

Minutes of a meeting of the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Monday, 2 November 2020.

PRESENT

Mr. T. J. Richardson CC (in the Chair)

Ms. L. Broadley CC  
Mr. B. Crooks CC  
Mr. T. Gillard CC  
Mr. D. Harrison CC

Mr. J. Miah CC  
Mr J. Poland CC  
Mrs. M. Wright CC

In attendance

Mr. R. Blunt CC – Cabinet Lead Member for Adults and Communities  
Mrs. C. M. Radford CC – Cabinet Support Member

17. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2020 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

18. Question Time.

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 34.

19. 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).

20. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

21. 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.

Mr. D. Harrison CC declared a personal interest in agenda items 8, 9, 10 and 11 (Adult Social Care Target Operating Model, Care Home Sustainability, Technology Enabled Care and Community Connections Programme) as his wife was in receipt of support services.

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

There were no declarations of the party whip.

23. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 35.

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

24. Adult Social Care Target Operating Model.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities together with a short presentation which provided an update on the successful completion of developing and implementing the Adult Social Care Target Operating Model. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 8' is filed with these minutes, along with the slides that were presented to the Committee.

In response to concerns raised by a member around the necessity and cost of using consultants, the Director emphasised that the main focus of the Programme had always been to deliver better outcomes for service users. For example, an additional 800 users per year were now able to access reablement services and 45 service users, with a learning disability or mental health need, had moved from residential care to supported living which was more appropriate to their needs. By improving processes, the Department was now able to offer a more timely and efficient service that focussed on providing the right service from the outset. The Lead Member added that the Programme had achieved all of its original objectives and that the consultancy fees had been structured in such a way as to ensure these were commensurate with the benefits the Programme was required to achieve.

The Cabinet Support Member commented that she had received positive feedback from a number of service users that had moved out of residential care and into supported living and that this work was making a real difference to people's lives by improving their independence.

The Committee was pleased to note the report and offered praise and thanks to all involved in achieving the successful delivery of the Programme.

RESOLVED:

That the update provided on the successful completion of developing and implementing the Adult Social Care Target Operating Model be noted and welcomed.

25. Care Home Sustainability.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities, the purpose of which was to provide the Committee with an overview of the current position in care homes across Leicestershire and the support being offered to them by the County Council to provide safe and effective care, in the context of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 9', is filed with these minutes.

In introducing the report, the Director highlighted that in response to the requirement set out by Government, designated care settings had now been established in Leicestershire

for people discharged from hospital who had a Covid-19 positive status to help prevent further outbreaks in care homes. Occupancy levels were currently low, but this would change depending on increasing rates of infection.

Arising from discussion the following points were raised:

- (i) With regard to the hospital discharge process it was confirmed that there continued to be focus on the Home First approach and that the increase in temporary admissions was partly due to the effects of the pandemic. One of the future aims would be to have more care facilities available that specialised in reablement services which could temporarily accommodate those with a higher level of need, helping them prepare to return to their home environment and thus avoid them being placed in a long-term care facility which was often not their preferred choice.
- (ii) The composition of the care home market was diverse in that it was made up of many different sized enterprises. Locally, providers were more regionally (not nationally) based with some operating a range of between 20-50 care homes across the County and surrounding area. It was acknowledged that larger group failure would be far more challenging to manage than, for example, a group of one to five care homes, and would likely require the support of other providers to assist in delivering suitable accommodation.
- (iii) During the Covid-19 pandemic the Council had held weekly, and more recently fortnightly, meetings with care home providers to give support and guidance on matters such as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), testing and training. Whilst it was difficult to quantify how many had taken up the Council's support offers, many providers had been keen to engage with the Council during this period and overall communication had therefore improved as a result. It was noted, however, that the level of engagement depended on the situation of the care home and the level of support that had been required. For example, care homes that accepted very few Council placements might be less likely to engage than those that had accepted many.
- (iv) In terms of Care Quality Commission (CQC) ratings, the Director confirmed that regard was given to these before a person was placed into a care home. However, it was important to note that due to the length of time between CQC inspections, the ratings did not always accurately reflect the current picture, so the Department also relied upon a wider range of intelligence to keep up to date with any issues, which may also require reporting to the CQC, or improvements being made.
- (v) Given the current higher than normal level of vacancies, and the Council's strategic aims around preventing inappropriate admissions to residential care, instead supporting more people to live more independently, it was seen as unlikely that capacity would become an issue in the short term. Therefore, in terms of future builds, the focus would likely be on replacement facilities rather than new capacity.
- (vi) Discussions were underway with care home providers that were experiencing higher levels of vacancies to identify their support needs and to explore ways in which the Council could support them to become more sustainable for the longer term. A member commented that there would likely continue to be a downward trend in the number of occupancies in care homes due to a number of factors

including the high costs and complex nature of running a care home. In respect of the work undertaken by the Department to move identified cohorts of working age adults from residential care to support living, the Director clarified that this work had already begun.

- (vii) In response to a question raised by a member the Director confirmed that although there was an element of risk to the Council with regards to the recovery of forward payments made available to care homes to help or prevent cashflow issues, it was in the Council's interest to work with those homes to ensure the stability of care for residents. In any event, the majority of care homes had already agreed the terms for repaying the money loaned, either in one instalment covering the total amount or smaller instalments spread over a period of time.
- (viii) The Committee thanked officers for the report and the level of insight and assurance this provided in respect of the exceptional work that had been undertaken to support care homes during this very difficult period and requested that a further update be brought to a future meeting when the Director considered this to be appropriate.

#### RESOLVED:

- (a) That the analysis undertaken of the current position of the care home sector in Leicestershire and the update now provided be noted.
- (b) That a further update on Care Home Sustainability be provided at a future meeting of the Committee when the Director considers to be appropriate.

#### 26. Technology Enabled Care.

*[Mr. J. Miah CC left the meeting at this point and did not return to the meeting]*

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities, together with a short presentation, the purpose of which was to inform the Committee of the results of diagnostic work undertaken to explore opportunities to maximise the use of technology enabled care (TEC) across the adult social care pathway and to set out the proposed way forward. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 10' is filed with these minutes, along with the slides that were presented to the Committee.

Arising from discussion the following points arose:

- (i) Members noted that the intention of the TEC model would be to establish a holistic, County wide service which would not be dependent on other services, but instead focussed on sourcing the appropriate solution which might include referring a person to an already existing service or sourcing an entirely different and new solution. It was expected that engagement would need to take place with a number of stakeholders to ensure the TEC approach aligned with existing local activity and services, such as Lightbulb, which members welcomed.
- (ii) Some members raised concern and emphasised the need to ensure service users were capable in using the technology provided. Assurance was provided that the intended approach would be outcome focussed rather than equipment led. Assessments would be carried out to determine the level of need and capability of each individual in order to find the most appropriate solution for them. Supporting

staff to increase their knowledge of the various technologies available would also be key.

- (iii) It was recognised that committing to certain types of technology would be a risk due to continuous advancements being made in this area. It was expected that the option to commission a delivery partner would help keep pace with those advancements and also provide better flexibility with any future offers that might become available.
- (iv) The Committee confirmed its support of the proposed way forward and welcomed further updates at future meetings.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the update on the results of the diagnostic work undertaken to explore opportunities to maximise the use of technology enabled care across the adult social care pathway be noted and the proposed way forward be welcomed and supported.
- (b) That the comments now made by the Committee on the proposed Technology Enabled Care approach be submitted to the Cabinet for its consideration.

27. Community Connections Programme.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities, the purpose of which was to advise on the formation and work of the Communities and Wellbeing Service's new Audience and Development Team within the Adults and Communities Department. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 11', is filed with these minutes.

The Committee confirmed its support for the work being undertaken by the Communities and Wellbeing Service's new Audience Development Team and expressed its thanks to all officers and members involved. Members were pleased to note that despite the significant challenges faced as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic the Council was continuing to develop and invest in this type of service to further support local people.

RESOLVED:

That the update on the work of the Audience Development Team and the shift in emphasis towards evidenced wellbeing impacts through the activity of the County Council's libraries and museums be noted.

28. Dates of Future Meetings.

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 18 January 2021 at 2.00pm.

Future meetings of the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be held at 2.00pm on the following dates:

8 March 2021  
7 June 2021  
6 September 2021

1 November 2021

2.00 – 3.54pm  
2 November 2020

CHAIRMAN