

Minutes of a meeting of the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held via Microsoft Team Video Conferencing on Monday, 18 January 2021.

PRESENT

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

Mr. J. G. Coxon CC
Mr. B. Crooks CC
Mr. T. Gillard CC
Mr. J. Miah CC

Mr. M. T. Mullaney CC
Mr J. Poland CC
Mrs. A. Wright 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
Mr Mukesh Barot – Healthwatch Leicester and Leicestershire

29. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2020 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

30. Question Time.

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

31. 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).

32. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

33. 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.

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

There were no declarations of the party whip.

35. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 35.

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

36. Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/22 - 2024/25.

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Adults and Communities and Director of Corporate Resources which provided information on the proposed 2021/22 to 2024/25 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 R Blunt CC, Cabinet Lead Member and Mrs Radford CC, Cabinet Support Member to the meeting for this item.

In introducing the report, the Director advised members of the financial challenges facing the Council and the demand and cost pressures facing adult social care services in dealing with an ageing population, an increasing number of people with complex disabilities and increased costs in meeting their assessed needs.

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

Proposed Revenue Budget

- (i) The revenue budget did not take into account any pay or price inflation. A contingency was held centrally and allocated in year when the position became clearer. In the previous year, a sum of £7.6million had been transferred for price, pay and pension inflation. The proposed revenue budget did not include the additional revenue that would be generated were the Council minded to levy the 3% social care precept which would generate approximately £9.3million. The consultation on this and the level of Council Tax had just closed and the Cabinet would need to have regard to the outcome of the consultation before taking a decision.

Growth

- (ii) G8 – Learning Disability Demand – Members were advised that there was close working with the Children and Families Service so that the demand was reasonably well known to allow good forecasting. The work between the two Departments also focussed on ensuring that during the transition phase service users and their families were supported with opportunities for independence and elsewhere in the budget a potential saving is being forecast as a result (AC10 refers).
- (iii) G9 – Mental Health demand - Members welcomed the proposed growth to address the additional need as a result of the Covid Pandemic.
- (iv) G11 – Market Premia - The challenges in recruiting and retaining social work staff were fully recognised and the proposed growth was supported. Members requested that the position be closely monitored given the central role played by social workers in the delivery of services to the elderly and vulnerable.

- (v) G6 and G7 – Increased demand from Older People and Learning Disabilities - This growth recognised the increasing demands from demographic growth and the increasing complexity of care and fragility of some service users. A report was due to be presented to a future meeting of the Committee on how needs were being met and the impact on carers. It was noted that the demographics and the fact that people were living longer, but often with poorer health, required support to be provided to more people with complex needs.

Adult Social Care – Savings

- (vi) Members noted the savings proposals and commented favourably on the Department's approach. In particular members highlighted the following saving lines in the budget which whilst delivering savings had the added benefit of improving services and outcomes: -
- AC2 – Social Care Investment Plan
 - AC4 – Revised Target Operating Model (TOM)
 - AC5 – Digital Assistive Technology
 - AC8 – Digital Self-Serve Financial Assessments
 - AC9 – Review of Mental Health pathways.
- (vii) A commitment was given to a report being submitted on the Revised Target Operating Model to ensure that it was meeting its objectives and that all those assessed as requiring services were receiving the necessary support.

Communities and Wellbeing – Savings

- (viii) Members noted that there were no new savings in this area of service.

Better Care, Covid and other Funding

- (ix) Members noted with some concern there was still no clear view from the Government on a number of these important funding streams given that they would affect over 20% of the Departmental Budget.
- (x) With regard to the Disabled Facilities Grant members were advised that the figure for the current year included an in-year one-off grant from the Government which had been pass-ported to the District Councils. Officers concurred with member comments that the restrictions placed on the use of DFG and the inability to use some for small 'revenue items' prevented best use of this money. It was hoped that the Government would look at some flexibility in this regard.

Savings Under Development

- (xi) The proposed areas for exploration of savings were noted.

Capital Programme

- (xii) The Capital Programme was noted.

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 25 January 2021.

37. Overview of Adult Safeguarding Activity Pre and During the Covid Pandemic.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities, the purpose of which was to provide an overview of adult safeguarding activity both before and during the Covid-19 pandemic. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 9', is filed with these minutes.

Arising from a question regarding repeated safeguarding alerts, the following points were noted:

- (i) Repeated safeguarding alerts were captured by the Adult Social Care Management System, which enabled staff to view enquiries related to an alert at both an individual and organisational (service provider) level.
- (ii) Where issues related to a particular provider, staff would check whether there were any individual enquiries relating to that provider to determine whether a pattern or theme was developing.
- (iii) Efforts were made to triangulate information between the Safeguarding Adults and Commissioning and Care Quality Teams to follow-up on repeated alerts to help determine whether an issue needed to be addressed at an individual or contractual level and the best course of action.

RESOLVED:

That the update on adult safeguarding activity before and during the Covid-19 pandemic be welcomed and noted.

38. Commissioning and Procurement of the Home Care Service.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities, the purpose of which was to seek comments from the Committee on progress made with the procurement of home care services following a pause in activity and re-profiling of timelines due to the Covid-19 pandemic. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 10', is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion the following points were raised:

- (i) In reference to the option to tender for an open framework, it was confirmed that any providers that were able to demonstrate they could meet the Council's quality and assurance specifications would be considered and securing a range of providers would be key to service delivery.
- (ii) Some members highlighted the need to encourage and support smaller care providers interested in working with the Council to help with both managing the

rise in demand for home care services since the Covid-19 pandemic began, and in maximising the availability of services, especially in rurally isolated areas. The Director acknowledged that it could be more difficult for some smaller providers to meet all of the Council's rigorous contractual requirements. However, there were other ways the Council could support those interested in providing care to local residents, for example through Direct Payments, so anyone interested was encouraged to make contact with the Council to explore the options available.

- (iii) Members were assured that assessment of provider infection control techniques would form part of the tendering process.
- (iv) The Committee confirmed its support for the proposed way forward and commended staff in the Department and the Lead Member for the work they had undertaken to redesign the service. The Chairman commented that the way the Department was prepared to review and adjust its service models in light of everchanging circumstances to improve outcomes for local residents and ensure their needs remained at the forefront of its work demonstrated its strength.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the update on the progress made with the procurement of home care services following a pause in activity and re-profiling of timelines due to the Covid-19 pandemic be noted and the proposed way forward supported.
- (b) That the Director of Adults and Communities be requested to take the Committee's comments on the updated approach into consideration as part of the forthcoming re-procurement.

39. National Performance Benchmarking 2019/20 and Performance Report 2020/21 - Position at November 2020.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities which highlighted the Adults and Communities Department's performance position in 2019/20 through national benchmarking, and which also provided an update on the Department's performance at the end of November 2020. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 11', is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

That the Adults and Communities Department's performance position in 2019/20, and the update of the Department's performance as at the end of November 2020 be noted.

40. Date of next meeting.

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 8 March 2021 at 2.00pm.

2.00 – 3.44pm
18 January 2021

CHAIRMAN

