

Health and Adult Social Care Policy and Accountability Committee Minutes

Wednesday 29 January 2025

PRESENT

Committee members: Councillors Natalia Perez (Chair), Genevieve Nwaogbe and Amanda Lloyd-Harris

Co-opted members: Victoria Brignell (Action On Disability), Lucia Boddington and Jim Grealy (H&F Save Our NHS)

Other Councillors:

Councillor Alex Sanderson (Deputy Leader)

Councillor Rowan Ree (Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform)

Officers:

Jacqui Mcshannon (Executive Director – People)

Katherine Wilmette (Director of Adult Social Care)

Prakash Daryanani (Head of Finance – Social Care)

Dr Nicola Lang (Director of Public Health)

Sarah Bright (Director, Commissioning Transformation and Health Partnerships)

James Newman (Assistant Director – Finance)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ann Rosenberg.

Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Genevieve Nwaogbe (who entered the room at 7.02pm).

The Chair thanked Emma Apthorp for her service on the committee and wished her all the best in her future endeavours.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Matters arising

Jim Grealy asked if the deprivation maps mentioned in the last meeting could be provided to the Committee. Dr Nicola Lang (Director of Public Health) said that the map would be sent after the meeting.

ACTION: Dr Nicola Lang

Jim Grealy also asked about the progress on organising a conference between disabled residents, Councillors, and the NHS to advise health services on improving accessibility. Councillor Alex Sanderson (Deputy Leader) updated that Councillors and officers were looking at dates and it would likely be held in autumn.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2024 were agreed as an accurate record.

4. 2025/26 REVENUE BUDGET AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (MTFS)

Councillor Rowan Ree (Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform) introduced the Council's corporate budget and thanked cabinet members and officers for their work in realising a balanced budget over the past year.

Councillor Ree highlighted the following points:

- The Net General Fund Revenue Budget was £221m.
- The difficulty of operating environment included reduced revenue funding, changing demographics and a sluggish national economy.
- The key objectives of the financial plan were ensuring the safety of residents, businesses and visitors, protecting the statutory services and other Council services valued by residents, promoting prosperity, running an efficient council, ensuring strong financial governance and resilience, and preserving low council tax rates.
- The budget headlines for 2025/26 included investing £3.5m in community safety and crime prevention, relieving pressure on statutory services, investing in the Upstream Industrial Strategy, tackling climate change and investing in sports facilities.
- The council tax would increase by 88p per week, but it was estimated that four in 10 households would receive some sort of discount.

Jacqui McShannon (Executive Director – People) introduced the 2025/26 budget for Adult Social Care, emphasising that enabling and empowering residents to live independent and healthy lives remained at the core of the work of the Adult Social Care department despite some changes in the department over the last two years.

Katherine Wilmette (Director of Adult Social Care) highlighted the key achievements of the department:

- An additional Annual Review Team helped double the reviews completed, which was critical to ensuring that residents were receiving and continued to receive the right care. They were also opportunities to make residents aware of the different services and support available to them.
- The launch of the Transitions Team focused on working with young people transitioning from Children's Services to Adult Services, with 80% of permanent staff working on pathways, processes and policies to help with the transition.
- Response times for people requiring assessment had improved as the team worked in more efficient ways, such as pointing people to the right resources at first contact.

Jacqui McShannon added that the department was working on a new workforce strategy, learning from the successes of Children's Services in retaining staff and creating career progression opportunities. There was also a revised Quality Assurance Framework for better governance.

Dr Nicola Lang (Director of Public Health) highlighted the achievements in Public Health. The Reach Out (suicide prevention) campaign was launched in 2024 in collaboration with local charities such as The Listening Place. Drug and Alcohol services were brought together following re-tender in 2022 and were now all provided as an integrated service by Turning Point. The number of persons in treatment had exceeded targets. The borough also had the highest continuity of care (continuity when people leave prison and come back home and have continuity of drug treatment) for London.

Jacqui McShannon noted the funding challenges to adult social care and welcomed the independent commission into adult social care chaired by Baroness Casey. Demographic demand growth and rising costs were also putting pressure on the service. She noted that it was important to be creative and courageous in constantly reviewing models of delivery and engaging with current and future service users.

Sarah Bright (Director, Commissioning Transformation and Health Partnerships) then introduced the strategic 'whole system' approach, which would guide the service in working with partners to meet needs locally through supporting independent living and ensuring residents receive the support they need at the earliest point of their journey. Jacqui McShannon noted that the transformation would take place in three phases, with implementation planned to begin in 2026/27.

Prakash Daryanani (Head of Finance – Social Care) gave an overview of the social care spending plan. He noted that the department has a gross budget of £121.09m, and the Council proposed an increase of £6.4m in 2025/26 (£2.8m investment, £2.09m inflation, £2.16 in other budget adjustments and (£0.65m) of savings). A significant portion of the budget would be spent on frontline services, including residential and nursing placements, supported living and direct payments residents. He also presented the public health spending plan, noting that the department had a budget of £24.46m, pending the funding announcement for 2025/26.

Jacqui McShannon wrapped up the presentation by highlighting the significant investment of the Council, which reflected the commitment to provide free adult social care by the political and corporate leadership. The departments would continue to work diligently to identify any efficiencies to support the health of the Council's budget.

The Chair thanked the officers for their work and their visions and strategies moving forward.

Jim Grealy expressed his appreciation for the balanced budget and the Council's commitment to free adult social care. He asked about the situation of long waiting time for beds after hospital discharge. He also asked what the specific challenges to provision were and how that interfaced with work on mental health.

On the first question, Katherine Wilmette explained that the borough had a relatively low delayed discharge rate. In some cases, there were delays for various reasons, such as an individual wanting a particular area or when someone had very complex needs.

On the second question, Sarah Bright noted the insufficient mental health placements locally as the biggest challenge, meaning that the Council had to purchase out-of-borough placements to meet needs. There was a backlog of hospital discharge, and she would provide more details on the number to the Committee after the meeting.

ACTION: Sarah Bright

Councillor Amanda Lloyd-Harris noted that things were going in the right direction. She enquired if rising wages would impact the delivery of independent living. Sarah Bright replied that the challenge was in meeting all the statutory needs within the existing resources and delivering services creatively to meet needs. Procuring additional places costed more than providing care locally, which was why the team was focused on meeting needs locally. Jacqui McShannon added that it was important to review whether the placements currently commissioned were meeting needs. More residents were choosing to take up direct payments and it was necessary to understand what changes residents were expressing and the care they required in the future.

Councillor Lloyd-Harris also asked if the Council had sufficient capacity to take in everyone who needed Drug and Alcohol services and if the service would also take in those who had mental health needs. Dr Nicola Lang explained that there was sufficient capacity as the service had expanded the model to ensure patients were picked up. This was done through outreach ensuring that people coming home from prisons were picked up and co-location in probation services, mental health services, police cells and Accident and Emergency (A&E). Working with drug and alcohol nurses in A&E, drug and alcohol workers in probation offices and police stations, the integrated drug and alcohol service was able to meet the targeted number of

treatments. The team could also respond to concerns raised by residents and politicians about their neighbourhoods – working together with the Law Enforcement Team. Outreach also took place in all homeless hostels with Turning Point visiting each hostel at least once or twice a week.

Lucia Boddington enquired about the connectedness between the Drug and Alcohol services with homelessness and social care departments. Dr Nicola Lang noted that the Council had an enriched offer – all homeless hostels and short stay homeless hotels had an excellent offer from Drug and Alcohol services. The Drug and Alcohol services also had a clinical psychologist to address co-morbid psychological needs. All mental health supported accommodation also received drug and alcohol support. An enhanced dual diagnosis service was also commissioned from Central and Northwest London, which was a big mental health trust in Northwest London and was hugely important in reducing the number of crises.

The Chair asked if there was any example of the strategic vision on partnership and if there was any plan to expand these collaborations. Sarah Bright replied that the borough had a rich community sector, and it was important to work together to help shape future service delivery. While third sector investment funds had a role to play, the team would continue to work with partners on allocating support to the community sector.

The Chair thanked Councillor Ree for the presentation, noting the positive consensus on the corporate budget, from the comprehensive council tax support to the commitment to continue free home care services. The Chair also thanked officers for their work and expressed her appreciation for the achievements in Adult Social Care and Public Health.

RESOLVED

1. That the Policy and Accountability Committee considers the budget proposals and makes recommendations to Cabinet as appropriate.
2. That the Committee considers the proposed changes to fees and charges and makes recommendations as appropriate.

5. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The date of the next meeting was noted:

- 28 April 2025

Meeting started: 7.00 pm
Meeting ended: 8.07 pm

Chair

Contact officer: Tiffany Yip
Governance and Scrutiny
Email: Tiffany.Yip@lbhf.gov.uk