services' leadership team have proved in the past that they have been able to combat these pressures and deliver efficient services.
- Concern about services being impacted due to partners being affected by external factors beyond their control (e.g. CCGs) or partner sustainability. Relations with the CCGs have improved and have reflected on lessons learnt. The County Council is focusing on prevention and is being transparent with sharing budgets and pressures in order to plan for challenges.
- Effective planning is needed to mitigate future demographic pressures. Early intervention and partnership working and calculating growth based demographic data is required.
- Remodelling of the YC Hertfordshire service is set against a challenging background of a forecasted rise in children aged 10-19 and a proposed 20% reduction in funding. There is continued work with the voluntary sector to offset costs. Members were also assured that Hertfordshire is still continuing to provide services albeit at a reduced volume.
- Recruitment and retention is being addressed by offering packages to attract and retain staff. The department is also working to train current workers and staff in partner agencies in specific services i.e. recognising and responding to Child Sexual Exploitation and gang culture cases.
- The budget implications for SEND and the increased diagnosis of autism. This is a national concern and the Executive Member and officers will continue to express concerns to central government to encourage funding for future years.
- Members were pleased that funding for the Thriving Families programme had been confirmed for another 5 years.

- Following the recent Carillion collapse reassurances were given that in-house financial checks are in operation for external partner agencies. The Family Centre recommissioning procurement process had taken place and it was confirmed how these will be regularly monitored.
- Pressure of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children entering the county was identified again this year. It is a challenge; however, the Authority is currently under its threshold number. This number is likely to grow and more work is needed to see an increase in central government funding
- Placement stability especially 3+ placements when the child is over the age of 11. This brings associated transport costs.

3. Community Protection & Waste Management

- Uncertainty arising from outstanding PCC decision with regard to the move of Fire & Rescue to the Police & Crime Commissioner
- Potential of SMART Digital to improve efficiencies across the directorate
- Potential for Herts Waste Partnership to work more effectively and learn from best practice
- The significant risk implications of the Energy Recovery Facility at Ratty's Lane not going ahead were discussed

4. Education, Libraries & Localism

- Concern arose around the succession planning and management capacity within the Library Service however, officers were able to evidence the mitigations that have been put in place.
- Members were happy with the responses from officers with regard to the savings proposals and future storage requirements of HALS. This includes digitalisation and a purpose built archive building.
- The Home to School Transport (HTST) emerging overspend was noted however, only briefly as not to duplicate discussion that took place earlier in the Children Service portfolio.

5. Environment, Planning & Transport

- Members discussed the limited progress reported in the Total Transport section of the portfolio (including Home to School Transport) and the Executive Member and officers were unable to identify significant progress in the area. With a £50m budget, even a small saving would be significant.
- EPT are awaiting guidance to fully understand the implications of the Bus Act
- Viability of planning and development will be dealt with by the new Growth & Infrastructure Team.
- The impact that issues around retention and recruitment has on planning, budget and services.
- More work is need on HIPP to ensure it works to its optimum capacity. This needs to be a visionary service.
- The merger of the Rights of Way service and Countryside Management Service will see a slight restructure of the teams. Savings will be

achieved through increasing income received from districts/boroughs and efficiency savings.

6. Highways

- Members highlighted how there was no specific reference to how new infrastructure development will support the proposal outlined in LTP4 that there will be a push for a modal shift in current transportation used by the general public.
- Members highlighted a concern over the increasing numbers of road casualties in Hertfordshire. Officers stressed that whilst the number of serious road accidents had increased the number of road incidents had fallen. Officers went on to reiterate that this increase in serious road traffic incidents was due to a change in the way incidents were logged by the Police.
- Members were concerned about the reduction of driver training income to the budget. Officers were equally concerned but stressed this was due to driver safety initiatives that had reduced the number of speeding offences in Hertfordshire.

7. Public Health, Prevention & Performance

- The risk associated with cutting drug and alcohol services and whether this could have an adverse effect on crime rates.
- A risk of increased cost in future years if Public Health services, such as school nursing and health visitors, are not proactive in putting in place preventative measures for CAMHS.
- There was concern at the IP proposal to changes in provision of sexual health services and the impact on infertility and increased STD transmission. Executive Member and officers were able to provide assurance.
- The members were concerned that the cost tree indicated much lower expenditure on Public Health by HCC when compared to the group average. This is due to Hertfordshire generally having less need than the other areas. The service has been successful in finding cost-effective alternatives.
- Public Health capacity was raised and it was admitted to being heavily reliant on favours and other services. The service has large training costs for staff that are necessary and cost effective.

8. Resources, Property & the Economy

- The effectiveness of support services in continuing to support the organisation.
- Realism of the digital strategy to achieve savings given the skills shortage within digital.
- Partnerships/Property – monitoring the performance and substance of partners relating to Property, and wider partners such as Serco. The risks involved in increasing our borrowing.
- Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP): Members debated the statement that funding the LEP provides 'leverage'. Discussion around if HCC receives best value from the LEP and indicators of success.

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