

Extracts from the following Overview and Scrutiny Committees:

- Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (meeting held on 18 January)
- Environment and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee (meeting held on 19 January)
- Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (meeting held on 23 January)
- Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee (meeting held on 24 January)
- Highway and Transport Overview and Scrutiny (meeting held on 26 January)

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## **HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**18 JANUARY 2023**

### **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2022/23-2026/27**

#### **MINUTE EXTRACT**

##### **Public Health Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023/24-2026/27.**

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Public Health and the Director of Corporate Resources which provided information on the proposed 2023/24 to 2026/27 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as it related to Public Health. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 9', is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed Mrs. L. Richardson CC, Cabinet Lead Member for Health, to the meeting for this item.

Mrs. Richardson CC stated that the budget had been challenging and services had been reviewed to ensure the best service for residents was provided. The department's funding came from the ringfenced Public Health Grant which meant there was a criteria for what the money could be spent on. The 2023/24 Public Health Grant allocation had not yet been announced and were it to be reduced compared to the previous year further cuts could have to be made.

In response to a question as to why savings had to be made if the Grant was ringfenced it was explained that Public Health Grant money could be spent in other County Council departments as long as it met the criteria. Decisions had to be made on whether to spend the money on the Public Health Department's own schemes or to use the money to support the work within other departments. If the money was to be spent in other County Council departments then savings would have to be made from the Public Health Department's own budget.

In response to a question from a member it was confirmed that due to rising inflation there was a concern that the Public Health Grant would be consumed by costs rather than on delivering services.

Members acknowledged the difficulties the department had faced in setting a budget and commended officers for their work.

With regards to the Homelessness Contract it was clarified that the contract was to provide support and improve the health and wellbeing of homeless people. Whilst many of the homeless people that received the support were based at the Falcon Centre in Loughborough, the contract did not fund the hostel itself. Therefore, were

the contract value to be reduced there would be no impact on the Falcon Centre core service. Members asked for a briefing note explaining this position to assist them.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report and information now provided be noted;
- (b) That the comments now made be forwarded to the Scrutiny Commission for consideration at its meeting on 30 January 2023.
- (c) That officers be requested to provide members with a briefing note regarding the situation with the Homelessness Contract.

**ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE OVERVIEW AND  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 19 JANUARY 2023**

**MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2023/24 – 2026/27**

**MINUTE EXTRACT**

**Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023/24 – 2026/27**

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Environment and Transport and the Director of Corporate Resources which provided information on the proposed 2023/24 to 2026/27 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as it related to the Environment and Waste Management Services within the Council's Environment and Transport Department. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 9', is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed Mr. B.L. Pain CC, Cabinet Lead Member for Environment and Climate Change, to the meeting for this and other items.

Arising from discussions the following points were made:

- (i) Mr. G. A. Boulter CC raised concerns about the proposals to cease all SHIRE environment grants with effect from April 2023 and he asked whether this could be reconsidered. In response it was explained that due to the County Council's financial situation the department was required to make significant savings and there was only so much capital to spend. It was also noted that SHIRE grants sat under the communities portfolio which sat with the Chief Executive's Department therefore they were not entirely under the control of the Environment and Transport department.
- (ii) The County Council gave recycling credits to incentivise third parties/charity sector and district councils to recycle certain types of household waste that it did not direct disposal on. A member raised concerns that these credits would be reduced in 2023/24.
- (iii) Savings were projected to arise from a new waste disposal contractual arrangement commencing April 2023 and switching use of third-party (contracted) "waste to transfer" to the in-house operated site at Bardon. In response to a question about the risks of these savings not being delivered it was explained that government changes to the regulations were expected which could have an impact but the contracts had been designed to be flexible so they could adapt to changes in the regulations.

- (iv) Whilst £47,000 capital had been allocated for tree planting in the year 2023/24, the tree planting allocation for the remaining years of the MTFs was zero. It was explained that this was because the County Council had been successful in obtaining funding from the Forestry Commission for tree planting and would be bidding to appropriate funding sources when they arose to cover the whole MTFs period. There was a target to plant 700,000 trees over a 10 year period and other organisations were contributing to the target as well as the County Council. Currently tree planting was ahead of the trajectory to meet this target.
- (v) A query was raised as to why spending on the Ashby Canal formed such a large part of the capital programme when it only related to one part of Leicestershire. In response it was explained that this was a historic issue dating back many years, details of which were set out in a report considered by Cabinet on 25 November 2022. The canal needed constant replenishing with water and some of it was sourced from a former coal mine. Leicestershire County Council had a responsibility to make sure the water was cleaned before it was deposited in the canal. An application had been submitted to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for consent to transfer powers under the Transport and Works Act Order 2005 to the Ashby Canal Association which if successful would reduce the financial burden on the County Council.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report and information now provided be noted;
- (b) That the comments now made be forwarded to the Scrutiny Commission for consideration at its meeting on 30 January 2023.

**ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**23<sup>rd</sup> JANUARY 2023**

**MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2023/24 – 2026/27**

**MINUTE EXTRACT**

**Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023/24 - 2026/27.**

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Adults and Communities and Director of Corporate Resources which provided information on the proposed 2023/24 to 2026/27 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as it related to the Adults and Communities Department. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 8' is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed Mrs. C. M. Radford, Cabinet Lead Member to the meeting for this item.

In introducing the report, the Director advised Members the report outlined the strategic priorities and how they related to growth requirements of the Department moving forward over the next twelve months, and detailed savings and efficiencies put forward as part of the MTFS round.

The Director continued that in general terms the Council remained, as did most councils, in a difficult position in terms of the funding of social care, which had over the past two years become heightened in terms of increased demand post pandemic and added pressure to the budget.

Arising from the comments and questions raised, the Committee was advised as follows:

**Service Transformation**

Members noted the information provided at paragraphs five to nine in the report and made no comment.

**Proposed Revenue Budget**

- (i) The table at paragraph 10 in the report provided information as to the starting point for the budget 2023/24 for the Department, which showed a proposed net budget of £186million.
- (ii) Members were asked to note that the revenue budget had been compiled on the basis of no pay or price inflation. A contingency for pay and inflation was held centrally and allocated in year when the position became clearer. Therefore, the growth highlighted was only for demographic, service pressure growth and some in-year price increases. It was noted the budget transfer and adjustment for 2022/23 was £15.2million, which included £10million for price inflation. It was explained that the Council used the contingency approach, as to put a notional flat percentage rate across all departments would be difficult due to the different levels of staffing and salaries. Members were advised to focus on the year

2023/24 and that the following three-year proposed budgets were for information and indicative at this point in time.

- (iii) The table at paragraph 12 outlined net budget breakdown in broad terms, with 87% of the budget going directly into services commissioned for local residents. Members requested a glossary of terms describing the different services be developed as a living document for Members, to be updated on a regular basis and to be attached to the agenda for each meeting.
- (iv) It was noted that the Better Care Fund (BCF) had been scrutinised and agreed by the Health and Wellbeing Board.

### **Growth**

- (v) Members queried the large increases in growth figures over the four years and asked how the increase was calculated. It was reported that this was based on the number of people receiving a service in November of the year and the cost of providing the service. That figure was then extrapolated forward using national models 'POPPI' and 'PANSI' (one for older adults and one for younger adults working age) which provided an estimated figure over a four-year period. It was, however, noted the figure was subject to change based in differing circumstances, such as people leaving long term care, or people developing a long-term illness as well as changes to costs arising from wage and contract settlements.
- (vi) It was difficult to predict how many people would develop mental health conditions or physical disabilities, therefore forecast was based on previous years' figures. The Department was confident about the forecast for the next financial year based on current monitoring. However, if there were to be an increase in service users greater than predicted it would result in overspend. Currently the figure predicted was slightly below the national growth average in the county.
- (vii) Members noted the typical growth of service users at 1 to 1.5%, which did not appear to equate to the increased budget figures for growth. It was reported that the 1.5% average was an average across all service areas. Some areas with static numbers could experience cost demand pressures due to some long-term service users with extensive needs could be greater than others. It was noted there was a sophisticated system for analysing the current service user needs, and the likelihood of further users have similar or greater needs.
- (viii) With regard to the on-going sustainability of the budget given the significant growth pressures predicted for the latter part of the MTFS it was pointed out that the growth requirement in the current year of £7million was matched by a £7million saving target for 2023/24, and that each year savings and efficiencies would be looked at to balance the budget. It was also noted Central Government would determine priorities with some additional specific grant funding, which could be applied to the budget to offset cost and demand pressure.

### **Adult Social Care – Savings**

- (ix) As denoted by the star system there were a number of areas that had been in previous MTFS reports, and the majority of those had been amended to take



account of latest information and data, and the budget had been increased accordingly. No comments were made on these saving requirements.

- (x) AC3 (Eff – Implementation of Digital Assistive Technology to Service Users (Technology Enabled Care – TEC) – the Council Care Technology (CT) service formed a significant part of the savings plan as the service offer had been developed.
- (xi) AC9 (Eff) – Direct Payment Commissioning Efficiencies – a £1million saving was proposed, rising to £1.5million from 2024/25. Whilst this was a significant sum, in the context of a budget of £42million it was a small percentage saving.
- (xii) AC10 (Eff) – Commissioning and Implementation of Revised Extra Care Model – the service had been out to procurement and the new contract would commence in April 2023.
- (xiii) AC11 (Eff) – Improved systems, ways of working and cost of recovery efficiencies – the saving would be through bringing together back office and commissioning efficiencies in a couple of areas.
- (xiv) AC13 (Eff) – Home Care – review of care packages – particularly for people with double-handed care (two carers assisting an individual). The level of care for individuals would be reviewed to see if the same level of care was required, and if it could be reduced.
- (xv) AC16 (Eff) – Improving outcomes from the Homecare Assessment and Reablement Team (HART) and Community Response Service (CRS); and AC17 (Eff) – Through as alignment of the Homecare Assessment and Reablement Team (HART) and Community Response Service (CRS) – it was hoped to provide an enhanced reablement offer, as the best way to manage demand for older people particularly, which in turn would bring in longer-term savings into the department. Mileage costs and travel time would be reduced by alignment of the two teams together so that both teams work to the same geographical footprint (currently the CRS operated on a countywide basis).
- (xvi) Members noted and commended the Department on its track record of making savings whilst maintaining quality of care.

### **Communities and Wellbeing – Savings**

- (xvii) AC19 (Eff/SR) – Implementation of revised service for Communities and Wellbeing – there had been various proposals looked at for the relocation of the Record Office but had not come to fruition due to lack of funding. It was noted that the City and Rutland councils paid towards the storage of documents. Members reiterated the need for a new facility to ensure appropriate storage and security of records given the existing facility had reached capacity and some items were not being kept in the environment required. The Cabinet Lead reassured Members that the issue was actively being looked at and actively under discussion.
- (xviii) AC20 (SR) – Review Green Plague Service – Members asked if, instead of removing the service, if it could be changed to a chargeable service. It was explained that sponsorship had been looked at previously, but not a charging model. The Cabinet Lead would take the request to Cabinet for discussion.

### **Savings Under Development**

- (xix) Three Conversations Model – described as a national model recognised within social care circles. This was about having the right conversation with people at the right time and was based on talking to people about how they could achieve some of their support requirements through their local communities, through their families and through people they know through a strengths-based asset approach, rather than seeing funding from a local authority, with the aim of trying to keep people independent for as long as possible, and thus achieve savings. The model would be piloted over the next 12 months and rolled out across the County over the 12-month period.
- (xx) Review of Discharge process and Reablement with ICB – it was noted that if proven to be effective there would be significant saving for the 2024/25 MTFS.

### **Health and Social Care Integration**

#### **Better Care Fund (BCF)**

- (xxi) Noted was the BCF at nearly 15% of the Department's net budget, and there was obvious risk should anything happen to the fund. In addition to the BCF in December 2022, there was a £500million Discharge Grant announced by Government of which Leicestershire received £5million (£2million for the County Council, £3million to the Integrated Care Board) to be spent on assisting discharge from hospital. There was an announcement in January 2023 of a further £250million grant to the NHS for discharge (around £3.5million locally to the ICB) the majority of which would go to community hospitals for step down beds from the UHL.
- (xxii) In terms of the discharge grant there were calls for longer-term funding to support community service infrastructure as well as funding to enable recruitment and retention of the workforce.
- (xxiii) Comment was made about the Disabled Facilities Grant, and the way that the two tiers, County and District Councils worked together was a successful model of delivery. Particular mention was made to the Lightbulb project, which had greatly added to peoples' lives and well-being in their own homes. It was however noted that lack of builders was restricting the speed at which DFG works could be undertaken

### **Adult Social Care Reform**

- (xxiv) Noted was the Government's announcement of a two-year delay to the national rollout of social care charging reforms to 2025/26, which removed a significant financial risk to the County Council which had been approaching £20million.

### **Other External Influences**

- (xxv) Members noted other areas of funding that influenced the achievability of the MTFS for the Department.

### **Other Funding Sources**

- (xxvi) Members noted a number of smaller grants that funded specific aspects of the Department's activity.

### **Capital Programme**

- (xxvii) Members noted the main source of external funding of the capital programme of £21million was the BCF grant of £17.8million which was passported to District Councils. The remaining balance of £3.4million was against the Social Care Investment Programme (SCIP) which was currently being reviewed.

### **Future Developments**

- (xxviii) Members noted the summary of provisional capital bids, in particular the SCIP with the development of alternative accommodation, for example, supported living, to enable people in the community to remain independent and receive better care.

### **RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the report regarding the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023/24 – 2026/27 and the information now provided be noted;
- (b) That the comments now made be forwarded to the Scrutiny Commission for consideration at its meeting on 30 January 2023.
- (c) That a glossary of terms describing the different services be developed as a living document for Members to be updated on a regular basis.

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**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 24  
JANUARY 2023**

**MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2023/24 – 2026/27**

**MINUTE EXTRACT**

**Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023/24 – 2026/27**

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Children and Family Services and the Director of Corporate Resources which provided information on the proposed 2023/24 to 2026/27 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as it related to the Children and Family Services department. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 8' is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed Mrs. D. Taylor CC, Lead Member for Children and Family Services, to the meeting for this item.

**Service Transformation and Proposed Revenue Budget**

Members noted the information provided at paragraphs 10 to 25 in the report and made no comment.

**Growth**

**G1 - Social Care Placements:**

- i. Members raised concerns regarding the growth in the demand for social care placements and the associated costs. The Director advised that the rise in demand had resulted mainly from more children presenting with more complex needs and because of an increasing trend in older children requiring care. Members noted, however, that the growth in spend had not been proportionate to this growth in demand as costs had also been affected by a number of other factors including market pressures, inflation and the rise in the cost of living.
- ii. The Director confirmed that Leicestershire had experienced a higher increase in demand for social care over the last five years (10%) when compared to the national average (4.1%). However, this had been because the Council had previously had a much lower number of children in care than other local authorities. Work had also been completed to ensure that 16/17-year-old homeless young people had access to care which had contributed to the increase. Members were assured that the number of children requiring care was projected to decrease. The Department had been focused on both

preventing the need for children going into care in the first instance and reducing the time spent in care. This had helped to reduce the yearly percentage increase which was now below 8%.

- iii. Members noted that, as part of the Defining Children and Family Services for the Future programme (DCFSF), the Department continued to deliver early intervention to provide families who were struggling with practical parenting advice and support. This helped to prevent the need for some children entering into care. However, Members noted that safeguarding children remained the priority, therefore where it would not be safe for a child to remain at home, a care placement would always be provided.
- iv. Following on from the success of the first phase of the programme, Defining Children and Family Services for the Future programme 2 (DCFSF2) was now being implemented. The Department had also been delivering targeted work on areas such as domestic abuse, following the allocation of additional funding by the Government.

#### G4 – Increase in EHCP’s Additional Case Managers:

- i. Concern was raised regarding a disproportionate increase in the number of children and young people requiring an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in Leicestershire (54%) when compared to the England (38%) and East Midlands (32%) average. The Director explained that all local authorities were required to measure against the same statutory data thresholds and that it would remain useful to make such comparisons to give an overall view. However, it was recognised that such data could not be considered in isolation. The Director provided assurance that the Department would focus on understanding the wider issues affecting demand for EHCP’s and would develop services and work with partners to address these, delivering the correct provision for children in the right place, at the right time. Members noted that Leicestershire had experienced higher growth in the demand for EHCP’s than any other local authority which had been partly due to low levels of Government funding for schools in Leicestershire. As a result, some schools did not have the resources to deliver the required level of inclusion services and therefore parents had applied for EHCP’s to ensure the best level support for their children. The Director explained that funding for schools in Leicestershire had been increasing, but that it would take time for changes to be implemented.
- ii. In response to questions raised, the Director reported that the appointment of ten additional Case Managers would not meet the increased demand for EHCP’s. However, it would help to alleviate some of the pressures in the system, adding capacity to enable the processing of applications and the opportunity for more engagement with parents and carers. This would in turn help ensure children were receiving the right level of support in the right place. The Director undertook to provide members with the number of case managers working within the service since 2016.

## Savings

### CF8 (Eff) Alternative Approach for Delivering Anti Bullying:

- iii. In response to concerns regarding the impact on children in not recruiting to the vacant post within the anti-bullying service, the Director assured members that the team (of two people) did not conduct work directly with children but provided support to schools to help them put in place their own anti-bullying initiatives. Members noted that this work would continue but that consideration was being given to how this support could be delivered more efficiently in future.

### CF9 (SR) Review Virtual School Provision:

- iv. In response to concerns raised regarding the potential impact on vulnerable children when reviewing the Virtual School provision, the Director assured members that the Department would be focussed on those children affected and consideration given to how best to mitigate any impacts arising from a reduction in the budget.

### Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)/Schools Block

- v. Concern was raised regarding the financial efficiencies projected to be made through the delivery of the Transforming SEND and Inclusion in Leicestershire (TSIL) programme and it was questioned whether there would be any associated negative impacts on children. The Director explained that the TSIL programme would focus on transforming the whole SEND system to ensure that children with SENDs had their needs met at the right time, in the right place and with the right level of support. Members noted that diagnostic work conducted by Newton Europe in 2022 had indicated that some children within the SEND system had been receiving incorrect provision or were placed in an incorrect setting to support their needs. There would be a financial benefit in identifying and applying the correct provision early on, as well as a benefit to children, parents and carers, schools and other partners in getting this right from the outset. The Director acknowledged that it would be possible that the programme could identify that some children required a higher level of provision than had been provided, but assured members that the diagnostic work conducted by Newton Europe did not indicate that this would be the case.
- vi. In response to a question regarding the importance of reducing the deficit in the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), the Lead Member for Children and Family Services explained that the Council was required to set aside resources to offset the DSG deficit and that this therefore impacted the level of funding available for other services. At the levels of expected growth, the budget position would become increasingly unsustainable as more resources had to be set aside. If the Council were required to repay that debt, its financial position would become even more untenable. The Lead Member assured the Committee that she would continue to lobby the Department for Education (DfE) on the matter of funding, but it was essential that the

planned measures to contain growth, address demand and reduce costs continued.

- vii. The Director explained that the TSIL programme would offer the opportunity for closer engagement with schools on SEND and inclusion with the aim of applying funds more effectively to support children with SENDs within a mainstream education setting where this was most appropriate. Members noted that schools had received information on the TSIL programme, and that positive feedback had been received.

#### Capital Programme

- viii. Members noted the information provided at paragraphs 92 to 100 in the report and made no comment.

The Chairman thanked officers for their work and for presenting a comprehensive report.

#### RESOLVED:

- a) That the report regarding the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023/24 – 2026/27 and information now provided be noted;
- b) That the comments now made be forwarded to the Scrutiny Commission for consideration at its meeting on 30 January 2023;
- c) That the Director of Children and Family Services be requested to provide members of the Committee with the number of Case Managers assessing requests for Education, Health and Care Plan's (EHCP's) since 2016.



**HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE - 26 JANUARY 2023**

**MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2023/24 – 2026/27**

**MINUTE EXTRACT**

**Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023/24 – 2026/27**

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Environment and Transport and the Director of Corporate Resources which provided information on the proposed 2023/24 to 2026/27 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as it related to the Highways and Transport side of the Environment and Transport department. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item '8' is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed Mr. O. O'Shea CC, Cabinet Lead Member for Highways and Transport, to the meeting for this item.

Arising from discussion, the following points were noted:

**Growth**

i) **G9 – SEN Transport**

The growth in demand for SEN transport had risen by some 12% in the last financial year and the projections were that there would be continued growth in the coming years. The investment by the County Council in new SEN places would assist in reducing costs. The Department was also looking at how costs could be better managed, and this would be reflected in the savings requirement 'Lean Review of SEN Transport (ET3)'.

The key drivers for the increased costs were attributable to:

- The increasing number of children with Education Care and Health Plans who were eligible for SEN transport. This was a national trend.
- There was an increasing number of pupils with severe and complex needs.
- The cost pressures facing transport providers arising from increased fuel and staffing costs.
- The recent trend of taxi contracts being handed back and these having to be recommissioned at a higher cost.

## Savings

### ii) ET 7 – Park and Ride

This service was run jointly with Leicester City Council. Work was underway to look at various options to deliver this saving and detailed reports would be submitted to members prior to implementation. There will be ongoing collaboration with the City Council throughout this process.

### iii) ET 9 – Community Speed Cameras

The existing 7 cameras have been in operation for some years now and it would be difficult and costly to re-use these at other sites. Members were reminded that the Council had lobbied but failed to convince the Government to allow it to retain a proportion of the fines which would have reduced the cost of the schemes to the Council. The Director also undertook to provide members with the location of the 7 existing cameras sites.

## Capital Programme

- iv) A511 – Members were advised that to an accounting technicality this scheme was not deemed to have “secured” funding and therefore was not included in the report, but that work was on-going on the scheme.
- v) DfT funding for major projects. The concerns expressed by members about the sufficiency of funding that had been allocated to schemes such as the Melton Mowbray Distributor Road some years ago was acknowledged. Members were advised that despite representations to the Department for Transport (DfT) no additional resources were offered. The bidding process limited how much the Council could include in the Outline Business Case to reflected potential increase in cost over the lifetime of the project.

## RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report and information now provided be noted;
- (b) That the comments now made be forwarded to the Scrutiny Commission for consideration at its meeting on 30 January 2023.