



## **Bath Mind – statement for Cabinet, 8 February 2024**

I am here today as CEO of Bath Mind but also as Chair of the BaNES Third sector infrastructure organisation, 3SG.

Bath Mind is a significant local independent provider of mental health and wellbeing services for people living across BaNES. We offer interventions for over 6,000 of BaNES residents from 16 years across the care and support pathway, from preventative wellbeing services through to crisis alternatives.

I wanted to share my reflections and concerns regarding the Council's budget savings process:

The consultation period being held over Christmas and New Year resulted in a challenging timeframe for our organisation, impacting on our ability to respond appropriately.

To date, there has been no detail around the proposed savings, leaving uncertainty around future provision, our ability to set our budget, being able to plan, indeed questioning whether we can continue with many of our essential services.

Bath Mind has trusted in and worked with colleagues developing the core values of council and the Integrated Care Board, which prioritises wider determinants of health and provision of early intervention and prevention services. These values will be significantly undermined if vital services are cut.

As a third sector employer, Bath Mind employs skilled, trained, and dedicated individuals, many of whom are local residents contributing to the local ecosystem, providing essential services which underpins and bolsters statutory sector provision (GPs and health and social care). The broad reach and impact of our work cannot be underestimated; without us, there is a gaping hole in mental health support across BaNES, with a resulting increase in the burden to the statutory sector, a sector already significantly challenged.

We are asked to deliver more services for less cost each year with less certainty around long term sustainability. Years of zero, or significantly below inflation uplift in contracts – have resulted in significant cuts in real terms with accompanied increase in workload. Although a number of contracts are held with HCRG, the ability to increase contract values for the third sector has remained within Council's control. It is essential that we are invested in to ease pressure on local authorities, primary care and emergency services.

Bath Mind are very aware that BaNES Council are facing financial challenges and would urge them to engage in talks with the Third Sector to bring about constructive conversations and develop creative solutions which will ensure minimum disruption, remove service duplication, and reduce the risk of job losses across the Third Sector in BaNES.

The broad range of services provided by Bath Mind demonstrate exceptional value for money. Bath Mind stands with other impactful Third Sector organisations in BaNES, willing and able to collaborate and support people living in our communities through these exceptionally difficult times.

Kate Morton, CEO, Bath Mind