

## **HEALTH AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE**

**22nd January 2024**

**Present:** Councillor Lynn Denham in the Chair

Councillors Ali, Cockeram, Collier, Hodgson (Vice-Chair), Laurenson, Murray, Pingree, Sadiq, Stanley and Willmore

**Officers:** Rosey Badham, Strategic Housing Team Manager  
Mark Baldwin, Head of Finance  
Shane Flynn, Corporate Director – Policy and Strategy  
Lloyd Griffiths, Corporate Director - Operations, Homes and Communities  
Tom Mountford, Head of Homes and Communities  
David Sutton, Deputy Director – Policy and Strategy

### **30 Appointment of Substitutes**

None.

### **31 Declarations of Interest**

None.

### **32 Public Participation**

None.

### **33 Minutes**

**RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.**

### **34 Worcestershire County Council - Public Health Update for Worcester City**

The Committee received a presentation from Matt Fung, Consultant in Public Health, Worcestershire County Council. His presentation summarised the main findings of the annual Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) for 2023. The report set out key public health indicators for Worcestershire, including Worcester City-specific information. The presentation highlighted a number of local success stories. Regional comparisons showed that Worcestershire has more health improvement outcomes rated as significantly better than national average than any other Council in the West Midlands. The presentation also set out what can be done to improve health and wellbeing.

Matt Fung answered questions from Committee Members on a wide range of issues.

The Chair concluded by thanking Matt Fung for his presentation.

### **35 Quarter 3 Performance Report for 2023/24**

The Committee considered a report on the Council's Quarter 3 performance for Health and Wellbeing for 2023/24. The Corporate Director – Operations, Homes and Communities presented the report and highlighted the main points.

The Corporate Director highlighted that three out of the four projects on the scorecard are rated green. Implementation of the recommendations from the Child Poverty Task and Finish Group is shown as red because of one outstanding recommendation concerning food production from allotments and more information about this will be presented to the next meeting.

Three of the ten performance indicators are shown as red. The Corporate Director reassured Members that the Young People Mental Health Support project had started slightly late but is now where it needs to be. The position on the number of rough sleepers engaged with outreach services is mainly due to resource issues, however the number of rough sleepers transition into accommodation has risen. Finally, exercise by prescription referrals has also been affected by resources being diverted elsewhere. As of the next quarter reporting will be based on a new voucher scheme and an update on this will be provided to all Members.

Officers responded to questions and comments from Committee Members.

**RESOLVED: That the Committee note the Council's quarter 3 performance for 2023/24.**

### **36 Setting of the Budget for 2024/25 and Medium Term Financial Plan to 2028/29**

The Committee considered the priorities within the budgets relating to Health and Wellbeing services for 2024/25. The Head of Finance presented the report and asked Members to consider any potential changes for the areas that fall under the remit of the Committee, including any new budget proposals.

He made specific reference to the DWAS budget, as this has been reduced from £119,000 to £89,000 as part of the Council's savings plan. There will be an allocation from the household support fund to address this reduction.

Officers responded to questions and comments from Committee Members.

Members did not identify any changes to budgets or capital programme and there were no new budget proposals. The Corporate Director – Finance and Resources advised that any budget proposals from Members can also be presented to the 6 February Policy and Resources Committee meeting.

In answer to a question about the Council's response to the Government consultation on this year's local government finance settlement, the Corporate Director stated that this can be shared with Members.

**RESOLVED: That the Committee agree to:**

1. **note the proposed Budgets for the various services identified for 2024/25;**
2. **note the priorities within each service;**
3. **note the services' Capital Programme and future projects; and**
4. **recommend the Policy and Resources Committee to agree the proposed budgets as set out in the report.**

### **37 Progress Update on the Delivery of the Active Travel Action Plan**

The Committee received an update report on progress to deliver the Active Travel Action Plan 2023-25. The Deputy Director – Policy and Strategy presented the report, which included a summary of internal and external actions. Details for each action within the action plan were provided in a performance report which was appended to the main report.

The Deputy Director responded to questions and comments from Committee Members. In response to a question about the scheme which operates in Hereford, the Deputy Director advised Members to contact him if they wish to make a visit to view this.

In response to a question about Modeshift STARS and how this is publicised, Members were advised that a strategic conversation with Worcestershire County Council about how to take this forward may be required.

**RESOLVED: That the Committee note the content of this report.**

### **38 Worcester City Discretionary Welfare Assistance Scheme (DWAS)**

The Committee considered an update report on the Worcester City Discretionary Welfare Assistance Scheme (DWAS) since the last Committee report in January 2023. The Strategic Housing Team Manager presented the report and highlighted the main points of the scheme review and the resulting changes, as well as an overview of demand and spend levels.

Since November 2020, DWAS had been extended with grant funding from the Household Support Fund (HSF) directed to enhance the offer and increase the provision of welfare assistance in the City. The total budget for DWAS in 2023/24 including the base budget contribution, HSF grant allocation and child poverty corporate funding was £264,490.

The HSF had been integral to providing support and mitigating the financial hardship of local residents. Funding was due to cease in March 2024, with no announcements having been made surrounding its continuation or replacement. If there was no further HSF allocation from April 2024, or a significantly reduced allocation, this would have an impact on the delivery of the DWAS and it would be necessary for changes to be made to the eligibility criteria for the scheme and the type of support available.

It was therefore recommended that authority be delegated to the Corporate Director – Operations, Homes and Communities, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee, to approve any scheme changes necessary in the event that a significantly reduced level of or no HSF is allocated to the scheme from April 2024.

To ensure continuity of base budget for 2024/25, it was propose to use a proportion of United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF) targeted at 'Communities & Place.' A report on this proposal was considered under the subsequent agenda item.

Committee Members expressed support for the proposals, as set out in the report.

**RESOLVED: That the Committee agree to:**

- 1. note the contents of the report, and in particular the allocation of the DWAS budget and changes to the scheme following its review; and**
- 2. delegate the Corporate Director (Operations, Homes and Communities), in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee, to approve any scheme changes necessary to the scheme from April 2024, subject to funding announcements.**

**39 UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Final Year (2024/25) Allocation - Community and Place Priority**

The Committee considered a report on a proposal to allocate £100,000 from the United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) to support households impacted by the cost of living crisis. The Head of Homes and Communities presented the report and explained that, at its meeting on 6 November 2023, the Place and Economic Development Committee had agreed to reallocate £100k of UKSPF funding from 'People and Skills' to 'Community and Place'. It was intended to focus this funding around community measures to reduce the cost of living, and the report was therefore being presented to this Committee as it has constitutional responsibility for this agenda.

In light of the uncertainty surrounding the future of the Household Support Fund, it was recommended that the allocation of £100,000 from the UKSPF be utilised to support households impacted by the cost of living crisis. Other options had been considered and these were summarised in the report, together with an explanation as to why they had not been taken forward.

Committee Members expressed support for the proposal.

**RESOLVED: That the Committee agree to:**

- 1. note the contents of the report, in particular the allocation of £100,000 of UKSPF Funding to the Community and Place Priority; and**
- 2. approve the allocation of this funding as set out in the report.**

40 **Any Other Business**

None.

**Duration of the meeting:** 7.00p.m. – 9.03p.m.

Chair at the meeting on  
18th March 2024