

# Cabinet

**28 February 2023**

## **Commissioning Strategies for Adult Social Care 2023-2028**

### **For Decision**

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr P Wharf, Adult Social Care and Health

**Local Councillor(s):** All

**Executive Director:** V Broadhurst, Executive Director of People - Adults

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**Report Status:** Public

### **Brief Summary:**

For a number of months, officers have been developing a set of commissioning strategies for adult social care. This included a period over autumn 2022, where a series of roadshows and other events were held to engage people in their development. There are a number of areas where the documents will continue to develop, as more analysis is undertaken and co-production work is done. However, the strategies are presented here for initial adoption, to shape and guide the work of adult social care commissioners for the coming 5 years and beyond, and to form a stronger basis for people to engage with the Council about our service development plans.

### **Recommendation:**

Cabinet is recommended to

- (1) Review and adopt the strategies as presented, to shape activity for the coming years on the development of the local adult social care system;

- (2) Note the suggested priorities for co-production work for the coming year, and propose any amendments;

**Reason for Recommendation:**

If people are to be able to engage meaningfully with the council about the future of social care, it is important that there is a clear account of the Council's view on future priorities. This should not be set in stone, but having a clear starting point for the discussion is central to the Council's commitment to involve those who draw on support, its staff, local service providers, and partners. Additionally, it is important that there is a strategy in place that can help to shape the future decisions about the financial frameworks within which social care operates, particularly in the context of the interface with the care market during a period when it is under significant pressure.

Even with further work to be done, this set of documents outlines a current view on the future of care services and some of the priorities for their improvement, stabilisation and development. The documents also seek to set out some interventions for the management of demand and the improvement of service quality.

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 On 28 June 2022, People & Health Overview Committee commented upon a set of documents that created a framework for the future planning of adult social care services. Having a set of strategies that frame the direction of travel for adult social care services for the coming 5 years and beyond is important if people are to be able to work consistently together on delivering the change that matters for local people. This is particularly key if the Council, with its partners, is to begin to shift investment and activity into preventive and community-based delivery, and to form and sustain the partnerships necessary to achieve this. These strategies set out to make it easier for people to engage with Dorset Council over the future of care services, and to have confidence that we had taken into account the things that mattered to them. They set a direction for improvement of the care and support that people receive.
- 1.2 These strategies formed the basis for a programme of public, partner and staff engagement, which has resulted in the set of strategies presented here for adoption. It is intended that this sort of engagement process is continued, so that the strategies continue to develop with the participation of those who draw on support and the wider community.

## **2. Engagement approach**

- 2.1 There were multiple opportunities to engage and provide feedback on the draft strategy documents, but also more broadly for people to provide their experience or views on the social care system in Dorset.
- 2.2 Six Roadshow events were convened, centred around each locality within the county, with mornings dedicated to staff engagement and afternoons for the public to engage. Nine further 'drop-in' listening sessions took place at locations around the county. Additionally, online opportunities were provided to comment, either by form or by email.
- 2.3 This was promoted through press releases, social media and local radio. Three dedicated newsletters were sent out. Information was provided to all Council Members on 16 September with two further follow-up reminders, and also to Members of Town and Parish Councils via their clerks. The information was also shared with the "A Better Life" stakeholder advisory

group (comprising statutory and VCS partners) for sharing amongst their networks and contacts.

- 2.4 Uptake from members of the public was not high, although those conversations that did take place were very insightful, and were helpful in shaping the strategies. Information provided will continue to be helpful in shaping implementation plans. There were a wide range of contributions from front-line staff, identifying what gets in the way of providing the best support to people, and altogether the contributions from all events led to many hundreds of 'post-it' note comments. These were collated, grouped and themed, and this source material of around 30 pages of comments informed the final changes to the documents.
- 2.5 Appendix 5 contains an overview of key comments/themes, and how the strategies have been amended in these final versions.

### **3. Overview of the Strategies**

- 3.1 One particular key point of feedback was on the structure of the suite of strategies. The initial drafts were divided up as:
- An 'overarching' strategy that detailed some of the system wide commissioning issues and approaches, including prevention, direct payments, partnership, place-based work, co-production and data.
  - A 'working age' strategy which gathered together the commissioning plans for people who lived their adult lives with disability (physical, sensory or learning), mental health condition or other impairments, and needed care and support.
  - An 'older people' strategy which presented approaches to some of the challenges associated with ageing and requiring care and support, and the commissioning plans that were needed to improve the support system.
  - A carer's strategy, which gave our approach to improving the support received by family and other carers (sometimes called 'informal' carers) for people with additional needs.
- 3.2 Feedback was broadly of the view that this structuring did not work, and particularly that the framing of 'working age' was confusing and unhelpful. Firstly, there was no clarity about what a 'working age' is (in a world where many people work beyond what was once considered a 'typical' retirement age, either by choice or necessity). Secondly, it was pointed out that some

people will never be able to work because of profound disability, and so the framing did not speak to their life story, whilst at the same time intending to address their support needs.

- 3.3 The other broad piece of feedback was that there was too much in the strategies and, whilst there was some appreciation of the detailed analysis of parts of the documents, it was generally felt that something easier to digest and more punchy about the priorities for the future would be more useful. Presenting information in infographic form was also felt to be helpful (particularly given that it will need to be updated at points if the documents are to be useful for their full term).
- 3.4 As a result, the strategy framework has been changed, resulting in the documents attached here. The intention is to encapsulate the broad approach for all adults taken by adult care and support in Dorset, with separate strategies to address specific issues in ageing and carers, together with a supporting document on how the commissioning system will work better to plan for the future.

### **Commissioning for A Better Life for Adults in Dorset**

- 3.5 The main strategy now sets out how this set of plans fit with wider ambition of Dorset Council, the Adults & Housing Directorate, and the Council's partners. It goes on to set out the ambition for continuing to support communities to develop resilience and preventive support networks. Finally, it addresses some of the issues in improving the care and support delivered to those who live with additional needs throughout (or through a significant part of) their adult lives. This is the content that was formerly part of the "working age strategy", addressing a range of particular needs including for people with a learning disability, a mental health condition or autism.
- 3.6 A number of service reviews remain underway, which will continue to expand and develop the ambitions in these sections.

### **Commissioning for A Better Life as People Age in Dorset**

- 3.7 This strategy takes the ambitions above for all adults in Dorset, and adds specific consideration of the issues that arise as people age, from the kind of wraparound community support that should be available through to the provision of specific support services as needs increase.

## **Commissioning for A Better Life for Carers in Dorset**

- 3.8 Again, taking account of the supportive, preventive community life that is envisaged in the adults' strategy, this strategy adds the specific ambitions relating to improving the support available to carers in Dorset.

## **Better Commissioning for A Better Life**

- 3.9 Finally, the intentions around improving the commissioning systems that support Dorset Council decision-making have been taken out of the 'overarching' strategy, into a specific document that supports all of the ambitions for residents of Dorset. This includes partnerships with the care market and with NHS partners, co-production, digital strategy, and use of data and insight.

## **4. Proposal**

- 4.1 Cabinet are invited to review and approve the strategies for adoption, with any comment or amendment that they may see fit. Thereafter, various research, planning and discussions will continue so that the plans are developed further. Cabinet may also wish to provide direction to officers on the future development of the strategies once initially adopted.
- 4.2 The action planning will be further expanded, particularly to refine the timing/resourcing of the actions proposed, aligned to the strengthened capacity of the commissioning team. The team restructure is expected to be completed in the first months of the new financial year, and a more clearly prioritised set of actions for the year ahead can be finalised at this point. Many of the actions are already in train, so progress will not be significantly held up by waiting for the restructure to conclude.
- 4.3 During the work to develop the strategies a number of early co-production priorities were identified. These would be intended as the most pressing areas for development for the coming year, where discussion and partnership with local communities and people who draw on support. They include:
- Direct Payments / Individual Service Funds
    - Continuing to explore how we improve the system
  - Day Opportunities
    - Involving people in the design of a new model
  - Dementia

- Opening up the conversation about how we improve dementia support
- Autism
  - Opening up the conversation about how we improve support for Autism,
- Social care reforms/digital
  - New financial arrangements for social care, self-assessment, access to care records
- Birth to Settled Adulthood
  - Continuing the conversation with people who draw on support through transition about improving the service offer

4.4 It is very important to acknowledge that the intention is not, at this point, for the strategies to be 'fixed in time'. They will continue to be a living and developing framework for the improvement of adult social care services over the next 5 years and beyond. As part of this, there will be the opportunity at any point for people to feed back comments on their experience of adult social care so that the approaches can be refined based on their insight.

4.5 Given this iterative approach to strategy development, the Portfolio Holder will update Cabinet at intervals through their forward-planned updates on corporate priorities, on how the strategies have developed and the impact that they are having on shaping activity.

## **5. Financial Implications**

5.1 The strategies are set within the context of currently available budgets for the delivery of these services. Accordingly, approval of the strategies makes no further explicit budget commitment.

5.2 However, the direction set within the strategies, and the actions proposed, are important contributions to containing the increasing demand for adult social care services, on which future budget-setting will rely. It should be expected that the strategies will be cited in future decisions that have financial impact, both at Cabinet and those delegated to officers, as providing the context for the proposals being made.

## **6. Environmental Implications**

6.1 There are a number of proposed actions within the strategies that have positive impacts on the environment and climate change. These include:

- Sustainability plans for homecare, which include 'zoning' of homecare contracting, which should reduce the mileage involved in delivering this care;
- A strong theme of local and "hyperlocal" delivery of support, and the building of support networks, which again should help people to find the support that they need closer to home;
- For residential care, there is a theme explored in the strategy around the need for more modern environments across the residential home estate, which if explored would provide opportunities for more energy-efficient buildings;
- Proposals for more effective delivery of day opportunities provide opportunities to consolidate existing services, and improve uptake, both of which would be a more efficient use of building estate than current delivery, and potentially reduce some travel times.

## **7. Well-being and Health Implications**

7.1 The overall intention of these strategies is to set out a vision for improving the wellbeing of people in Dorset, and particularly those with additional needs for support. There are many parts of the strategies that directly address the partnerships with the health sector that are crucial to ensuring a joined up approach to improving health and wellbeing. The voluntary and community sector partnerships are also central to both community and individual wellbeing, with the focus that the strategies bring to preventing future adult social care needs.

## **8. Other Implications**

### **Property and Assets**

8.1 There are potential implications for Council-owned property and assets in various proposed workstreams around day opportunities, residential care, and accommodation with care. However, whilst setting a framework for the broad direction of those services, this report is not requesting any specific authority for any decision involving property. Further appropriate decisions will need to be set out as the strategy is implemented.

## **Voluntary organisations**

- 8.2 The strategies have very significant implications for the Council's shared work and ambition with the local voluntary, community and social enterprise sector. The continued journey that is described in the strategies, towards a stronger prevention model that is grounded in the community, will provide many opportunities for creative partnership and new commissioning opportunities for local VCSE sector organisations.
- 8.3 The engagement programme was shaped with input from local VCSE partners (through the Stakeholder Advisory Group for 'A Better Life') and the opportunity for partners to continue to shape the co-production priorities and process is integral to the future development of the strategies.

## **Safeguarding Adults**

- 8.4 Safer, higher quality services are a core aim of the strategies, and as such they intend to have a positive impact on the safety of vulnerable people who draw on support. The intention to strengthen community relationships around adult social care will also provide an opportunity to increase "eyes and ears" for risks to vulnerable adults. In the Better Commissioning strategy, there are ambitions around improving provider quality management systems and, whilst there will be more to say about the specifics of this work as the commissioning team structure is bedded in, there clear intentions around improving strategic provider quality management are set out.

## **9. Risk Assessment**

- 9.1 The risks associated with the decision to adopt the strategy are twofold:
- i) The risks of **not** adopting strategies centres on having an uncertain plan for addressing future service demand and challenges in the provider sector, and a reduced ability to engage partners in jointly addressing those future challenges because the Council has an unclear approach in mind;
  - ii) The risks of adopting the strategies falls principally in that the ambition set out becomes impossible to achieve through reducing availability of resources (principally a risk around non-continuation of current government grant funding beyond the end of this Spending Review period). That said, these risks are themselves mitigated by a number of

the actions and approaches that are intended to reduce the pressure on resources by more efficiently managing preventive activity and the contracting of care services.

- 9.2 A number of risks already set out in the directorate risk register, related to commissioning, are mitigated to an extent through adoption of these strategies, including: capacity in the local voluntary sector (342); failure to achieve an effective ICS (323); market failure in domiciliary care (343) or residential care (383); failure of the Dorset Care Framework (464).
- 9.3 The risks of not adopting the strategies, and having no clear basis for partnership, future co-production activity, and work with the market greatly outweighs any risks associated with adopting ambitions that prove difficult to deliver. Accordingly, the adoption of the strategies reduces overall risk to the Council.
- 9.4 **HAVING CONSIDERED:** the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:
- Current Risk: that the absence of a clear strategy framework for future adult social care service delivery makes it more difficult to meet future demand and service challenges – risk score 12 (moderate impact; likely to occur)
  - Residual Risk: that the adoption of these strategies provides a set of activities, and an overall framework for developing partnerships and approaches, that places the Council in a better position to address long-term challenges in care delivery – risk score 6 (slight impact; possible to occur)

## **10. Equalities Impact Assessment**

- 10.1 The strategies lay out a set of ambitions, together with a set of governing principles which will guide future action. They scope some of the immediate challenges in providing care and support services to those who need them, and they give broad direction to the solutions. They do not contain root-and-branch detailed plans for specific reforms. There will need to be further equality impact assessment as these specific action plans are shaped (with public and partner participation) and taken through for approval.
- 10.2 The strategies lay the foundations for improved engagement with people who draw on support, care providers, and partners in the statutory and

voluntary sectors. As such, they create the conditions for improved dialogue on equality and diversity in the provision of social care support, which should improve the insight available to commissioners who are drawing up further plans.

10.3 The strategy-wide ambitions for supporting and strengthening community connections will have notably positive impacts on older people, people with disabilities, women, rural communities and carers. There are likely to be positive outcomes for LGBTQIA+ people, people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, men, and armed forces communities.

10.4 A significant focus of the strategies is on the improvement of care services, and plans include a number of interventions which will have a positive benefit on the care workforce:

- Proposals to improve workforce conditions in the care sector through the fair cost of care will improve living conditions disproportionately for women, some older members of the workforce, and to a small extent those from minority ethnic populations. They will also address the socioeconomic challenges of some of the lower paid in the Dorset workforce.
- Proposals that seek to stabilise the market in the provision of social care services will improve the lives of those that depend on them, including disproportionately older people, those with disability and mental health conditions, and carers.
- Addressing the additional challenges of delivering care in rural communities through the rates paid for that care will positively address rural disadvantage in care delivery.

10.5 Interventions planned to raise quality in care services, improve flows for people from hospital back to their home via rehabilitation, and strengthen information, advice, choice and control and these will all have positive benefits for people who, through disability or frailty, draw on support services.

10.6 Finally, it has been noted that there is opportunity to improve how insight is used around equality and diversity in the care and support sector, and this has been included as a revision to the strategies as a result of the Equality Impact Assessment.

## 11. Appendices

- 1: Commissioning for A Better Life for Adults in Dorset 2023-28
- 2: Commissioning for A Better Life as People Age in Dorset 2023-28
- 3: Commissioning for A Better Life for Carers in Dorset 2023-28
- 4: Better Commissioning for Better Lives 2023-28
- 5: “You Said We Did” – changes made to the strategies following engagement

## 12. Background Papers

- Developing Commissioning Strategies in Adult Social Care: Report to Overview Committee, 28 June 2022, Item 11:  
<https://moderngov.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=652&MId=5303&Ver=4>
- Developing Commissioning Strategies in Adult Social Care: Feedback presentation to Overview Committee following engagement, 19 December 2022, Item 7, minute 39:  
<https://moderngov.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=652&MId=5523&Ver=4>