

**Questions asked by Members and associated responses
provided by the Leader of the Council
and Interim Director of Finance**

- 1.1 **When was the 2011 – 2012 budget set?** At the meeting of Council in March 2011.
 - 1.2 **When was a balanced Council budget agreed?** At the meeting of Council in March 2011.
 - 1.3 **Why was this information not provided as part of the Consultation process for Adults?** It was in the public domain as it was included in the Council agenda papers.
 - 1.4 **What date was the bid made for this funding to the Department of Health? If this bid was made after the Adult Care budget had been agreed, was it made clear to the Department of Health that Harrow Council believed they already had sufficient funding to meet social care needs in Harrow?** It was not a bid, it was an allocation.
 - 1.5 **What date did the Department of Health and the Council confirm / sign an agreement, and were there any changes at this point to the original use of the funding?** The Section 256 Agreement was signed by the respective parties on 29 and 30 March 2011 and it was fully in accordance with the relevant legislation.
2. **Questions about the decision making processes used.**
- 2.1 **Did any consultation take place with NHS Harrow regarding the changed use of funding – was any other statutory body or individual resident in Harrow consulted?** There was no consultation as there was no change in the use of funding. An agreement had been reached on prescriptive legislation.
 - 2.2 **Can you confirm that the Council has sought, and received, agreement from Dept of Health for the transfer of Section 256 monies from the Adult Social Care Budget to this newly created fund?** The Council did not need to seek such a decision as the funds were being properly used and permission was not required.
 - 2.3 **Which council officers in which roles made the recommendation that this funding be vired from its intended use?** There was no virement recommendation. There was a recommendation from Cabinet to Council that the net £2.1m received from the PCT be transferred to the Adult Social Care Budget.

- 2.4 **Can you confirm that those who are responsible for the Adult Social Care budget (in particular Margaret Davine and Paul Najsarek, were supportive of the virement as a result of being convinced that this money could be taken from that budget without repercussions to their service users?** The proposal had the unanimous agreement of Cabinet.
- 2.5 **Why was the budget not consulted on when these decisions were being considered? We used to have something called an Open Budget process which the administration at the time said was essential. Is it no longer essential?** The budget was consulted on when it was set. It was being considered whether it could be done on a similar scale to participatory budgets.
- 2.6 **Why was it not seen to be of any importance to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment on this transfer of funds when we know that planned cuts to the Social Care Budget will impact on 'protected groups' under the Equalities Act. This is of particular importance because Adult Social Care are running a consultation based on the fact that the Adults Social Care budget is no longer robust enough to meet the growing needs in Harrow, and savings must be identified. The Steering group supporting consultation with Adult social care users have identified multiple concerns which would have to be addressed to avoid creating adverse equality impacts on many protected groups, and yet this Section 256 decision did not even seem to merit an Equality Impact Assessment. This had been covered during the presentation to the Committee. No service was cut or customer or citizen impacted as a result of the decision. This was an accounting entry only.**
3. **Questions regarding the planned use of the funding:**
- 3.1 **What specifically does the application say what the funds must be spent on? Can we see it?** There was no application.
- 3.2 **When the decision was made to put the funds into the Transformation budget did they firstly consider any social care spending out of the funds at all and if so what rationale was used to make the decision not to use it for those services? If it was not even considered, why not?** There were private discussions as to what to do with the under spend and the decision was to move this to the transformation fund. Adults and Social Care could make bids to this fund.
- 3.3 **Why was all of the money (£2.1m) put into the Transformation budget rather than putting at least £600k into social care to make up the difference between the £1.5m which Bill said they put in and the £2.1m they got?** £2.1m from the PCT had been put in the social care budget. This Council money previously put in the budget was then moved to the transformation fund.

- 3.4 **Is it not true that the budget was only balanced by cutting some essential services and this money was supposed to be used to reduce such cuts? If so why have the cuts not been reversed?** All services had to make efficiencies and savings. The PCT money was to enable us to continue to fund existing social care and this is what we have done.
- 3.5 **It has been stated that the council want to use the Transformation fund to invest to save – was any thought given to using this for invest to save projects specific to Adult Social Care?** Yes – Adult Social Care had been encouraged. In addition, the Council was always looking at other opportunities to secure services. Use of LAA reward grant money had been considered.
- 3.6 **How do you reconcile the fact that cuts have been made to services for Adult social care users, and people are being consulted on contributing to the costs of a wide variety of care and support needs, with the statement that there was sufficient money in the social care budget to meet people’s needs?** This was covered during the presentation but the advice was that services were not cut in Adult Social Care. The consultation was about the longer term future. The Leader had been reassured of the position at the Challenge Panel by the relevant Portfolio Holder and Corporate Director. All parts of the Council had been required to make savings.