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| Report to: | ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE |
| Relevant Officer: | Karen Smith, Director of Adult Social Services |
| Date of meeting: | 28 September 2023 |

ADULT CARERS STRATEGY

1.0 Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To consider the final draft of the Carers Strategy and contribute as appropriate.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 To review and make suggestion on the strategy where appropriate and identifying any areas for further scrutiny.

3.0 Reason for recommendation(s)

- 3.1 The need for this strategy is driven by the following:
- To update the current strategy which expired in 2015;
 - To ensure that the council achieves compliance with the relevant aspects of the Care Act 2014 and associated Guidance;
 - To develop an action plan that will help identify carers at an early stage, improve carers' support and services, deliver a more coordinated approach, and to enable carers to lead fulfilled, independent lives.
- 3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy approved by the Council? No
- 3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered

- 4.1 A lack of a refreshed Carers Strategy would mean the Council is not in compliance with the Care Act 2014, putting carers and their loved ones at risk from lack of co-ordinated support and risking budget pressures due to increase need for packages of care and increased stays in acute and long-term care settings. In addition to this it could leave the Council open to risk of litigation.

5.0 Council priority

5.1 The relevant Council priority is:

- 'Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience'

6.0 Background and key information

- 6.1 Supporting carers in their caring role significantly benefits the community. Carers provide an incredible amount of support to: those they care for, their friends and family, the wider health and social care system, and to society. Therefore, it is in the best interest of communities that carers are and feel supported in their caring role.
- 6.2 This strategy will outline a clear vision and set of key priorities around how the council, working together with key stakeholders, are going to help support Blackpool Adult Carers as much as possible in their caring role so that carers can continue providing care whilst also leading fulfilled, independent lives.
- 6.3 National figures estimate there are approximately, 13.6 million unpaid carers in the UK, equating to around 1 in 4 people. There are approximately 16,000 carers in Blackpool. Unpaid carers provide an incredible amount of support to those they care for, to their friends and family, to the wider health and social care system, and to society. The financial value of the contribution by unpaid carers in the UK, is estimated to be £139 billion per year.
- 6.4 Additionally, many carers do not see themselves as carers and can be unrecognised as such by others. This is because carers may feel that providing care is a normal duty of being a family member or friend and as a result many carers do not, or struggle to, access support. Under Section 10 of the Care Act 2014, local authorities have a responsibility to identify carers and are required to assess whether the carer does have needs for support (or is likely to do so in the future), and, if the carer does, what those needs are (or are likely to be in the future). As a result, it is necessary that the council has a strategy in place to identify carers and encourage them to recognise their role and rights.
- 6.5 A Carers Week report estimated that 4.5 million people in the UK became unpaid carers as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is in addition to the 9.1 million unpaid carers who were already caring before the start of the pandemic. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic many carers had to continue without the same level of support. It is important that the Council understands and addresses the impact of COVID-19 on carers to better support carers moving forward.
- 6.6 Furthermore, individuals and families across the UK are currently facing significant financial pressures as a result of the cost of living crisis. Carers already face several additional costs such as extra costs from equipment, care, travel and food. For example,

almost two-thirds (63%) of carers are spending their own money on care or support services or products for the person they care for. At the same time, a carer's capacity to work to earn money is reduced, with carers working below their potential or having to give up work entirely in order to care. It is vital that information on the services and support available to carers is accurate and up to date, as well as being available in a range of accessible formats and through a range of channels.

7.0 A detailed review of local, regional and national evidence available and analysis was undertaken as part of the strategy development process.

8.0 Other planned additional research included:

- Desktop research of national, regional and intra-council plans and strategies to establish best practice and critical alignments.
- Sessions with Carer Peer Groups from Blackpool Carers Centre to understand what is working and not working or them, their preferences and how needs can best be met and what potential gaps in current services there may be.

8.1 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

9.0 List of appendices

9.1 Appendix 7a – Adult Carers Strategy 2023-2028

9.2 Appendix 7b - Equalities Impact Analysis Assessment

10.0 Financial considerations

10.1 The commissioning contract for external carers' services is currently managed by the Integrated Care Board with an agreed financial contribution passported across from the Adult Social Care budget to the ICB. Adult Social Care also facilitate funding for a carers support worker in the Transfer of Care Hub.

11.0 Legal considerations

11.1 Care Act 2014 and associated guidance

12.0 Risk management considerations

12.1 The following risk considerations were evaluated, however regular monthly meetings between the DASS, Carers Lead in Commissioning and the Management at Blackpool Carers Centre will ensure any concerns can be dealt with in a timely manner.

- A lack of buy-in from other Council services and partners.
- A change/decline in funding for the service will have a major influence on the course of the plan.
- A lack of buy-in from carers.

13.0 Equalities considerations and the impact of this decision for our children and young people

- 13.1 The Head of Equality and Diversity noted that the Equality Analysis provided a comprehensive analysis.

14.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations

- 14.1 The Council will work together with key stakeholders to better support carers and at the same time supporting the carbon emissions reduction agenda. Examples could include encouraging service providers to adopt a sustainable travel hierarchy to encourage take up of the least polluting travel methods to minimise emissions. Another example could be to promote low-carbon impact activities through green prescribing or encouraging outdoor respite care.

15.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken

- 15.1 The development of the strategy involved engagement with a range of local health and social care practitioners, commissioners and carers to gather information on what local stakeholders are currently doing to support carers in Blackpool, and how the council can work together with these stakeholders to better identify carers and improve the services and support offered to carers in Blackpool.

- 15.2 Key stakeholders consulted included:

- Blackpool Carers Centre – Discussions with Management team and Staff.
- Carers peer support groups - Face to Face engagement sessions with Mental Health Carers, Dementia and older adult carers.
- Wider public engagement – Via social media
- Current carers engaged with the Authority - Feedback through the Survey of Adult Carers England (SACE) and Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) Surveys 21/22.
- Adult Social Care – Discussions with carer support workers, and regular meetings with the Senior Management Team.
- ICB (Integrated Care Board) for Lancashire and South Cumbria – Shared knowledge and best practice.
- Health watch – Shared information from previous engagement campaigns.
- NHS Commitment to Carers Programme North West Carers Leads – Shared knowledge.
- Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) North West Carers Leads – Shared knowledge.
- Current Day Service Providers – Liaison with Director of Adult Social Services.

16.0 Background papers

None