

THURROCK BOARD MEETING
PART I
24th February 2016

Title of Report:	Thurrock Council Update	
Board Sponsor:		
Prepared by :	Roger Harris, Director of Adults, Housing and Health	
Committees previous consulted:		
Executive Summary:	The purpose of this paper is to provide the Board with an update on key issues affecting the local authority – in particular those items which may have a potential impact on the CCG.	
Financial / Resource Implications:	As noted within the report.	
Fit with CCG strategy/objectives:		
Risks identified / Outcome / Link to BAF:	CG05 – Substantial reduction in budgets within the Local Authority could affect A&E discharges if domiciliary care is not sufficient	BAF Ref: CG05
Actions Required:		When By:
Recommendation to the Committee:	To note the report.	

1. Financial Position

The Council is in the process of setting its budget for 16/17. The budget needs to reflect key messages to come from the recent Comprehensive Spending Review which include:

- Confirmation that the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) will be abolished over the life of this parliament through a continuation of year on year reductions; and
- As a result of the abolition of the RSG, the Council will be reliant on bridging the gap through raising funding locally – e.g. via Council Tax, Business Rates, fees and charges.

The cost of paying for the majority of the services that the Council is responsible for will have to be met from income raised directly.

The Council has recently asked Cabinet to recommend to Council an increase in Council Tax by 3.99%. This includes a 2% precept which local authorities are able to raise to meet adult social care

responsibilities. Thurrock has the third lowest Council Tax band D out of all 55 Unitary Authorities; has the third lowest net budget; and the fifth lowest net budget per head of population. Raising Council Tax by 3.99%, should Council agree at its meeting in March, will generate an additional £2.2 million – half of this being for the Adult Social Care precept.

Whilst an increased budget will be welcome, there are still significant savings to be delivered and on-going pressures to be met – which outstrip the increased revenue that will be raised should the Council Tax increase be agreed. This includes meeting the cost of implementing the living wage. The cost of the living wage for Adult Social Care will exceed the amount raised by the 2% Council Tax Adult Social Care precept.

Additionally, Cabinet recently agreed Adult Social Care savings proposals. These had been consulted on and then subsequently endorsed by Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Work is now taking place to implement the proposals.

2. Public Health Grant

Public Health Grants were announced during week commencing 8th February. The Director of Public Health reported at the February Health and Wellbeing Board that the totality of the reductions equated to 7.34% - this included the recurrent in-year cuts to the 15/16 budget.

Thurrock's Public Health budget of £12.5m will reduce by £924k.

Further work is taking place to fully cost the reductions and to identify proposals that will enable reductions to be delivered.

3. Health and Wellbeing Strategy

The Health and Wellbeing Strategy is now in final draft and will be reported separately to the CCG Board for agreement. The Council and CCG have worked closely together to develop both the Strategy and the Outcomes Framework which focus on prevention and early intervention.

4. Better Care Fund

The Department of Health is yet to publish the technical guidance to accompany Better Care Fund planning for 2016/17. Original timescales included a first submission in February, followed by final plans being submitted in April. To date, we are unsure as to whether the April deadline will remain – and if so, whether the expectation is that final plans will be submitted or draft plans.

There are changes to the Better Care Fund for 2016/17. This includes:

- A new national conditions on Delayed Transfers of Care (DTCOC);
- The removal of the payment for performance element of the Fund (paid for reductions in non-elective admissions) which is to be replaced by NHS out of hospital commissioned services.

BCF allocations have recently been announced. For Thurrock, the mandated amount for 2015/16 was £10,565,000 (made up of contributions from the CCG and Local Authority). Thurrock agreed to top-up the mandated amount and placed an additional £7,454,336 in to the Fund for 15/16.

For 2016/17, Thurrock's mandated BCF has increased by £205k - £54k for the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG), and £151k from the CCG's contribution to the Fund. It is likely that the top-up amount will be at least the amount added to the Fund in 15/16.

Through the Integrated Commissioning Executive, the CCG and Council will develop proposals for the 2016/17 Plan – including any change of focus, review of existing schemes, and contributions to the Fund. The intention is that the BCF will incorporate the CCG's transformation plans.

5. Domiciliary Care

The care market continues to be under extreme pressure. In my last report, I made the Board aware that domiciliary care provider Sanctuary had given notice on its contract and that the Council had formally terminated its contract with domiciliary care provider Temp Exchange. The Council has taken a number of hours back in-house to ensure continuity of service, but this has placed additional pressure on internal capacity in addition to creating additional cost pressures for Adult Social Care.

As reported under the 'financial position' section, the Council has to find in excess of £1m to meet the cost of implementing the living wage.

The Council continues to closely monitor the situation and is in the process of developing the specification for the Domiciliary Care tender.

6. Bruyn's Court, Derry Avenue

Bruyn's Court is a development in South Ockendon consisting of 25 properties (flats) specifically designed to meet the needs of older people in 'care ready' homes. The properties have been developed by and will be managed by the Council. The development has now been completed and the Council are in the process of letting the properties.

7. LGC Awards

The successful Local Area Coordination service has been shortlisted for a Local Government Chronicle award under the 'Team of the Year' category. There are three teams in this category that have been shortlisted for the award, so the LAC team has a very good chance. Should they not win, being recognised in the final three is success in itself.

LAC coordinators continue to work hard across Thurrock to keep people from reaching crisis point and from either needing a service or from requiring a greater level of service. In Purfleet, the LAC coordinator is working closely with one of the GP surgeries to ensure those attending the surgery get the right kind of support – i.e. many making a GP appointment do not require a clinical, but a social intervention.