Agenda Item 12 - Appendix 1

Some Approaches to Priority Setting

Approach	Pros	Cons	Will it work here?
Ethical framework – outlines values and principles, on which decisions are based	• Acknowledges the role of values in decision-making •	• Espoused values may not be representative of the whole population, or specific, important sub-groups • Difficult to evidence with an audit trail • Conflicts of values can lead to poor decision-making or paralysis • If set of values is insufficient to cover all eventualities, there will be disagreement about priorities	Likely, yes – the Council already has an agreed set of principles by which to work. N.B. partners, public and other stakeholders
Economic/ technology assessment, i.e. based on cost-benefit/cost-effectiveness analysis or evidence (output in DALYs)	Relatively objective, though open to interpretation	• Built-in bias against older people and those with disabilities • Evidence or data required for calculations is not always available • Somewhat opaque to people without technical expertise • Resource & capacity required to produce the technology assessments	Possibly. However, evidence base in some areas is not well developed, e.g. social care
Multi-criteria decision-	• Useful for choosing	• Can open up a dialogue,	Yes.

analysis (MCDA) - an "umbrella term to describe a collection of formal approaches which seek to take explicit account of multiple criteria in helping individuals or groups explore decisions that matter" (Belton and Stewart, 2002)	between alternatives • Multiple criteria can be considered in a single process, e.g. finance, safeguarding, sustainability and impact on other services • Facilitates dialogue about alternative courses of action and their consequences and aids transparency • Allows values to be taken into account, as well as evidence and intelligence	which is then difficult to close down • Not all criteria that inform a decision can be framed as trade-offs between alternatives • Those involved in the process may not be representative of the whole population • If using scores or weightings, their values may not be agreeable to and they do not increase the objectivity of the process	
Programme budgeting and marginal analysis – understanding spend within and between programmes and evaluating incremental changes in costs and benefits as changes are made	• Tools available to support it, e.g. SPOT (Spend and Outcomes Tool)	• Incomplete information about budgets and spend • Accurate data on expenditure and outcomes not always available • Cost effectiveness return on investment (ROI), or social ROI information is not always available • Beware double counting, when something appears in more than one programme budget	Yes, but information is limited.
Socio-technical approach, or decision conferencing, e.g.	• Incorporates technical data and evidence	• Requires facilitation	Yes, but requires a lot of resources, including external

STAR	• Can involve participation by a wide group of stakeholders	• Resource intensive • Can be complicated for people to follow	facilitation
Delphi Technique – a specialised opinion survey of "experts", conducted in rounds	• Useful when knowledge/information is uncertain or incomplete • Avoids group-think or deference to hierarchy •	• Time consuming and labour intensive • Requires facilitation • "Experts" may tire of answering questions in subsequent rounds, leading to reduced quality of information • Significant and useful, but minority opinions could be overlooked	Yes
Public consultation (e.g. Oregon)	• Very transparent • Public signed up to results of prioritisation	• Can lead to "unreasonable" ranking of priorities, e.g. in Oregon public involvement in developing a scale led to development of a list priorities that evoked a public outcry.	Yes, depending on how it's used
Mixed method	• All the benefits of individual approaches	• Some of the disadvantages of individual methods • Some disadvantages eliminated by combining methods, e.g.	Yes