

**Somerset Council MTFP 2024/25 - 2028/29
Savings Proposal**



Title of savings proposal	Information and guidance and support for Older People
Reference Number	ADS008

Executive Directorate	Adult Services
Service Directorate	ASC Commissioning
Service	Information and guidance and support for Older People currently provided by Age UK

Lead member	Cllr Bill Revans - Adult Social Care
-------------	--------------------------------------

Cost centre name	
Cost centre code	

Overview of proposal

Description of savings proposal (alt+return for new line)

Somerset Council has statutory obligations in developing a local approach to preventative support; this will be a key focus of the new Care Quality Commission assessment framework of Local Authority adult social care which launched in April 2023. As quoted in the Care Act 2014 "A local authority must provide or arrange for services, facilities or resources which would prevent, delay, or reduce individuals' needs for care and support, or the needs for support of carers. Local authorities should develop a clear, local approach to prevention which sets out how they plan to fulfil this responsibility, considering the different types and focus of preventative support. These services ensure that Somerset Council is meeting these statutory obligations.

This decision relates to the non-renewal of grant funding of services to support older people delivered by Age UK. The current grant is due to come to an end on 31st March 2024. The review and re procurement of these services would conclude with the award for a contract to one provider to continue to provide a clear bespoke offer of a variety of support services to Somerset older people. Renewal would ensure continuing of these services from 1st April 2024.

Current grant funding includes a contribution from both Adult Social Care and Public Health and is included as a savings proposal to be considered in the 23/24 MTFP process. The public health component is not part of the current MTFP process but relates to the decision made during 2022/23 to spend £1.8 million per annum of the ring-fenced public health grant in a different way to achieve a changed model of public health delivery across the council. This is through the implementation of a new target operating model which focuses on aligning funding to focus on the wider determinants of health.

The total grant funding is for £107,200 per annum, of which £61,200 is from Adult Social Care and if a decision is taken to not renew this grant, would represent a saving of £61,200 to the Council. The remaining funding of £46,000 per annum is from public health. If a decision is taken to not renew this grant, this would not represent a saving but allows the realignment of this amount of public health funds to other areas of the Council for wider determinants of health. The service activity described below relates to what was delivered by Age UK in 2022/23 using the total grant amount of £107,200.

The joint grant funding to Age UK is to deliver services and support offers that empower older people in Somerset to take control of their health and wellbeing. The services take a holistic, person-centred approach to older peoples health and wellbeing and give individuals time to focus on 'what matters to me'. This includes people with learning disabilities and/or autism and mental ill health.

The service delivers a targeted 'preventative' offer to older people, at the earliest opportunity, by contributing towards the provision of an Information, Guidance and Support Service that promotes independence; reduces isolation and loneliness and increases the sense of well-being.

In the last year the service has supported 47,313 people at a cost to Somerset Council of £1.29 per intervention. This support is broken down to the following three headlines:

- 17,757 older people with advice, free tailored support or regular social interaction manifest in 56,197 contacts.
- A further 18,949 tailored exercise places were made available across 52 locations in Somerset.
- A further 10,607 unpaid carer interactions were supported with virtual meet-ups, signposting and respite.

The grant also supports Age UK volunteer service. 255 volunteers gave 92,820 hours to helping older people across the 11 specific services, equating to well over £1,000,000 per annum in volunteer time. The Council support helps pay for Volunteers DBS, Travel costs, training, recruitment, communications and volunteer events.

The service supported free Information and Advice service. During 22/23 £1,503,092 worth of benefits was brought into the Somerset economy because of Age UKs trained volunteer team were successful in 86% of the claims they made on behalf of clients. 52 clients contacted Age UK every single week with problems and concerns and were looking for help and advice from our team. Satisfaction levels were in the high 90s%. One outreach session was held every single week throughout the year.

The service supported the provision of 2496 exercise classes throughout the entire county area during the year. This is important because for some rural communities, these classes are a social lifeline and they often do run at a loss. Often with only 3 or 4 attendees.

The service supports the Active Befriending and Wellbeing Friends services. 65 older people are supported every week by visits to their home for a walk and talk arrangement (for Active befriending) or a coffee and chat (for Wellbeing Friends, for those with mobility issues).

Other services that are part of the package offered to older people in Somerset, include Friendly Phone Calls, Chat and Map, Cognitive Stimulation for dementia sufferers, Falls Prevention, Winter Fuel assessment and payments and work to prevent scams.

NB. This savings proposal sits with the Adult Services Directorate and the Service Manager Paul Coles, but the overall grant fund decision is joint with Public Health Directorate, with Service Director Lou Woolway and Cllr Adam Dance. Lou Woolway has therefore included her signature to this proposal and Cllr Adam Dance has been made aware of this.

What will the saving achieve? (alt+return for new line)

£61,200 per annum from Adult Social Care

Type of saving

Which of the 17 key areas does the saving cover?	Non-LGR - Contract
Is this saving once-off or ongoing?	Ongoing
Does this impact on either the Council's priorities or another service?	Yes
Are there any policy change requirements? If yes, please provide further information below.	Yes
This decision would mean we would not be able to fulfil our commitment to early help and prevention as currently set out within our 2023-26 Adult Social Care Strategy and joint Health and Social Care Strategy with our ICB partners. This would also impact on our ability to deliver against our Council Plan.	

Benefits of the proposal		
Tangible Benefits - savings/income £ (pro-rata for part year)		Intangible benefits (e.g. cost avoidance)
2023/24 (in-year)	0	
2024/25	61,200	
2025/26		

Delivering the proposal
Describe the high level milestones for delivery, including timescales and target delivery date for the saving.
Allow contracts to come to a natural end on 31st March 2024. Savings would be realised from 1st April 24.
Who are the key people/services involved/required (internal and external).
Commissioners and Procurement officers
What activity is needed to achieve the saving?
None - Contract terms will naturally come to an end and Commissioners would no longer seek approval from Executive to recommend ongoing service delivery as a result of the procurement process
What are the financial resources required?
None
Are there any limitations or constraints?
None
What is the anticipated impact on service delivery to residents or business?
Financial Risk Evidence from Case Studies in areas implementing community led support (including Somerset case studies) suggest a potential 5% decrease in commissioned care in initial care and support arrangements compared to

expected levels. For Adult Social Care alone if we were to stop this approach, this equates to £13m additional costs into the Council. These additional costs will ripple and increase across the whole Integrated Care System including Children Social Care, Mental Health services; Housing, Displaced People, My Life My Future, Revenue and Benefits, Somerset Direct, Acutes, Primary Care and voluntary and community sector.

Safeguarding Risk

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and protect them from harm. Protecting children and vulnerable adults from:

- abuse and maltreatment
- preventing harm to children’s health or development
- ensuring that they grow up with the provision of safe and effective care enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect

Removing this service will have a catastrophic impact on how effectively Somerset Council can safeguard Somerset’s families and residents.

Please note that an equalities impact assessment is required for all proposals.

Other implications	
Impact	Number or description
Staffing impact (#s)	Approximately 3 redundancies within Age UK
Redundancy or vacancy?	Redundancy
Legal impact	As this proposal relates to a service reduction or change, those likely to be affected or impacted by it may seek permission to challenge it by way of judicial review. Grounds for challenge include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illegality (the Council does not have power to make this decision); • Irrationality (the Council’s decision is unreasonable OR the Council took irrelevant matters into account/failed to consider relevant matters); • Procedural unfairness (the Council did not follow statutory procedures or observe the principles of natural justice – flawed consultation process claims are usually made under this ground); and • Legitimate expectation (that the Council will act in a specific way as a result of its own statements/conduct).
Insurance or other impact	None
Equalities impact	Attached within the EIA

Please ensure that you have consulted HR and your Finance Business Partner regarding any staffing savings.

Risks	
What is the risk status of the proposal?	High
What are the risks associated with this proposal?	
A full Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed. There are other impacts in relation to this decision.	

- Increase to an already pressured Adult Social Care system in terms of increase in the number of people requiring an Adult Social Care Assessment. 140 Carers and 881 Somerset residents already waiting for an Assessment as well as 3,221 outstanding reviews.

- Increase in the number of people requiring statutory more costly service provision to meet their needs as community solutions will be reduced. This is not limited to Adult Social Care Services but will also impact increase in demand on Children's Social Care services; Mental Health services, housing; revenue and benefits; displaced people and Somerset Council Customer Services.

- Increase in the number of people seeking help from GPs who are already under extreme pressure, a recent report demonstrates a 40% increase through reduced community solutions

- Hospital flow be less effective with a rise in the number of people needing more acute services and a reduction in the solutions to be able to have an effective discharge as well as an increase in bed blocking. A significant reduction to Pathway 0 discharges resulting in an increase in demand through out bedded pathways which will be significant impact on health and social care budgets. There will be up to 10 % or 400 referrals per month into the funded Pathway 1 D2A service which would impact flow and cost of the service would increase by up to £3.5 million per year. Re-admissions will increase, with each re-admission costing around £3k per episode to the NHS.

- Adult Social Care transformation programme (My Life, My Future) will be significantly impacted through a reduction in the ability to be able to deliver on the savings identified, through reduced community solutions.

- Inability to be able to successfully evidence against Care Quality Commission (CQC) assessment criteria due to lack of support for unpaid carers and no clear plan for targeted prevention services. This risks a negative inspection outcome and reputational damage to the Council.

- Somerset's Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) reduce the need for more costly statutory services. The negative impacts of reduced funding to the VCFSE, particularly at a time of increased vulnerability as they recover from the effects of both Covid19 and the Cost-of-Living Crisis, include:

i. A reduction in service delivery and innovation

ii. Staff redundancies

iii. Reduced sustainability with potential closure of organisations

iv. Fewer active volunteers

v. Devaluing their economic contribution

vi. An ability to visibly follow through the commitment to invest in places.

vii. Health and Wellbeing impacts

viii. Emergency response undermined

ix. Potential breach of the Public Sector Equality Duty

x. Reputational damage to the council

xi. Increased costs to the council

Are there mitigations or actions that if implemented can reduce those risks?

Would require an increase in social care resources to respond to the demand for support. This will cost more than the current offer and recruitment into these posts would be challenging and not immediate.

Please send your completed form to your Finance Business Partner for sign-off and submission of request.