

**Wiltshire Council**

**Cabinet**

**27 November 2018**

**Health Select Committee**

**18 December 2018**

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**Rapid Scrutiny Exercise:  
Extension of Intermediate Care Bed Service contracts for 2019-2020 – report**

**Purpose of the report**

1. To present the findings and recommendations of the rapid scrutiny (RS) exercise, which took place on 8 November 2018, for endorsement by the Health Select Committee (the committee).
2. It should be noted that, due to the scheduling of meetings, this report was presented to Cabinet on 27 November 2018, although the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Public Protection may wish to provide a further update at the December committee meeting (recommendation 4).

**Background**

3. Due to the scheduling of Cabinet and committee meetings, Cabinet would make a decision on the above-named report before it could be presented to the committee.
4. Following an invitation by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Public Protection, after the committee meeting on 18 September 2018, to undertake a rapid scrutiny of the above-named report, a meeting took place on 8 November 2018.

**Membership**

5. The opportunity to take part in the rapid scrutiny was offered to all non-executive members of the council and all members of overview and scrutiny committees, the following were appointed:
  - Cllr Chuck Berry, elected as lead member for the RS
  - Diane Gooch
  - Cllr Mollie Groom
  - Cllr Pip Ridout

**Evidence**

6. The RS received the draft cabinet report ahead of the meeting.

## Witnesses

7. The RS group would like to thank the following Cabinet Member and officers for attending the meeting on 8 November 2018, providing information and answering questions:
  - Cllr Jerry Wickham, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Public Protection,
  - Helen Jones, Director of Commissioning,
  - Sue Geary, Head of Community Commissioning, and
  - Deborah Elliott, Programme Manager – Commissioning.

## Summary of deliberations

8. The RS received a detailed presentation on the intermediate care bed service, including its funding, its role, the location of the beds, number of users and a stark statement on the risk of extended hospital stays.
9. The RS was informed of the evolution of the service in terms of location of beds. At the beginning beds were spot purchased close to the service user's home, however this was not financially sustainable and presented issues with regards to staff in care homes understanding the core purpose of step-up intermediate care beds (re-ablement).
10. Intermediate care beds were now commissioned in nine care homes across the county. It was recognised that this potentially had a negative impact in some cases for service users in terms of distance from home / support network.
11. However, it did also have at least three positive outcomes:
  - a. the "specialisation" of staff in these care homes (understanding of the ethos and purpose of intermediate care);
  - b. the reduction in travel for professionals, such as Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist, which freed up their time for reablement work with service users;
  - c. as well as an unexpected benefit to other residents of the care home who were able to engage with activities designed for intermediate care bed users (principally aiming to improve health, confidence and to regain independence) which may not have been available otherwise.
12. The detailed information provided in answering questions from the RS members offered reassurance on topics such as allocation of beds, spot purchasing, "community" and professionals' understanding of the ethos and purpose of step up beds, timely discharge (not hindered by a "risk-adverse" decision making process), and issues with bed voids.
13. The RS had noted that the occupancy rate for both step up and down intermediate care beds was between 82 and 98% between August 2017 and July 18, which appeared a high occupancy rate, and therefore sought further explanation on the bed void issue. It was explained that concerns were about higher voids rates in general block beds.

14. The figures on bed voids overall (not intermediate care) and reasons given reassured the RS of the need for the overall bed review and the logic behind this request for an extension of contracts (recommendation 2).
15. However the RS believed that this experience (the right number of beds but not necessarily the right type of beds being commissioned) should be used in informing some potential clauses in future contracts to avoid a repeat of “long term” high bed voids rates, i.e. building some “flexibility” in the contracts to ensure that the type of beds can be changed to respond to changes in needs / demand (recommendation 1).
16. The RS was also informed of the issues linked with historical contracts where either the building, facilities, or types of beds commissioned no longer matched the demand / needs of service users. It was also noted that, in the past, it was not uncommon for contracts to be agreed for a longer time period than the council would do now (an example given was a 25-years contract).
17. The RS was pleased to receive confirmation that the bed review would include consideration of where decisions were made for service users with more complex needs who could not use the step-down beds. All types of supported accommodation would be considered as part of the review.
18. It was noted that only under half of service users using the step-down beds actually returned home. Although the team would wish for higher numbers, the reality of the increase of the complexity of needs for service users meant that it was accepted that this should be seen as a positive result.
19. It was clarified that the review of beds had started in September 2018 and would conclude in February 2019. The RS therefore invited the Cabinet Member to inform the Health Select Committee of the outcome of the review at its March 2019 meeting (recommendation 5).
20. At the conclusion of the exercise the RS members took the opportunity to thank the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Public Protection for seeking out engagement from overview and scrutiny and the officers who had attended the meeting for their apparent dedication to the proposed review and openness in answering questions.

## **Recommendations**

**Based on the evidence it received, the rapid scrutiny exercise recommends that the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Public Protection notes:**

- 1. The rapid scrutiny exercise’s concerns over potential bed voids in future and consideration be given to clauses in the contract(s) to mitigate the risk of long term bed void rates (paragraph 15 refers)**

2. **The rapid scrutiny exercise's support (paragraph 14 refers) of the proposal in the Cabinet report for Cabinet to:**
  - i. **approve the extension of the Intermediate Care bed service contracts for a further year until 31 March 2020.**
  - ii. **approve delegated authority to the Corporate Director for Adult Care for the contract variations needed to achieve the above.**

**The rapid scrutiny exercise recommends that the Health Select Committee:**

3. **Endorses the report of the RS exercise.**
4. **Invite the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Public Protection to update the committee on the decision by Cabinet on 27 November and to provide any further update, or information, on the implementation of the decision (paragraph 2 refers).**
5. **Ask that the outcome of the review be provided to the committee at its March 2019 meeting (paragraph 19 refers).**

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**Cllr Chuck Berry, lead member for the rapid scrutiny exercise – Extension of Intermediate Care Bed Service contracts for 2019-2020 – report**

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**Appendices** None

**Background documents** Draft Cabinet report