

## SOUTH EAST ENGLAND COUNCILS EXECUTIVE MEETING



Date: 23 March 2018

Subject: **Social care pressures: funding and the role of all tiers in managing demand**

Report of: Heather Bolton, SEEC Director

### Recommendation:

- i) Members discuss options for addressing South East social care funding and demand pressures to inform SEEC input to the national debate on the future of social care.

### 1. Background

- 1.1 Funding for social care is a major concern for South East local authorities. Despite cost efficiencies and cross-tier working to reduce pressures, rising care demands are consuming a large proportion of councils' spending capacity and often exceeding their ability to raise funds locally via council tax.
- 1.2 Care demands for adults with disabilities, complex health conditions and learning disabilities are all rising, but a particular concern is that the South East has the UK's largest and fastest-growing number of residents aged over 75. In 2017, the South East had 805,000 residents aged 75+ and this is expected to almost double to 1.52 million by 2039. There are also concerns about capacity and financial viability in the care market, given the high cost of land, property and salaries in the South East.
- 1.3 Councils have welcomed Government's promise of a Green Paper this summer on reforming care and support for older people as it will offer opportunities to debate a long term funding solution. MHCLG and the Department of Health & Social Care have also committed to review social care for working age adults – but many in local government feel the Green Paper should cover **all** adult care rather than creating two separate reviews.

### 2. SEEC recent work on social care

- 2.1 Earlier this month SEEC submitted views to an inquiry on social care funding that is being held jointly by the Housing, Communities & Local Government and Health select committees. The full submission – made jointly with SESL – will be circulated once it has been published by the committees. Key points in the submission include:
- The Government's expected Green Paper on social care is welcome but it should cover social care for all adults, not just older people.
  - Boundaries between health and social care should be reviewed to ensure clarity on responsibilities. All tiers of councils have important roles in preventative work – this is often more cost effective than NHS care and can keep people healthy and safe at home longer, delaying the need for residential or hospital care. This locally-led care improves residents' quality of life while also reducing pressures and costs in NHS acute services.
  - A national funding solution for social care is needed instead of using council tax.
  - Government should establish a short-timescale Royal Commission to review funding options and make recommendations. Local government leaders and officers should be represented on a Commission to ensure its work draws on councils' practical experience.
- 2.2 SEEC also wrote to Immigration Minister Caroline Nokes in January asking for councils to be fully refunded for the costs of caring for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children placed via the voluntary national transfer scheme (see also agenda item 5e).

### 3. Today's discussion

- 3.1 SEEC welcomes three speakers who will cover different aspects of the care system, outlining problems and possible solutions to inform a discussion on how SEEC should respond to the next steps in the national debate on the future of social care. To help build a joined-up picture of how successful cross-tier and partnership working can operate, the speakers will draw on their experiences in Kent although, of course, these concerns and pressures are shared South-East-wide.

- 3.2 **Cllr Graham Gibbens** is a member of the national LGA Community Wellbeing Board and is Kent CC cabinet member for Adult Social Care. Graham will outline:
- LGA's national perspective on the social care Green Paper expected in summer 2018
  - The extent of pressures on social care at national level and Kent's own experiences
  - How cross-tier working can help manage demand and cost pressures on social care and the NHS
  - Options for better funding councils' care services, for example Kent CC's interest in a funding solution similar to the German model of national tax contributions from adults.
- 3.3 **Cllr Michelle Lowe** is Deputy Leader of Sevenoaks DC and a strong advocate for district councils taking a leading role in preventative public health work. Michelle will cover:
- The Sevenoaks strategy for early intervention – what it looks like and how it works
  - Examples of joint working between district and county councils and the results achieved
  - How prevention work improves residents' quality of life and reduces pressure on social care and NHS budgets
  - How health and care funding could be rebalanced to support councils better.
- 3.4 **Leon Steer** is Chief Executive of social care providers Rapport Housing & Care. Leon will give a service provider's perspective of challenges and opportunities in the care market and how working with local authority partners can help address these. He will cover:
- The main challenges for care service providers in the South East, for example the level of demand for care places and the cost of providing services in expensive areas
  - How councils at all tiers can work most effectively with care providers and examples of what is working well in Kent
  - How councils and care providers can collaborate on planning and land availability to ensure there is sufficient capacity for future needs such as residential homes, extra care accommodation and supported housing.
- 4. Next steps**
- 4.1 Today's discussion and Q&A session give members the opportunity to share local challenges and successes on health and care. Member views on potential policy solutions and the role of local government are invited. These will inform future SEEC input to Ministers and other stakeholders during this year's national debate on social care, for example covering:
- Options for making social care funding sustainable to reduce the burden on council tax
  - Ways to rebalance funding between acute services, preventative work and social care
  - How to clarify roles and responsibilities between all tiers of councils and the NHS
  - Pros and cons of means tested social care when health care is free
  - Ways to ensure the care market remains viable and offers sufficient capacity.