

Cost of Care – Briefing Note

The People and Health Scrutiny Committee have been asked to scrutinise the costs of block care home contract the council has with Care South. A response was provided to Full Council from Cllr Wharf to a related question in December 2021. The Adult Social Care Commissioning team are currently undertaking two cost of care exercises one for care homes and one for home care and supported living provision. These exercises will enable the council to meet the Government requirements as set out in the Market Sustainability and Cost of Care Fund statement published on 16th December 2021. All Councils are required to carry out cost of care exercises and to publish these; Dorset Council has extended the scope to include supported living provision. The exercises are being carried out by independent agencies (both of whom are working with the Government to develop guidance on what the exercises should include) who will take into account Dorset's rurality, cost of living and workforce pressures as these are important factors – these will be important for the Committee to be aware of. The exercises will then set out what Dorset Council should expect to pay for care; this in turn will help Dorset Council work with and support the providers to create a Sustainability Plan. All councils are required to completed and published their plans by September 2022.

Once completed the Council will be able to compare the assessed cost of providing care with the prices it is currently paying under the block contracts it has in place. It will also take into account as part of this analysis any wider benefits of block contracts, as pricing is not the only consideration when assessing the benefit to service users and taxpayers.

I am told the cost of care exercises will be completed before the end of the financial year. Council officers will then determine the pricing rate and publish this as a key discussion. The information will be shared with providers in advance of that decision being made. The Committee are interested in the pricing and how this has been arrived at – the outcomes of the exercises will be brought to the Committee in May 2022. Depending on the findings the Committee will decide whether further information is needed in relation to the Care South contract.