

WIRRAL COUNCIL

FINANCE AND BEST VALUE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

21 JANUARY 2009

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES

TRANSFORMING ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES- ACHIEVING A STABILISED AND SUSTAINABLE BUDGET

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 A report was presented to a Special Meeting of the Finance and Best Value Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 22 December 2008 which detailed the projected budget overspend; the resources necessary to monitor the budget and the procedures to ensure robust commissioning and procurement systems exist. Whilst only a few weeks have passed since that meeting Committee requested that a further report be brought to this meeting to assess progress.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The Committee, at its meeting 22 September 2008, received a report entitled "Transforming Adult Social Services – Achieving a Stabilised and Sustainable Budget", previously considered by Cabinet on 4 September 2008. The Cabinet had resolved that:

- (i) the continuing efforts of officers to manage within resources, recognising the high probability of overspends of £3.483m in 2008/09 and £0.761m in 2009/10, which are likely to require funding from balances, be noted; and
- (ii) The Director of Adult Social Services be requested to present a further report to its meeting of 6 November 2008 on options to stabilise the department's medium term budget and deliver further efficiencies towards the corporate target.

2.2 Senior managers from DASS with the cabinet member attended Committee on 22 December 2008 to address concerns expressed in relation to the budget shortfall. Following the presentation of that report it was requested that a further report be made to the next meeting outlining progress being made.

3 Projected Outturn

3.1 The figures reported at the December 2008 meeting were based on the data in the books of account as at 31 October 2008 and identified financial pressures of £7.8m. Projected efficiencies and additional PCT funding reduced this figure to a projected deficit of £5.5m. The report included a number of initiatives to mitigate the position and it was stated that the projected overspend for 2008/09 remained at £3.5m.

- 3.2 Since the meeting it has been possible to review the detailed expenditure contained within the accounts as at 30 November 2008. The accounts confirm a reduction in expenditure and identify current financial pressures of £7.5m.
- 3.3 Further efficiencies and additional funding previously reported of £2.3m, together with a contribution of £0.2m from the Children's & Young Peoples Department towards the Emergency Duty Team and SWIFT system reduce the projected deficit to £5.0m.
- 3.4 In order to address immediately the projected deficit of £5.0m the Department is continuing to implement a number of management actions: all external training has been stopped; all requests for recruitment are vetted by Heads of Branch and only internal recruitment is permitted; overtime has ceased and "Panels" have been established to assess the eligibility of service users' needs with revised guidance and support to managers and staff on matching resources to assessed needs.
- 3.5 The report presented in December outlined a number of other initiatives to further mitigate the position these are in the process of being implemented and included:
- working closely with NHS – Wirral to develop new service models that develop improved services for people at home, including the expansion of the HART service and support for people who use services with complex health conditions who have previously been supported through social care funding;
 - the standardisation of meals charges in day services to £2.60 per full meal, to be implemented from 1 February 2009
 - The use of independent sector providers for standard home care and correct care packages being delivered by the most appropriate and efficient care providers. This will be facilitated by the early voluntary retirement of a number of in house home care staff that is being considered for approval by Cabinet on 15 January 2009;
 - The specialist review team for learning disability services continues to fully consider that packages of care allocated to individuals with a view to implementing more appropriate regimes
- 3.6 Whilst little time has passed since the December report to assess the impact of these actions it is anticipated that they will deliver efficiencies to stay within the original overspend forecast of £3.5m.

4. FINANCIAL AND STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This report has revisited the financial position of the Adult Social Services Department. It has been highlighted an amount of £5.0m has been identified as being the projected over commitment and that management action is being taken to ensure the final position does not exceed the previously projected over budget figure of £3.5m.

5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

6. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

7. LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are none arising from this report.

8. PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are none arising from this report.

9. ANTI POVERTY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are none arising from this report.

10. SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are none arising from this report.

11. LOCAL MEMBERS SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no specific implications for any member or ward.

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1 None used in the preparation of this report.

13. RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 It is recommended that Committee note the progress being made to achieve a sustainable budget for DASS

JOHN WEBB
DIRECTOR OF ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES