

Executive – 6 March 2024 – Public Questions

Question

Nigel Behan – Unite

We are asking questions about the [Revenue Budget Monitoring Report Month 10](#) and the accompanying appendices.

It is stated in [M10 Appendix 01 - Adult Services.pdf \(somerset.gov.uk\)](#) that:

“Adult Services overspend is £24.2m due to increase in both fee levels for care home placements and delivery of home care, offset by a number of in year mitigations to reduce it to £14.9m. Additional costs within the intermediate care model have been identified and discussions are being held with Integrated Care Board. These costs mainly relate to pathway beds which are used to support discharges from acute hospitals.”

And

“To offset the overspend a number of in year mitigations and funding have been identified including the market sustainability funding - workforce grant of £3.8m, in year mitigations of £3m including reviewing all 1:1 with a view to reducing hours required and £2.5m NHS monies.”

Moreover

“Adult Social Care - Physical Disability/Sensory Loss/65 Plus This area of Adult Services is currently projecting to be £5.3m overspent. As in previous years, we continue to see pressure within residential and nursing placements, with pressure on the weekly costs, as well as the number of people receiving support. Historically the authority has paid low fee rates within this sector. The increase in fee levels for 23/24 are still not stabilising the market, due to the increase in inflation and cost of living.”

Furthermore

“Commissioning is currently projecting to overspend by £1.1m, as the Adult Services’ transformation ‘my life, my future’ will not achieve the full £5m saving relating to this financial year.”

Q1 a)

Is the market sustainability funding required (partly?) because of the years of 0% increase in CTAX as identified in the Full Council report(s) for the 2024/25 budget setting process?

Q1 b)

Why “(Historically the authority has paid low fee rates within this sector.)” has the authority paid lower fee rates and “The increase in fee levels for 23/24 are still not stabilising the market....” Does SC think there are better, more accountable, transparent and democratic methods to deliver care services (for service users rather than customers with cash?!) without relying on stabilising the care “market”(for example relying on Somerset Care’s business model -of financial viability-as reported in the Gazette [Councillor starts petition to avoid closure of two Somerset care homes | Somerset County Gazette](#))?

Q1 c)

The My life, my future project (using consultants Newton Europe) seems to be duplicating “business as usual” work that ASC ought to be conducting – why has the use of Newton Europe been considered necessary and what are the overall projected savings etc?