Present: Cllr Eileen Keller (Chair), Cllr Danielle Lawrence (Deputy Chair), Cllr Sanchia Alasia, Cllr Abdul Aziz, Cllr Sade Bright, Cllr Peter Chand and Cllr Edna Fergus

Also Present: Cllr Maureen Worby, Cllr Dominic Twomey, Cllr Rocky Gill and Cllr Dan Young

Apologies: Cllr Syed Ahammad and Cllr Faruk Choudhury

11. Declaration of Members' Interests

Councillor Peter Chand declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in the budget proposal relating to Personalising Learning Disability Services (ACS SAV 06a), as he was an employee of the Osborne Partnership.

Councillor Danielle Lawrence declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in the budget proposal relating to the Generalist Advice and Hate Crime reporting contract (ACS SAV 12a) as she was an employee of DABD UK.

Councillors Chand and Lawrence left the meeting room prior to the budget proposal in which they declared an interest being discussed and did not participate in the discussion or vote relating to it.


The Cabinet Member for Finance gave a presentation on the background to the budget, setting out the approach, timetable, the consultation process and next steps.

The Council was facing significant challenges due to the shortfalls in budgets and the reduction in Local Government Funding. Estimated savings of more than £53million were required over the three year period covering 2015/16 to 2017/18.

To bridge that budget gap, a range of savings proposals had been developed targeting the next two financial years with additional proposals earmarked for 2017/18. A gap still existed for each year and savings proposals to address this were currently being developed.

Those savings proposals that specifically fell within the remit of the Health and Adult Service Select Committee (HASSC) totalled £3.530million and were detailed within the report.

The Lead Member advised those present that the HASSC had been asked to review and analyse the options and issues presented in each budget saving and provide comments and recommendations. The Cabinet would consider the
feedback from the Select Committee scrutiny and other public consultation forums on 16 December 2014.

The Lead Member advised that other Members of the Council, Trade Union representatives and members of the public present would be invited to ask questions and contribute to the discussions during the meeting in line with the procedures.

The savings proposals relevant to the HASSC were then presented and discussed as follows:

(a) Adult Social Care Workforce (ACS SAV01; £584k)

This proposal would respond to both the Care Act 2014 and the Council’s success in personalising adult social care services, in particular the rapid expansion in the local market in personal assistants. It would see the deletion of a number of posts from management, occupational therapy, the in-house personal assistant team, and support planning. An additional care budget allocation would be made to ensure support continues to be provided from the local market in care services. The Community Learning Disability Team and the Complex Needs Service would continue to be operated as separate functions, but with merged management. The total staff saving would be £584k.

Members of the Committee expressed concern that whilst some people would be able to make choices around who to purchase care from, others may not.

Members of the Committee and the public also expressed concern that the proposal would see a deletion of 19 personal assistants and asked, given that it was difficult to find work at this time, what would be done to support these members of staff find alternative work. Furthermore, they asked what the redundancy costs incurred by the Council would be.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health stated that:

- Independent advice would be available for people and, family members (where appropriate) would be a part of the decision on who to purchase personal care from. Furthermore, the experience since the Service was remodelled in 2009 was that the availability of personal assistants in the market has far exceeded expectations. The quality assurance mechanisms worked well with dedicated personal assistant coordination function.
- When the Service was remodelled in 2009 a lot of staff who were made redundant became self employed or went on to work for agencies, as the demand for personal assistants was high. She was confident that the staff affected by this proposal would not find it difficult to find work. Furthermore, the Council, where possible, would support staff who were interested in becoming self employed.
- Staff redundancy costs were not available at this stage. These costs would be covered by central budgets.

Members asked what the cost of recruiting eight new social workers would be and whether the proposal would have a potential negative impact on staff in terms of their casework load and ability to cope.
The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health stated that the saving of £584k had been arrived at after having taken into account the cost of recruiting eight social workers. The Corporate Director of Adult and Community Services stated that staff did feel well supported and had adequate levels of casework and this proposal, if implemented, should not affect this.

Members of the Committee asked whether there was any feedback from Occupational Therapy staff with regards to the proposal to delete one managerial and front line post.

Other Members asked whether the implementation of the proposal would be likely to affect compliance with the Munroe guidance that casework should be allocated to social workers on a 12 to one ratio. They also asked whether some children’s services social workers could not be re-trained to deliver adult social care services.

In response, the Corporate Director of Adult and Community Services stated that:

- In terms of the impact on the Occupational Therapy Service, this proposal allowed an opportunity for the Council to look at the skill mix of the Team and integrate their posts with other work, with the potential positive impact of less people going in and out of people’s homes.
- With regards to the feedback from members of staff who would be subject to redundancy, it was expected that they would not be in support of the proposal. However, the proposal was based on what would be best for service users in light of resources.
- The Munroe guidance was not applicable to adult social care workers.
- Whilst the core training for both children’s and adult’s social care was the same, the roles required a significant degree of specialism, which would have to be built up over time.

A member of the public stated that a proportion of people using services provided at the Maples paid for them using their ‘virtual budgets’ and that their needs had been met well. The proposal seemed to put forward a deficient way of meeting people’s needs. For those individuals for whom the virtual budget would no longer be applicable, their cost to use the Maples would increase to £65 a day. Therefore the Osborne Partnership would only be able to offer two thirds of the current placements.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health stated that it was for the Osborne Partnership to decide how much to charge for placements. In response, the member of the public stated that the Osborne Partnership was supported by charities, which were more likely to support it if they knew that it was backed up by the Council. As Council support would be removed if this proposal was implemented, the Osborne Partnership would be less likely to attract support from charities.

The Corporate Director of Adult and Community Services stated that the eligibility criteria in the Care Act was very clear; the Council was required to determine the amount the person was entitled to by considering their needs. This was different to the question of how much the Council could give to the service provider. It was necessary to retender the contract and although the Osborne Partnership had a good chance at being awarded the contract because of their experience, others may also bid and the Council would have to evaluate the bids before making a
A member of the public stated that in his view, this proposal was akin to a “sticking plaster” approach. He asked what imaginative or brave approach the Council would adopt and when in meeting people’s needs. He also asked how the Council could claim to be able to do more with less, again, having undergone budget cuts in previous years and with the Care Act now placing new duties on it.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health stated that understanding and implementing the Care Act was a complex process; the guidance had not yet been complete and the Council did not know how much it would receive from the Government for its implementation. This proposal would partly help to create some capacity to respond to the Care Act and it was based on the principle that people in need of services should decide which service was right for them, allowing greater flexibility for individual needs to be met.

The Committee supported the proposal.

Councillor Peter Chand left the room at this point and did not return until the discussion and vote on the following saving proposal was over.

(b) Personalising Learning Disability Services (ACS SAV06a; £334k)

This proposal concerned the day services provided at the Maples, under the Council’s own management, and the Osborne Partnership, currently under contract for a particular group of service users, although it also provided services to personal budget holders. The proposal would see the existing service users of both the Maples and the Osborne Partnership block contract moved to a personal budget through which they could choose the support that they would like. The building currently occupied by the Maples would be closed and an alternative use found for it, and the Council’s in-house learning disability day services would be focused at Heathlands where services for people with higher levels of need are provided. The two groups of service users would be assessed to determine their need for specialist support through a personal budget, and supported to move into the new arrangements; in some cases it is anticipated that this would be through more mainstream services rather than specialist. The eventual total savings would be £334k.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health stated that she was aware that the Maples was a long standing service which was very well thought of. However, as more people had taken control over use of services through personal budgets, fewer people had chosen to use services offered by the Maples. 65 people were registered to use the Maples but on a daily average basis there were rarely more than 40 people there. The building had the capacity to support more than 100 people. She acknowledged that for the people who used the Maples, it was very important; however, similarly to the previous proposal, this proposal was based on people’s ability to now choose what service they wished to purchase using their personal budgets.

She stated that the Council had invested £150k in a block contract with the Osborne Partnership. Due to procurement rules the contract had to be re-tendered. However, should people continue to wish to purchase services from the Osborne Partnership, they would be able to do so. To ensure there was no
adverse affect on the service at Healthlands, some social workers would be transferred there. There were also some people who, with the right support, could find employment. Others would purchase the right services for them, including, if they wished, services from the Osborne Partnership.

She stated that she wished to use the opportunity to clarify that the Relish Café would not be closed down. The Relish Café was a model of what the Council would like to see more of; it was doing well enough so as to not rely on a Council subsidy. The subsidy would be reduced over a phased period.

Members of the Committee stated that some users could find it difficult to make decisions around what services to purchase and asked what support would be available to people during the transition process. The Chair read out a question on behalf of MP Jon Cruddas asking the same and also asking how this would be monitored. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health stated that people who had social workers could ask them for support and that the Council would work with the Osborne Partnership, the Learning Disability Forum, and where appropriate, family members, to ensure people felt well supported during transition. She would be happy to attend a future meeting of the HASSC to discuss the monitoring of the impact of this proposal on service users.

In response to a question from Members, the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health stated that:

- The Heathlands was not close to the Maples; however, it was suitable for people with more complex needs.
- Staff redundancy costs had not been worked out at this stage.
- She was confident that staff made redundant would find work as they they were trained, experienced and talented.
- The calculations for achieving the saving of £334k had taken into account of the costs of providing services for those who would need higher level support.
- People who used the Maples would be reassessed against eligibility criteria, after which some people may not receive what they were receiving now.
- Every local authority was implementing ‘personalisation’ to accord with the Care Act. By April 2015 local authorities were required to move to different arrangements.

The Committee supported the proposal.

(c) Double-handed calls for personal care in the home (ACS SAV10; £130k)

If a service user requires lifting during home care visits, the current policy of home care agencies is to send two carers to the appointment (doubling up). This reduces privacy and dignity for vulnerable people. A number of factors suggested that there was an excess of such ‘double ups’, and that the use of equipment, supported by individual risk assessment, could potentially reduce the costs associated with providing this care. The proposal would see the provision of overhead hoisting equipment and/or slide sheets and a review of safe handling techniques to reduce two carers to one carer.
In response to questions, the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health stated that the Council would not take health and safety risks with staff and that risk assessments would be carried out for every case. With regards to permanency of equipment in the person’s home, this was something that would be determined on a case by case basis.

The Committee supported the proposal.

(d) Independent Living Fund (ACS SAV09; £250k)

This proposal would ensure a fairer and more equitable distribution of resources for people currently receiving separate funding through the Independent Living Fund (ILF). The ILF closed to new applicants some time ago, and the funding and responsibility for meeting the needs of recipients’ would transfer to local authorities on 15 June 2015. The proposal was to reassess all 39 recipients of the ILF and transfer them to a new personal budget allocation from April 2016, which would bring their support into line with the Council’s standard resource allocation system. It was expected to save £250k from a current spend of around £550k per annum.

Members of the Committee stated that the proposal would have a substantial impact on disabled people, and asked whether people would be disadvantaged if this proposal was implemented. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health stated that this proposal would see two groups of people being treated more equally, and therefore, the group affected by this proposal would be disadvantaged.

A member of the public stated that he was receiving money from this fund for a number of years; he felt his independence and wellbeing were based on this support. He urged the Council to find funds to continue making payments to people who had high needs.

Members of the public stated that a risk of implementing this proposal was that people may end up in residential care due to a deterioration in their lifestyle and wellbeing, which would cost the Council much more in the long run.

Members stated that rather than local authorities taking money away from people who needed it to maintain their independence, the Government should be lobbied to provide a fund for those who were no longer eligible for the ILF.

The Committee did not support the proposal due to the potential negative impact it would have on current ILF recipients’ independence and wellbeing given their high level of needs.

(e) Passenger Transport (ACS SAV 11: £400k)

As the Council was working to reconfigure day service provision, particularly for people with learning disabilities through the Fulfilling Lives Programme, it was proposed to also reconfigure the Passenger Transport Service to reflect more individualised transport choices made by service users, with an expected saving of £400k. When the Care Act is implemented in 2015 adults with social care needs
would, where appropriate, have transport costs included in their personal budgets, therefore reducing the need for this Service.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health stated that she was not proposing the cessation of the Service; rather, that the Service be reconfigured to make efficiencies, for example, by having a cross borough service. The proposal would not be implemented until 2016/17, as a review would be undertaken first to establish what the best service model would be.

Members stated that there was no breakdown of how the £400K worth of savings would be achieved. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health stated that the detail of this proposal was not available yet as the review of the Service had not been undertaken. The Committee was being asked to support the decision to undertake a review with a view to reconfiguring the service to achieve a £400k saving.

Members asked how people no longer eligible to use the Passenger Transport Service would be supported with learning to travel independently. The Corporate Director of Adult and Community Services stated it was expected that some people would learn to travel independently relatively quickly (with some being eligible for the freedom pass). Generally, any support provided would need to be considered on a case by case basis.

A member of the public stated that reconfigurations usually meant job losses and asked what effect the knowledge of this proposed service review would have on staff morale. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health stated that she acknowledged it would be difficult for staff; however, it was necessary to go through this process. She stated that some staff would retain their jobs as the cessation of the Service was not being proposed.

The Committee did not support this proposal, planned to be implemented in 2016/17, due to the lack of detail around how a saving of £400k would be achieved. However, members agreed with the Cabinet Member’s proposal to undertake a review of the Service to establish whether efficiencies could be made by turning the Service into a cross borough one, for example.

The Chair adjourned the meeting for a short break. Upon the meeting being reconvened, to accord with the Council’s Constitution, the Committee agreed to extend the meeting for a further reasonable period to get through the business of the meeting.

(f) Taxicard Scheme (CEX SAV50; £160k)

Taxicard was a scheme providing subsidised door-to-door transport for people who have mobility impairments. This proposal to make changes to eligibility (which would see an anticipated 60% reduction in the number of those eligible for the Taxicard Scheme) would save an anticipated £160k per annum. The focus of the reduction would be on those who had the least pressing need for the Service. The Council’s current Taxicard budgets were the second largest of all the London boroughs. Users affected by this proposal would be able to request a reassessment.

Members of the Committee noted that this proposal would affect Band C users and
expressed concern at the proposal as there were currently 1766 people in Band C.

Other members were concerned that people potentially affected by this proposal may not be aware that it was being put forward, or that the Council was undertaking consultation on it. It was suggested that the Committee recommend that the proposal be deferred so more people could be consulted on it.

In response to a question the Corporate Director of Adult and Community Services stated that users affected by this proposal, who have a lot of appointments to attend due to their health needs, may be entitled to travel support for those appointments under NHS provision.

A member of the public suggested that yet again, a proposal was put forward that would affect more vulnerable people. He suggested that the proposal be phased out over a longer period of time than proposed.

In response to questions relating to how the saving had been worked out, the Cabinet Member for Finance stated that Band C users were collectively entitled to 63576 trips. The saving of £160k was based on these trips no longer being funded.

**The Committee supported the proposal.**

(g) **Commissioning Supported Living provision: The Foyer (ACS SAV 12f; £367k)**

It was proposed that the short term accommodation for single homeless young adults (18-15) not be retendered when it ceases on 3 July 2015. The service provided 116 beds and tailored life skills programmes seeking to reduce the risk of these young people may cause to themselves or the community. This proposal would see a 100% reduction in the service provision at a saving of £367k. In ceasing the supported living aspect of the accommodation other services delivered from the facility, particularly commissioned by Children’s services, may be impacted. In addition there may be an impact on homeless referrals locally. However, arrangements would be put in place to ensure young adults of working age were supported to live more independently, wherever possible in ordinary houses, in ordinary streets.

Members noted that the concept of placing young people in need of support in one building may cause problems for neighbours. They cited examples of this at the Foyer. However, members were also mindful that it was important not to tarnish all the young people as they were from difficult backgrounds and needed support.

Members of the Committee asked what other options would be available to young people who needed support with living independently should the proposal be implemented. They also asked what would happen to the young people who were currently living in the Foyer, given the low level of one bedroom accommodation in the Borough.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health stated that:

- The Council would continue floating support but in the long term, it would need to have discussions with partners in the voluntary sector about whether they could provide some advice to young people. Although this
proposal was not to renew a specific contract, the Council needed to consider more widely whether locating all young people in need of support in one building is conducive for them and the community and, the level of floating support available.

- The Foyer was not long term accommodation; the placement was for two years after which the young person would need to move out. In terms of the supply of one bedroom properties in the Borough going forward, Housing would need to have discussions with East Thames about how to increase supply.

Other Members commented that although the non-renewal of this contract would see a short term saving, the repercussions of this proposal may cost the Council more in the long term. Without support, the young people, who were from difficult backgrounds, would be more likely to use drugs or become parents at a young age, for example; this would increase costs for the Council due to the interventions they would require. Also, the young people would need to have their housing costs met by the Housing General Fund.

The Corporate Director of Adult and Community Services stated that the young people who would be affected by this proposal were aged 18 – 25. Whilst it was a difficult decision there were examples of people from this age group, from difficult backgrounds, who had lived independently in the community without support.

The Committee supported the proposal.

(h) Commissioning Supported Living provision: The Vineries (ACS SAV 12g; £201K)

This proposal concerned the Vineries, which provided low level supported accommodation for 16 -18 year olds to enable them to live full and independent lives. There were 31 units available for a tenure of up to two years. The contract would end on 6 August 2015 and it was not intended to recommission. The anticipated saving from this proposal would be £210k. Support would be put in place for the transition to alternative accommodation.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health stated that this proposal was based on the same principle as the last one; however, as the affected group of people were younger, they may be more vulnerable.

In response to questions from Members of the Committee, the Corporate Director of Adult and Community Services stated that:

- The reason these young people were in supported living arrangements was due to circumstances such as family problems, or teenage pregnancy and fostering was not considered appropriate due to their age.
- At the moment there was no concrete alternative option for these young people; however, among the options being considered were grouped tenancies, floating support and whether a package of support could be offered with resources from Children’s Services, depending on the young person’s circumstances.

Other members argued that similar to the previous proposal, this proposal would
see increased costs in the long term, which may need to be met by the General fund, and therefore, this proposal would not produce a ‘real’ saving. Furthermore, the Vineries did not have the problems associated with the Foyer; it was well thought of in the community.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health stated that she agreed with many of the points raised. She emphasised however, that this proposal would not leave the young people without accommodation; it would remove the supported element of the Service. She stated that perhaps the Troubled Families Programme could provide some support.

**The Committee did not support this proposal**, noting that this Service was for young people who were likely to be from very difficult backgrounds. They expressed concern that should the supported element of the accommodation be removed, it would have negative effects on young people’s wellbeing with the risk that support would need to be provided from other Council services leading to more expenditure, which would defeat the objective of the proposal.

(i) **Commissioning Supported Living provision: Bevan House (ACS SAV 12i; £195k)**

It was proposed to not retender the short term accommodation based support for families and single people aged 25 plus when the current contract ceases on 30 September 2015. The Service provided 47 beds and tailored life skills programmes. This proposal would see a 100% reduction in the service provision at a saving of £195k. In ceasing the funding of this Service there would be a reduction in the opportunities to refer from the housing and homelessness teams within the Council and this would impact on other housing provision and the ability to offer provision to families locally. Support would be put in place for the transition to alternative accommodation.

Members expressed concern at the potential impact this proposal would have on vulnerable families, particularly, on children. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health stated that whilst the Council had more resources, it was right to support these families; however, due to the level of savings to be made, it was necessary to balance the needs of all those using services, against the resources available. There were many vulnerable families who had learnt and managed to live in the community without support.

**The Committee supported the proposal.**

Councillor Danielle Lawrence left the room at this point and did not return until the discussion and vote on the following saving proposal was over.

(j) **Generalist Advice and Hate Crime reporting contract –ACS SAV 12a; £280k**

It was proposed to remove the generalist advice, enhanced welfare rights advice and hate crime reporting by ceasing the commissioned Service as the contract comes up for extension or retendering on 31 March 2015. This would be an 89% reduction in the commissioned Service which supported 5,000 residents annually to access advice locally. The current cost of the provision from the commissioning
budget was £280k. There was an additional contribution from Children’s Services of £35,000 for advice through children’s centres and with the reduction this Service would be impacted too, as the core service support would no longer be available to deliver additional outreach through children’s centres.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health stated that although there were no developed plans at this stage to mitigate the impact of this proposal, the duty placed on the Council by the Care Act to commission advice services for those who were eligible, may alleviate some of the adverse impact on the community as a result of this proposal, at some stage going forward.

In response to concerns raised by Members of the Committee and the public, with regards to the potential removal of hate crime reporting, the Corporate Director of Adult and Community Services stated that this aspect of the Service was a very small part of the contract and that the evidence clearly showed that the majority of hate crime is reported directly to the Police. She stated that this proposal was brought not because the services were not effective, but because of the level of savings that had to be made to balance the Council’s budget. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health stated that people experiencing hate crime should report it to the Police and could go to the Race Equality Council for support.

Members were concerned that implementation of this proposal mean that the most vulnerable members of the community would have nowhere to turn to, particularly at a time of substantial welfare reform. Most people using these services did so because they were desperate. The Citizen’s Advice Bureau was a ‘beacon’ Service who gave much more back to the community than was invested in it. They pointed out that the Public Accounts and Audit Select Committee (PAASC) discussed a proposal to reduce the number of the Council benefits advisors providing face to face advice, which if implemented, would worsen the situation.

The Director of the Citizen’s Advice Bureau provided statistical information on the number of people it supported as well as the types of problems it was supporting people with. She asked who these people would turn to should the proposal were implemented, given that the Council could not directly support them.

**The Committee did not support this proposal** on the basis that the advice services covered by it were all the more necessary at a time of substantial welfare reform. Furthermore, in light of statistics showing that a high level of the Borough’s residents were in debt, unemployed or in receipt of housing benefit, Members felt that this proposal would impact upon the Borough’s residents particularly badly. They also noted that should another savings proposal (falling under the PAASC) to reduce the number of benefits officers providing ‘face to face’ advice be implemented, this would exacerbate the situation.

**Introduction of a charge for the Active Age Programme (ACS SAV39; £120k)**

The Council delivers a health improvement activity programme for older people in the Borough, which has two elements: Active for Life, principally the free leisure offer in the Borough’s leisure centres; and Active Age, activities provided at locations across the Borough. It was proposed to bring these two strands into an
overall programme and to introduce a charge of £1 per week for overall membership. It was expected that this would raise £120k.

In response to questions from Members of the Committee, the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health stated that:

- users of the services would be able to spread the cost rather than pay one annual fee
- She would not propose to increase the charge further next year, if she remained the Cabinet Member for this Service.

Other members stated that as a host Olympic Borough, its legacy should be to provide easier and cheaper access to its residents. They also commented that it was not right to base an income generating proposal on the Borough’s elderly residents and suggested that perhaps younger or out of borough’ residents should be charged a small amount more instead.

Members questioned whether this proposal would raise the level of income projected as it could be presumed that a lot of residents used the Active for Life Service because it was free and would not continue to do so even if only a small charge was introduced. In response the Corporate Director of Adult and Community Services stated that the projection was prudent and the level of income may actually exceed the amount projected.

**The Committee supported the proposal.**

(i) **Administrative and commissioning posts (ACS SAV 15a; £200k)**

This proposal would see the deletion of eight individual posts across the Directorate. A number were administrative, whilst others were in commissioning functions. As the Council considered how to meet the new duties under the Care Act, further consideration would be given to the resourcing of commissioning functions. The projected saving of this proposal was £200k.

Members asked whether staff remaining in post would face increasing workloads if this proposal was implemented.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health stated that this may be a potential effect but primarily it would mean a reduction in support for Group Managers and Divisional Directors in a range of disciplines.

**The Committee supported the proposal.**

(m) **Mental Health Services (ACS SAV08; £250k)**

This proposal concerned the Council’s integrated mental health social care service managed by North East London NHS Foundation Trust (NELFT). It proposed a reduction in the budgets for residential and supported accommodation, and would require care co-ordinators to find ways in which to keep people independent and/or at home for longer, as well as the moving of support packages from high-cost residential services to lower-cost supported living environments. It would involve the Service working with commissioners on the future configuration of supported
living services. Work was currently underway on the future of the joint arrangements with NELFT, therefore, this was proposed as a saving of £250k starting in 2016/17.

Members of the Committee expressed concern with regards to the availability of supported living environments in the community. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health stated that the saving was not proposed to be implemented until 2016/17 and 2017/18 so that the Council could look into the level of provision.

In response to a question from Members of the Committee, the Corporate Director of Adult and Community Services stated that at the moment, people of a working age often went into residential care and stayed there longer than necessary as there was not a strong approach to supporting people to get back out into the community. This proposal would mean more people would be supported to remain in their existing home and that when appropriate, people would receive hospital treatment.

A member of the public stated that this proposal was wrong as:

- it would force people to return home to circumstances which may have contributed to their ill health in the first place.
- individual budgets would not be funded sufficiently enough to allow the person to have a genuine choice.
- This proposal presented risks to very vulnerable people with no safeguards in place to address them.

He urged the Council to provide an ‘affordability guarantee’ to people who would be affected by this proposal.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health stated that people would not be asked to return to unsupported accommodation if it was not safe to do so. She stated that the budget for mental health services was very limited and that this proposal would encourage movement through the care pathway through a ‘recovery approach’.

The Committee supported the proposal.

The Lead Member of the Committee asked the Cabinet Members and officers to formally report back to the Cabinet the comments and recommendations resulting from the meeting. She thanked councillors, officers, and members of the public for their contributions.