



HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

19 JANUARY 2022

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2022/23 – 2025/26

MINUTE EXTRACT

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 – 2025/26

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Public Health and the Director of Corporate Resources which provided information on the proposed 2022/23 to 2025/26 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as it related to the Public Health Department. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item '9' is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed Mrs. L. Richardson CC, Cabinet Lead Member for Health, to the meeting for this item.

In introducing the report the Director informed the Committee that the 2022/23 Public Health Grant allocation had not yet been announced which was of concern and the date of the announcement was not known. Although the Chancellor had indicated in his Autumn 2021 statement that there would be a real terms increase for the 2022/23 Public Health Grant, the department's budget had been based on an assumption that the Public Health Grant would remain the same as the previous year.

The Cabinet Lead Member highlighted that a lot of recommissioning with external providers had been carried out in order to produce savings. However, investing in prevention schemes resulted in savings in the long term for Public Health and the NHS therefore it was counter-productive to cut core services. The implementation of Integrated Care Systems would result in more partnership working between the NHS, Local Authorities and other stakeholders and it was hoped this would result in more sharing of funding as well.

Arising from discussion, the following points were noted:

- (i) No growth bids were expected for 2022/23 though there were expected to be some cost pressures for example the increase in NHS salaries. Concerns were raised by members that the MTFS did not take into account increased pressures such as population growth and in response some reassurance was given that when commissioning external providers increases in cost pressures such as population growth were built into the contract and forward modelling.

- (ii) Increased pressures arising from the Covid-19 pandemic were being funded from the Contain Outbreak Management funding of £3.0m, not the main Public Health budget.
- (iii) In response to concerns raised as to how the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy would be delivered if there was no growth in the Public Health budget, it was explained that only part of the Strategy was about Public Health service delivery and much of it was about policy making and wider measures that could be taken across the County to improve the health of the population.
- (iv) In response to a request from a member for more outputs to be included in the MTFS report so members could understand what was being achieved as a result of the Public Health budget, the Director of Public Health confirmed that the department did monitor outputs through departmental management meetings and this information would be publicised as part of the forthcoming Public Health Strategy. The Health and Wellbeing Board also had a role to play in monitoring whether sufficient funding was being invested in prevention strategies in Leicestershire.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report and information now provided be noted;
- (b) That the comments now made be forwarded to the Scrutiny Commission for consideration at its meeting on 31 January 2022.