

Report to	Corporate Governance Committee
Date of meeting	18 November 2020
Lead Member / Officer	Bobby Feeley / Nicola Stubbins / Phil Gilroy
Report author	Phil Gilroy
Title	Audit Wales Report – Social Services Budgetary Cost Pressures

1. What is the report about?

- 1.1. This report summarises the Audit Wales Report of the Social Services Budgetary Cost Pressures in Denbighshire and provides Officers' responses to the Proposals for Improvement.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

- 2.1. To ensure Elected Members are kept informed of and able to scrutinise observations and actions following an external audit of a Denbighshire County Council service.

3. What are the Recommendations?

- 3.1. That Members consider the report, the associated Proposals for Improvement and Officers' responses, providing feedback as appropriate.

4. Report details

- 4.1. In February 2020, Wales Audit Office (now Audit Wales) undertook a review of the commissioning and administering arrangements of care homes for older people. The full report is included at Appendix 1.
- 4.2. The final report was issued in August 2020 and reached the conclusion that the Council has been unable to maximise the potential benefits of partnership

working when commissioning and administering residential and nursing home care placements.

4.3. The report stated that this conclusion had been reached because:

- the pooled budget arrangement for care homes accommodation does not provide value for money;
- the Council has well established arrangements for contracting for residential and nursing home care; recent national changes to the financial assessment process have resulted in additional financial cost; and
- the Council acts to ensure that service users are in appropriate placements, but access to continuing health care funding can result in delays and disputes.

4.4. The report goes on to make Proposals for Improvement which, for ease of reading, are included here with Officers' initial and further comments.

Proposal	Initial Comments	Further Comments
<p>P1 The Council, in partnership with the Health Board should establish a strategic approach to the funding and commissioning of residential and nursing home care that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bridges organisational differences; • demonstrates value for money; and • places service user needs at the forefront. 	<p>Work is ongoing regionally through the Commissioning Board and the Care Home Steering Group. Transformation Programme developments will also include changes to how BCU and DCC work together in commissioning and monitoring care home placements.</p>	<p>The Care Home Steering Group has recently been strengthened following a series of high level meetings between BCU and Local Authority representatives during the initial COVID-19 outbreak. The Care Home Operation Group is now chaired by a Director within the Health Board and reports both internally within BCU and externally to the Regional Commissioning Board chaired by a LA Director</p>
<p>P2 The Council should engage with partners to review the current pooled budget arrangement for</p>	<p>The current pooled budget arrangements are 'in development' and as such are regularly reviewed with all</p>	<p>The Wales Audit Report is yet to be shared with the Regional Partnership Board, which is the body tasked with overseeing</p>

<p>residential care for older people, to ensure that transfers of funds between public bodies have a tangible benefit such as better more integrated commissioning of residential and nursing home care</p>	<p>partners. We'll see that the examples of ensuring benefits such as integrated commissioning of care are included in this review.</p>	<p>the Pooled Budget arrangements that were made a legal requirement in the Social Services & Wellbeing Act. The current arrangements have been signed off by Welsh Government as being lawful.</p>
<p>P3The Council should work with the Health Board to improve communication arrangements that ensure any changes in health needs (and subsequent eligibility for continuing healthcare funding) are quickly communicated and funding arrangements revised.</p>	<p>Transformation Programme developments will also include changes to how BCU and DCC work together in commissioning and monitoring care home placements, including the development of joint review arrangements through Community Resource Teams.</p>	<p>The Coronavirus Pandemic has slowed the development of Community Resource Teams but it is still within the intention of the ongoing developments to include joint review arrangements. Regional joint work did begin on the development of a Continuing Health Care Standard Operating Procedure but BCU disengaged with LAs and the work has stalled.</p>
<p>P4Consider changes put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic to identify opportunities for better, more integrated commissioning of residential and nursing home care</p>	<p>A review of the arrangements developed in response to COVID-19 will be undertaken within the Joint Locality Management Team</p>	<p>The Joint Locality Management Team has recently resumed following the initial reduction on Covid-19 cases. Unfortunately no improvements in commissioning were made during the initial phase of the pandemic other than a reduction in the quality of discharge of frail older people into care homes from hospital, often with no reference to the LA.</p>

4.5 Audit Wales have since undertaken similar reviews of commissioning in Conwy County Borough Council and also within BCU. Those reports have yet to be made available to Denbighshire.

4.6 In 2020-21, Audit Wales plan to complete a regional review of residential and nursing care commissioning, with a focus on forecast demand and capacity planning, across North Wales

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

5.1. The commissioning of care homes for older people contributes to the following priorities:

- **Housing:** Everyone is supported to live in homes that meet their needs
- **Resilient Communities:** The Council works with people and communities to build independence and resilience

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

6.1. There are no costs arising directly from this report.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

7.1. A Well-being Impact Assessment is not required for this report.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

8.1. None

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1. Text here

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

10.1. There are no additional risks arising from this report.

11. Power to make the decision

11.1. No decision is required.