

HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

20 NOVEMBER 2017

MEMBER QUESTION TIME

1. QUESTION RECEIVED FROM COUNCILLOR PAM MOSELEY:

Shropshire's voluntary and community sector includes many organisations which provide advice and practical assistance on a diverse range of health and social care issues, such as loneliness and social isolation, ageing, depression and poor mental health, obesity, inactivity, loss of independence, deprivation, family breakdown, falls and complex health conditions.

Recent research (Summer 2017) by the Shropshire CCS Assembly found that "whilst investment in the VCS is reducing, redesigned models of public sector care are emphasising community provision as the first point of contact for people in need of support". Clearly, this includes the operating model of this Council, which has determined a shift from paid support to community resources. Referring to County VCS organisations, the research also found that "...if lost as a result of current challenges, the impact will be wide ranging and affect individuals, careers and the public sector."

Public sector financial support, including from Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group and Shropshire Council - is seen as an essential component of the funding of this sector. The current round of funding from Shropshire CCG ends on 31 March 2018, with no guarantee as to future support, which is recognised in the future work programme of this committee. In the recent past, Shropshire Council has used reserves to offer an additional 2 years of funding to extend existing VCS prevention contracts.

In light of the increasing demands for services being placed upon the voluntary and community sector by individuals, referring agencies and the public sector, and diminishing monies available to them, what can Shropshire Council do ensure that the County's voluntary and community organisations can continue to operate, providing the essential services upon which many Shropshire residents rely?

RESPONSE:

The Council recognises the value and importance of the work that the local Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) provides. We have worked with the local VCS for many years, both through individual contractual and grant-funding relationships and also at a strategic level, eg the Change and Compact Group.

The Council also recognises the longer-term financial impacts on social care and health budgets if the preventative outcomes currently being delivered by Shropshire's VCS providers are at risk through funding reductions to the sector. Discussions with VCS providers have also recognised that the demand on preventative services provided by the VCS is changing and increasing – people are

presenting with more complex and diverse issues; people who would have been supported by services or organisations which are no longer operating are now presenting to VCS providers.

Shropshire Council Adult Services has commenced work with VCS and local housing providers to review and plan our approach to commissioning preventative services beyond 2018/19. A VCS provider event was held on 7th November which reviewed current funding across preventative services, outcomes being delivered, emerging themes and the range of programmes which are dependent on a sustainable VCS which delivers preventative outcomes. These programmes include many of the Better Care Fund schemes, in particular Social Prescribing. It is hoped that Shropshire CCG will be able to work with the Council on this review.

This first event will be followed up by a series of themed working groups which will help to shape how commissioned preventative services will look beyond April 2019 and how they will be funded and supported. In the meantime the Council will continue to support our VCS and local housing support providers through existing grants and contracts.