

**North Yorkshire County Council**  
**Health and Adult Services Executive**

10 March 2023

**CESSATION OF PARTICIPATION IN THE ADULT SOCIAL CARE**

**CHARGING REFORM TRAILBLAZER INITIATIVE**

**1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To note that the government has formally ended the Trailblazer project.
- 1.2 To note that some work which began as part of the project will continue, where appropriate and within existing budgets, to ensure that lessons learned during our participation can help to deliver value for money in service provision.

**2.0 Background**

- 2.1 In 2021, the government published proposals to change how much people would have to pay for social care. These would have meant that anyone with assets of less than £20,000 would not have had to pay anything towards the cost of care either at home or in residential care from October 2023. The proposals also noted that people with more than £100,000 in assets would pay all such costs until they reached a maximum of £86,000. Those with assets of £100,000 or less would pay a means-tested proportion towards their care costs, again until they reached a maximum of £86,000.
- 2.2 North Yorkshire had agreed to be one of six “Trailblazers” for the new proposals and has been working with those other councils and the DHSC to look at the impact of the proposals.
- 2.3 On 19 April 2022, the Executive of the County Council agreed to:
  - (i) Approve North Yorkshire County Council’s participation in the Trailblazer Programme, and
  - (ii) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Health & Adult Services in consultation with Corporate Director Strategic Resources and Executive Members for Health & Adult Services & Finance to consider and exercise any opting out at the appropriate stages should it be deemed appropriate.

- 2.4 On 17 November 2022, as part of the Autumn Statement, the government announced that it was delaying the implementation of the changes for at least two years.
- 2.5 The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has subsequently formally stood down the Trailblazer project. Funding allocated to NYCC as a Trailblazer in 2022/23 will not have to be returned but there will be no further allocations for now.
- 2.6 Within the Council, although we do not have to implement the changes in the immediate future, we have taken stock of the work we had already undertaken and will continue to pursue some aspects of this to bring about improvements and efficiencies in our services. This will include progress towards more digital self-service models – where appropriate.

### **3 Financial Implications**

- 3.1 Trailblazers received funding for the additional costs that the council incurred in preparing for implementation, including recruitment of staff and IT system change.
- 3.2 Although funding already received to cover costs in 2022/23 will not be required to be repaid, we and other Trailblazers have pointed out the ongoing costs of staff already appointed in support of the project and we continue to pursue that aspect. However at this stage the DSHC has refused to consider any contribution towards these and therefore any continuing costs will have to be consumed within existing budgets.

### **4 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

- 4.1 The Department had published its own Impact Assessment and this can be found at: [Adult social care charging reform: public sector equalities duty impact assessment - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-social-care-charging-reform-public-sector-equalities-duty-impact-assessment)
- 4.2 The Council's own EIA was attached to the original Executive report on 19 April 2022. Any future changes as part of the ongoing work will require updated EIAs.

### **5 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 The Council entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the DHSC, which, although not legally binding, outlined the expectations for both participants during the Trailblazer initiative. On the 1 February 2023, the DHSC wrote to NYCC to note that as the government was formally standing down the Trailblazer initiative, that “the requirements and expectations set out in the

Memorandum of Understanding between Trailblazer local authorities and DHSC are no longer applicable.”

### **Recommendations**

1. The Executive Member is asked to note the ending of the Trailblazer programme, following the decision made by the government.
2. To note that some work initiated as part of the project will continue, where appropriate and within existing budgets, to ensure that lessons learned during our participation can help to deliver value for money in service provision.

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