

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 13<sup>th</sup> March 2025

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Executive Director, Adult Services

**PORTFOLIO:** Adult Social Care

**SUBJECT:** Halton Borough Council and NHS Cheshire & Merseyside: Joint Working Agreement (Better Care (Pooled) Fund)

**WARD(S):** Borough-wide

## 1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To present, for approval, the new Joint Working Agreement (JWA) between Halton Borough Council (HBC) and NHS Cheshire & Merseyside (CM), taking effect from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2027, and which replaces the previous two-year JWA which was approved by Executive Board on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2023; new JWA can be found at *Appendix 1*.

## 2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board:

- i) **note the contents of the report and associated Appendix; and**
- ii) **approve the Agreement, with delegated authority the Executive Director, Adult Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, to finalise the new JWA.**

## 3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 HBC and NHS CM (previously NHS Halton Clinical Commissioning Group) have had a JWA, including a pooled budget, in place for the commissioning of services for people with Complex Care needs since April 2013.

3.2 Since it's original development, the JWA and associated Pooled Budget has gone through a number of changes including the inclusion of the Better Care Fund in 2015 and the separating out of the Continuing Healthcare and Community Care budget elements in 2020.

3.3 Both HBC and NHS CM remain committed to developing our integrated approach to service delivery and transformation to improve the Health and Wellbeing of Halton residents.

3.4 Work has taken place between HBC and NHS CM to review the JWA. As a result of this review, no significant changes have had to be made to the JWA.

3.5 At the time of writing this report, the JWA is currently being taken through

NHS CM's associated governance channels, at Place, for approval.

- 3.6 As such, in case any issues are encountered, the Executive Board are asked to give delegated authority to the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and the Executive Director, Adult Social Services to finalise the new JWA, following approval by NHS CM.

#### 4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 None identified.

#### 5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 At the time of writing this report, the Better Care (Pooled) Fund budget for 2025/26 is still to be finalised and once agreed will be reflected in the JWA.

- 5.2 With effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025, the pooled budget will include:-

- Better Care Fund and Improved Better Care Fund (iBCF)
  - Includes spend in areas such as Intermediate Care Services, Carers, Equipment Services, Care Homes, Domiciliary Care, Supported Discharge, Community Respiratory and Rehabilitation Services
- Hospital Discharge Funding
- Disabled Facilities Grant

#### 6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

##### 6.1 **Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence**

Those people who are in receipt of long-term care whether that is funding from Health or Social Care are those people in our communities with some of the most clinically complex and severe on going needs, so it is essential we have effective mechanisms in place to ensure that people we provide services to receive appropriate outcomes.

The integrated system and pooled budget arrangements will continue to ensure that the resources available to both Health and Social Care are effectively used in the delivery of personalised, responsive and holistic care to those who are most in need.

##### 6.2 **Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy**

None identified.

##### 6.3 **Supporting Children, Young People and Families**

None identified.

##### 6.4 **Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need**

See 6.1 above.

## 6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

None identified.

## 6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

None identified.

## 7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The JWA complies with the financial standing orders of HBC and NHS CM and the regulatory and monitoring arrangements contained within.

## 8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 None associated with this report.

## 9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no environmental or climate implications as a direct result of this report.

## 10.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

10.1 Approval of the Agreement will continue to support both HBC and NHS CM in developing our integrated approach to service delivery and transformation to improve the Health and Wellbeing of Halton residents.

## 11.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

11.1 1. Allow the JWA to cease.

## 12.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

12.1 The two-year JWA takes effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025.

## 13.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

| Document   | Place of Inspection      | Contact Officer  |
|--|--------------------------|--|
| Joint Working Agreement between HBC and NHS Cheshire & Merseyside 1.4.23 – 31.3.25 | Copy available via Email | Damian Nolan<br><a href="mailto:Damian.nolan@halton.gov.uk">Damian.nolan@halton.gov.uk</a><br>Tel: 0151 511 8520 |