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| Meeting: | Health and social care overview and scrutiny committee |
| Meeting date: | 28 April 2017 |
| Title of report: | New carers strategy for Herefordshire |
| Report by: | Strategic wellbeing and housing manager |

Classification

Open

Key decision

This is not an executive decision.

Wards affected

County-wide

Purpose

To seek the views of the committee on the proposed new carers strategy for Herefordshire.

Recommendation(s)

THAT:

- (a) the committee considers the process adopted to developing a new carers strategy and advises on whether it is appropriate and sufficiently robust and on how it might be improved; and**
- (b) the committee considers the priorities set out for the proposed new carers strategy and advises upon the most appropriate content for the final strategy document.**

Alternative options

- 1 None. It is open to the committee to determine whether it wishes to make any recommendations for improvement.

Reasons for recommendations

- 2 The council has committed to producing a new carers strategy for Herefordshire in collaboration with its partners. In 2017 building on previous engagement work, it has

been working closely with carers to prepare a strategy for consideration by cabinet this summer. The advice and recommendations of the committee are sought to help further shape the strategy and enhance its content and strategic value.

Key considerations

- 3 The council acknowledges the enormous role played by unpaid and family carers in supporting vulnerable people across Herefordshire. It has legal duties towards carers, arising from the Care Act 2014, the Children Act 1989, the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004 and other legislation. Carers can play a key role in the assessment, co-ordination and review of social care and support needs. The council commissions contracted services to support carers.
- 4 The council and its partners in Herefordshire are seeking to establish a comprehensive approach to promoting health and wellbeing and preventing the need for health and care services. A strategic approach to enabling and supporting carers is a key element of that wellbeing approach, alongside information, signposting and advice, wellbeing networks, access to technology and universal services. The views and recommendations of the committee are sought particularly around how the carers strategy should fit with these other wellbeing and preventative approaches.
- 5 The Herefordshire carers strategy 2012-2015 was built upon five priorities; early identification of carers, carers as expert partners, employment and education, a range of support services and promoting the health of carers. Although these bear some similarity to current and emerging priorities, they were not reflected in the sort of whole system and new commissioning approaches that are now proposed. In 2012, there was a continued reliance on established models and levels of resourcing and so not the same emphasis on mutual and self help or access to universal services.
- 6 The climate of policy and resources has altered significantly over the past five years. In addition to the very substantial reduction in resources available to the council, the Care Act 2014 has consolidated and re-drawn the statutory framework for defining and supporting carers, complemented by other recent legislation. In particular, this has informed a very different approach to carers' assessments which will be reflected in the new strategy. In addition, very substantial consultation and co-production with carers has been undertaken since 2012. The views of the committee are sought in relation to how the new strategy is most likely to deliver positive change and service improvement for carers, in the light of the 2012/2015 strategy and the subsequent statutory and other changes.
- 7 In 2015, the council undertook to develop a new carers strategy in conjunction with its partners. This was to be completed in the context of a new national carers strategy which was promised by the Government in summer 2016 but which was later delayed until December 2016. The national strategy is still to be published and is now expected later in 2017, so the council resolved to press on with its own local strategy.
- 8 The council completed extensive consultation and engagement with carers between 2015 and 2016 to revisit the existing strategy, learn from experience and build an informed picture of their concerns and priorities. This was the starting point for an intensive process of coproduction and research in March 2017 in developing a new carers strategy for Herefordshire.
- 9 The carers strategy will set out the concerns and priorities of local carers and the barriers they face in fulfilling their caring role and in their own lives. It will propose system wide change and improvement across six priority areas and include

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commissioning intentions. The committee's advice is sought on the balance and potential impact of these priorities. In light of the new strategy, detailed proposals will be prepared for the commissioning and procurement of support services for carers. The newly configured services will be in place from April 2018.

Community impact

10 Carers play a significant role in realising the vision in the council's corporate plan of people living safe, healthy and independent lives. The carers strategy will have a significant impact upon the achievement of all priorities within the corporate strategy and the health and wellbeing strategy, as follows:

- It will ensure carers are identified, giving them access to universal services and clear pathways for information and advice;
- It will assist them to stay healthy, supporting their physical and mental health;
- It will identify the challenges for young carers and provide direction on how to assist them to achieve the best possible start in life;
- It will assist to improve the quality of life for older people and reduce isolation;
- It will reduce inequalities and support carers to stay in work where possible, or to access education and career opportunities.

The strategy will also inform future commissioning of services to carers in ways consistent with the corporate plan and health and wellbeing strategy, so ensuring better services, quality of life and value for money.

Equality duty

11 The implications for equalities arising from the carers strategy will have an indirect impact on groups of people sharing protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, notably older people and disabled people including those with mental health needs. Many carers themselves belong to groups with protected characteristics, including young carers, older carers and carers who are disabled. In addition carers benefit from some indirect protection under the act, given the dependency of many people upon them. This is particularly in relation to employment and access to services.

12 An equality impact assessment will be completed for the strategy and associated commissioning decisions, which will change services available to support carers. The impact of the strategy upon any group of people with protected characteristics will be measured via continuous engagement and evaluation against agreed outcomes.

Financial implications

13 There are no direct financial implications arising directly from the report. All commissioning intentions and actions arising from the carers strategy itself will be accomplished within the budgets of the council and its partners and will be subject to decisions as appropriate.

Legal implications

14 The committee has the power to make reports or recommendations to the executive with respect to the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the executive and to review and scrutinise any matter relating to services designed to

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secure improvement in:

- (a) the physical and mental health of residents; and
- (b) the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of physical and mental illness

Risk management

15 No specific risks arise from the recommendations in this report.

Consultees

16 The council has undertaken extensive consultation and co-production with carers in preparing the proposed carers strategy and therefore their views have substantially shaped the document. This is reflected in detail within the attached presentation slides at appendix 1.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Presentation

Background papers

- None identified.