

Minutes of a meeting of the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Tuesday, 19 January 2016.

PRESENT

Mrs. R. Camamile CC (in the Chair)

Mr. M. H. Charlesworth CC
Mrs. J. A. Dickinson CC
Mr. D. Jennings CC
Mr. M. T. Mullaney CC

Ms. Betty Newton CC
Mr. A. E. Pearson CC
Mrs. C. M. Radford CC
Mr. S. D. Sheahan CC

In attendance.

Mr. Dave Houseman MBE CC, Cabinet Lead Member for Adult Social Care (Minutes 59 - 62 refer),
Mr. R. Blunt CC, Cabinet Lead Member for Heritage, Leisure and Arts (Minutes 59 and 64 refer),
Fiona Barber, Healthwatch Leicestershire Representative.

52. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2015 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

53. Question Time.

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 35.

54. Questions asked by members under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

55. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

56. Declarations of interest.

The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to declare any interest in respect of items on the agenda for the meeting.

No declarations were made.

57. Declarations of the Party Whip in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16.

There were no declarations of the party whip.

58. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 36.

The Chief Executive reported that no petitions had been received under Standing Order 36.

59. Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016-17 - 2019-20.

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Adults and Communities and Director of Corporate Resources which provided information on the proposed 2016/17 to 2019/20 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 Mr. Dave Houseman MBE CC, Cabinet Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Mr. R. Blunt CC, Cabinet Lead Member for Heritage, Leisure and Arts to the meeting for this item.

In introducing the report the Director of Adults and Communities and Cabinet Lead Members advised that the County Council and the Department was facing unprecedented budget pressures as well as demand pressures. The most significant demand pressures arose from the need to provide services to an increasingly ageing population and for people with complex disabilities who as a result of improvements in medicine were living longer and more productive lives. In addition to this the County Council, along with all other local authorities, was facing significant additional costs in dealing with Deprivation of Liberty Assessments as a result of more people coming within scope of the legislation. In response to the challenges the Department was focused on:-

- Managing demand by preventing and delaying need for services by building capacity in communities and enabling people to manage their conditions;
- Ensuring care was provided in the most cost effective way;
- Closer working and commissioning of services with partners, particularly the NHS.

The County Council had a priority to support the most vulnerable in society and to that end the proportion of spend in Adult Social Care was increasing, rising from 34% of Council spend currently to 39% of Council spend at the end of the current MTFS in 2019/20.

Proposed Revenue Budget

Arising from discussion the Committee was advised as follows:-

- (i) The additional 2% precept to fund social care had to some extent reduced the need for additional savings. The County Council took a holistic view of its overall budget but the Director pointed out that the central contingency for growth and the living wage which would impact primarily on adult social care service providers was greater than the amount generated through the additional precept.
- (ii) There was an element of frontloading of savings as the Council had to make a total saving of £78 million of which £26 million had to be found in the next financial year. The Department's contribution to the savings requirement in the next financial years would be £7.7 million. Members were advised that in most cases detailed planning to deliver these savings had been undertaken and there was confidence that these could be delivered. In some cases part of the savings requirements were already being delivered.

- (iii) The experience of co-production of care plans and care packages was that there was greater transparency and hence ownership of such plans. There was also clear evidence that in many cases the care needs could be met more cost effectively by service users commissioning the service.

Growth

- (iv) The decision of the Supreme Court on the scope of the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) legislation has resulted in the number of DoLS cases continuing to rise from 600 in 2014/15 to over 1700 in the first half of 2015/16. There was currently a backlog and this put the Council at some risk. An external agency had been engaged to assist with the backlog and work was underway to provide in-house social workers with the necessary training to undertake this work.

Savings - Adult Social Care Savings

Transformation Savings

- (v) AC1 – Effective Management of Direct Payments

The introduction of payment cards not only reduced operating cost but enabled the Department to monitor spends by service users. This monitoring would cover not just overspends but more importantly ensure that service users were using the budget appropriately and purchasing care in line with the assessed needs. Where monitoring identified underspends the care team would be notified and would check whether the particular service users' needs were being met and how they might be better supported to manage their budget.

- (vi) AC2 - Outcome Based Commissioning

The independent sector had been fully engaged in the proposals to change the commissioning arrangements. Members were assured that the Department would meet the true cost of care provision which would include travel and training costs but that alongside this there would be a need for providers to be transparent about their costs.

- (vii) AC4 - External Contract Review

The substantial saving requirement in this area of the budget reflected the non-statutory nature of services provided. At a time when the Council was finding it challenging to meet its statutory obligations it was right and prudent to look carefully at spend in this area. The savings requirement in the previous year had been £500,000 but as a result of work already undertaken a saving of £1.5 million could be realised at the start of the next financial year.

The Director undertook to provide detailed reports to a future meeting on the impact of savings in relation to carers.

- (viii) AC13 - Reablement

The Department had introduced a two weekly review of reablement packages and this had reduced costs as some people had progressed faster than had originally been anticipated on assessment.

Emerging Savings

- (ix) AC 15 – Review of long term residential placement costs

The saving requirement had been reduced as a result of preparation of a detailed business plan. The focus of the work was on reducing the number of payment bands and additional payments so as to provide greater transparency and reduce administration costs. Members were assured that there was no intention of moving people into lower bands purely to save money. Providers were engaged in this process and reports on progress would be made to the Committee during the year. The recent consultation by the Care Quality Commission on fee increases would no doubt be part of the discussion with providers and any increase in fees would need to be factored into the cost of provision.

Communities and Wellbeing Transformation Savings

(x) AC21 – Implementation of the revised Communities and Wellbeing Service

Members were advised that no specific proposals had been identified to achieve the £1.7million saving from a total budget of just over £5million as to achieve this level of saving would require a major remodelling of the Service. The draft Communities and Wellbeing Strategy was currently out for consultation and would be debated by this Committee in April when potential options and opportunities for delivering this saving would be explored. The Cabinet Lead Member indicated that as part of that debate he would be open to consider all options including delivery of service in conjunction with other Councils.

Capital Programme

(xi) Libraries – Reconfiguration of space

The investment would primarily focus on equipment and classroom or meeting room development as the main user of these rooms was the Adult Learning Service. The Department would look at the charging regime to ascertain whether this was affecting hire.

(xii) Extra Care Provision

This reflected the Council's capital investment in a private sector extra care development and such investment would enable the Council to obtain nomination rights. This development in Loughborough followed the Blaby scheme that the Council also supported.

(xiii) Future Developments – Snibston

The cost of maintaining the Scheduled Ancient Monument was approximately £30,000 per annum and provision was contained in the Maintenance Programme. With regard to not proceeding with the proposed mining offer the Cabinet Lead Member advised that given the dire financial situation facing the Council it would not have been prudent to do so.

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 27 January 2016.

60. Adult Preventative Mental Health Services in Leicestershire.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities which provided an update on the current status of preventative mental health services to the citizens of Leicestershire, as requested by the Committee at its meeting on 3 March 2015. The report also appended the findings of a piece of insight work undertaken by Healthwatch Leicestershire on the same subject. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 9' is filed with these minutes.

Mr. Dave Houseman MBE CC, Cabinet Lead Member for Adult Social Care welcomed the report and expressed his view that more emphasis should be put on supporting service users to achieve independence outside of the drop-in setting, through friendships and informal peer networks.

The Committee welcomed Healthwatch Leicestershire's report, which presented a balanced view of the mental health drop-in service provided by the Richmond Fellowship. Members noted, that the report highlighted some staffing and recruitment issues, and that a more compassionate approach to service users could be adopted at no additional cost. In addition, both staff and service users felt that more work could be done to support service users to partake of services more constructively. The Committee was pleased to note that the recommendations from Healthwatch Leicestershire would be taken on board by the service provider.

RESOLVED:

That the update on the current status of Preventative Mental Health Services to the citizens of Leicestershire be noted.

61. Safeguarding Adult Board Business Plans 2016-17.

The Committee considered a report of the Independent Chair of the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Adult Board (LRSAB) which sought its views on the draft Business Plans 2016-17 for the Board. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 10' is filed with these minutes.

Mr. Dave Houseman MBE CC, Cabinet Lead Member for Adult Social Care welcomed the draft business plans and was pleased to note that the safeguarding in residential care homes and domiciliary care services was recognised as one of the priorities for the Board's work.

The Committee was pleased to note that the LRSAB continued to work jointly with Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Board to provide a more responsive joined-up service. In addition, members expressed their support for adding the safeguarding risks that might be faced by refugees in the light of the current international issues, as a priority for the joint business plan for the Boards during 2016/17.

RESOLVED:

That the comments now made be forwarded to the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Adult Board for consideration.

62. Performance Report 2015-16 - Position at November 2015.

The Committee considered a joint report of the Chief Executive and the Director of Adults and Communities which provided an update of the Adults and Communities Department's performance at the end of November 2015. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 11' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were raised:

- (i) Members expressed concern regarding the decrease in visits to the heritage sites by 2% at the end of November 2015 in comparison with the same period the previous year. The Committee was advised that the visits varied between heritage sites, and that Bosworth Battlefield was visited 9% more than the previous year. The development of the Communities and Wellbeing Strategy was intended to address this overall drop. It was also hoped that, once the visits to the King Richard III legacy sites had plateaued, the overall performance data would be more representative;
- (ii) The Committee expressed concern that the target proportion of carers receiving a personal budget was not being met. It was acknowledged that the Care Act had had an impact on this by introducing new rights for carers but there was also an issue regarding the way in which services were accessed. The Department had introduced a combined service user and carer assessment which was expected to result in improved performance;
- (iii) Members raised concern over the reduction in library visits and book issues from the previous year's performance. The Committee was advised that the drop in book loans and overall visits was a reflection of the national downward trend and changes to the ways in which people were using libraries. A report regarding the performance of libraries was considered as a separate item elsewhere on the agenda (minute 64 refers).

In his closing remarks Mr. Dave Houseman MBE CC, the Cabinet Lead Member for Adult Social Care welcomed the increased ratio of people with learning disabilities in employment. He also reported on the joint working between Leicester City Council, Leicestershire County Council and the NHS to build flats following a Department of Health Grant to support the development of accommodation to facilitate the effective discharge of people with Learning Disabilities and/or Autism from in-patient mental health settings. The grant would be used to provide three long term tenancies and two short tenancies on two sites.

RESOLVED:

That the performance update for April to November 2015 be noted.

63. Donington le Heath Manor House Charging and Opening Hours Strategy.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities which sought its views on the proposal to introduce an admission charge and make amendments to opening hours as part of a more cost effective and sustainable operational model for Donington le Heath Manor House. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 12' is filed with these minutes.

Members welcomed the planned improvements at the Donington le Heath Manor House and were of the view that the introduction of the charging policy, accompanied by the changes in the opening hours, was necessary for the museum to continue operating.

In response to the questions raised, members were advised as follows:

- (i) A separate charging policy and opening hours by arrangement outside of the regular hours of operation were planned for school visits and organised groups;

- (ii) The 1620s theme was preferred for the Manor House, as the building's medieval architecture had been modernised in 1612. In addition, it was planned to use the connection to Digby family to link the Manor House with the Gunpowder Plot, to make the museum a more attractive place to visit and to link this theme with the new primary school curriculum which had a focus on local history.

RESOLVED:

That the proposal to introduce an admission charge and make amendments to opening hours as part of a more cost effective and sustainable operational model for Donington le Heath Manor House be supported.

64. Performance of Libraries.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities which provided a contextual review of library performance and compared Leicestershire's position against a group of similar sized authorities, along with more detailed information about the usage of the Council's funded libraries. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 13' is filed with these minutes.

In response to questions raised, members were advised as follows:

- (i) The officers would be able to provide the segregated data for market town and shopping centres libraries, in the future reports. It was hoped this would give insight to the causes behind the drop in the visits to the libraries and book loans;
- (ii) It was difficult to determine what purposes people used the libraries for, due to the discontinuation of the Public Library User Survey. It was hoped, that partnerships would be developed with the management teams of community libraries, and feedback could be continuously collected from the service users;
- (iii) Consultation was due to take place shortly on the draft Communities and Wellbeing Strategy. This would inform the future delivery of services. Options to ensure that the Department had capacity to maintain links with local communities would then be considered. It was felt that there was an opportunity to develop partnerships with local communities to ensure the best use of community assets;
- (iv) The reduction in library visits and book loans had dropped below the national trend. This was partially a result of a period investment, especially in the rural areas, over 2010-11, which had skewed the baseline data used for the comparison. The Committee was assured that work was under way to ensure the service was relevant and reflective of the local communities. It would also be focused on the most vulnerable service users as they would receive the most benefit from the service.

In his closing remarks Mr. R. Blunt CC, Cabinet Lead Member for Heritage, Leisure and Arts advised that working in partnership with the community led libraries would enable the local resolution of issues such as determining opening hours and developing a reporting structure which would be informative and user-friendly.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the suggested performance criteria as set out in Appendix B to the report be noted;

(b) That officers be asked to produce a performance framework for libraries in the light of the comments now made.

65. Date of next meeting.

RESOLVED:

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held at County Hall on 26 February at 2.00pm.

2.00 - 4.48 pm
19 January 2016

CHAIRMAN