

Minutes of a meeting of the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Monday, 7 March 2022.

PRESENT

Mr. N. Chapman CC (in the Chair)

Mrs. L. Broadley CC
Mr. B. Champion CC

Mr. J. Miah CC

In attendance

Mrs. C. M. Radford CC – Cabinet Lead Member for Adults and Communities

53. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2022 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

54. Question Time.

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

55. 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).

56. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

57. 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.

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

There were no declarations of the party whip.

59. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 35.

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

60. Care Technology Transformation.

The Committee considered a presentation from the Director of Adults and Communities which provided an update on the work being undertaken by the Department alongside Hampshire County Council and its strategic partner, PA Consulting Group, to transform Leicestershire County Council's care technology services. A copy of the slides marked 'Agenda Item 8', is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed Mr Luke Muir from PA Consulting Group and Mr Mark Allen from Hampshire County Council (HCC) to the meeting to co-present this item with the Director.

Arising from questions asked of Mr Muir and Mr Allen regarding their work and experience, the following points were made:

- (i) Members commented that the feedback HCC had received from care technology users had been exceptionally good so far. It was questioned what action would be taken in the event a person expressed dissatisfaction with the service. Mr Allen confirmed that HCC would follow up directly with such service users and work to fully resolve the issue so long as it did not relate to factors outside of the Council's remit. For example, issues with a service user's telephony system.
- (ii) Mr Allen further confirmed that the process of lessons being learned was continual and the service at HCC worked flexibly in order to adapt to individual need. Gaining the views of service users and staff was a key part of the process in order to make any adjustments needed, or to identify any areas where staff knowledge could be enhanced. Members noted that a staff member from HCC had been seconded to PA Consulting Group to enable practices to be shared.

In response to questions regarding the County Council's planned approach, the following points were made:

- (iii) Members raised concerns that some people might be resistant to having digital care technology installed in their homes. Whilst it was acknowledged that there would always be such cases, Members were assured that the main focus of the service would not be on technology but meeting individual needs. It was confirmed that a personalised, solutions focussed approach would be adopted to help ensure a person's needs were properly understood and the environment they lived in assessed to determine the right way forward with that individual. Members confirmed their support for this approach.
- (iv) Members noted that a key aim of using technology would be to complement existing services and to provide a support mechanism to enhance independence. Having conversations and establishing trust with individuals would be essential to convey the potential benefits that care technology could provide.
- (v) Members noted that once the initial re-modelled pathway for Leicestershire County Council's care technology services was underway, the initial focus would be on

providing services for elderly and frail people. However, there would be potential to develop the service further later on and to broaden the impact by adding pathways focussed on other cohorts such as for people with early stage dementia.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the presentation regarding the transformation of care technology services for Leicestershire be noted;
- (b) That Mr Luke Muir from PA Consulting Group and Mr Mark Allen from Hampshire County Council be thanked for attending the meeting and answering the Committee's questions.

61. Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Care Record.

The Committee considered a presentation of the Director of Adults and Communities which provided an update on the progress with the development of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) Care Record. A copy of the slides marked 'Agenda Item 9', is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed Laura Godstchalk, LLR Care Record Programme Manager at NHS Leicestershire Health Informatics Service to the meeting to co-present this item with the Director.

In response to questions raised, Ms Godstchalk, confirmed the following:

- (i) As the LLR Care Record was a platform being formed using the current clinical systems from each organisation involved, the responsibility for ensuring the records stored were correct and not out of date would continue to fall with the clinical staff treating the person.
- (ii) Although it would not be possible for a person to withdraw particular parts of their Record to stop them being viewed, an option for people to 'opt out' of being registered on the LLR Care Record was being developed. Assurance was provided that clinicians would not usually write verbatim notes on a person's medical record so the information stored would be succinct and if an individual had a particular objection to certain information being shared, they would be able to raise this directly with the relevant local organisation. Members were pleased to note that safeguards would be in place to ensure that only the Health and Social Care Professionals directly involved in a person's care would be able to view an individual's Record.
- (iii) There were already certain categories that were legally restricted where data sharing was concerned, and these were therefore classed as information of a highly sensitive nature which would not routinely be shared via the LLR Care Record. These included a person's gender reassignment and HIV/AIDS status. Officers undertook to share the full list of categories with Committee members outside of the meeting for information.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the presentation regarding the work to create a shared care record for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland be noted;
- (b) That Ms Godstchalk be thanked for attending the meeting and answering the Committees questions;
- (c) That further information to confirm the categories classed as highly sensitive in nature that would not be shared routinely via the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Care Record be provided to Committee members outside of the meeting.

62. Charging for Social Care and Support Policy.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities, the purpose of which was to brief the Committee on a number of proposed changes to the Council's Charging for Social Care and Support Policy to be introduced from 11 April 2022 and invite comment on the revised Policy prior to approval for implementation being sought from the Cabinet at its meeting on 29 March 2022. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 10', is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were made:

- (i) The Director reported that a circular issued to all local authorities after the Committee report had been published confirmed the Government's intention to raise the statutory minimum amounts for the Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG) and Personal Expenses Allowances (PEA) for 2022-23 by 3.01%. This meant that the PEA amount would rise from £24.90 to £25.65. The calculation of the MIG depended on a range of factors (such as age and disability) so it was not possible to provide an exact amount in the same way.
- (ii) A member raised concern that people planning for their future with good intentions could be negatively affected by the rules around deprivation of capital and clarification on the assessment process was sought. The Director confirmed that these rules would only apply if, at the time a person gave away an asset, they had a reasonable expectation of the need for care or support and the need to contribute towards the cost of that care or support.
- (iii) Members noted that there was no time limit (like with inheritance tax) which would make the giving away of an asset such as property, exempt from being considered as part of an application for care or support services. Regarding advice available for those looking to make decisions about their future, Members were advised to signpost people to the Department which could provide guidance based on an individual's circumstances. Members noted that a care funding booklet was also available setting out each provision. It was emphasised that such advice could only be given based on a person's circumstances at the time the enquiry was made. Members also noted that if a number of asset-related actions had been taken over a period of time (for example, if a person had given away £10K four times in one year), the circumstances around each would be individually considered as part of the assessment process.
- (iv) Predominantly there were two kinds of financial assessments used to determine how much a person would be charged for their care. These were based on

whether the care/support would be provided in the person's own home/community or in a residential setting. The outcome of the financial assessment largely depended on the type of care to be provided. Once this had been confirmed through a care assessment the financial assessment would then be completed. The process for those requiring care in a residential setting would usually be more complex, for example taking account of whether the placement would be temporary or permanent and whether they were a property owner.

- (v) Members were assured that the complexities of the process did not mean that care would be delayed; responding to people's care needs would always be the priority. Unless the person had made a choice to wait, a care package could begin, and charges could be back dated once the outcome of the financial assessment had been confirmed. This may happen if, for example, a person needed additional time to collect information to inform their assessment.
- (vi) Regarding the information available to the public about charges for care, the Director confirmed that there was an online financial assessment tool on the Council's website which offered a provisional result based on the information provided by the person completing the form. The Department would then evaluate the details of those identified as being eligible for care and support services and a notification letter would be issued. Members noted that the Department was currently considering ways to improve the tool for use and publication more widely.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report and revised Charging for Social Care and Support Policy set out at Appendix A be noted.
- (b) That the comments now made be forwarded to the Cabinet for consideration at its meeting on 29 March 2022.

63. Leicestershire Adult Learning Services.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities which provided an overview of the Leicestershire Adult Learning Services' (LALS) performance for 2020/21 from the context of an annual self-assessment and potential OFSTED inspection. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 11', is filed with these minutes.

At this point of the meeting, Mrs. L. Broadley CC declared a non-registerable interest in this item as her daughter worked for the County Council supporting the running of adult learning classes at Wigston Library.

Members noted that for a Service to receive an overall grade of "Outstanding" by OFSTED, each part of the assessment criteria (particularly achievement rates) needed to achieve a high standard of at least 10% above the national average.

Regarding the LALS' overall position and how close it had been to moving from "Good" to "Outstanding", the Director confirmed that this was a mixed picture but that a number of the programmes within the LALS were already performing at the "Outstanding" level. For example, the Apprenticeship Programme's achievement rates were currently above the national average. Whereas some of the lengthier programmes had been more affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Skills for Life English and Maths provision was one such example where achievement rates had dropped during the period. Members were

pleased to note that this would therefore be an area where greater focus would be given over the next year. Members highlighted that English and Maths courses including the ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) were vital to help people improve their life chances and also to help non-English speakers communicate with their families.

RESOLVED:

That the Leicestershire Adult Learning Service's performance for 2020/21 be noted.

64. Use of Resources in Adult Social Care.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities, the purpose of which was to share the Local Government Association's (LGA) 2020/21 report on Use of Resources in Adult Social Care and to seek the Committee's views on the Use of Resources in Leicestershire. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 12', is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion the following points were made:

- (i) Members noted that Leicestershire was in the top decile of authorities for provision of Direct Payments which was positive. However, a survey the Department had conducted earlier in 2021/22 had highlighted a need to simplify the processes for setting up and receiving Direct Payments which the Department would be working to achieve. In response to a question raised, the Director explained that Direct Payments were a highly audited area, and that the processes relating to them were complex. Therefore, making these processes less intensive was expected to be beneficial both to service users and to the Council. This might also encourage more people to apply or at least stabilise current application levels.
- (ii) Regarding the average hourly rates for home care, the Director clarified that the reason why a number of the rates for Leicestershire were much higher than the external rates, was because the Council's reporting method for this area differed from other local authorities in that it not only took into account care workers, but also a range of other factors such as occupational therapy services, crisis response services and overhead management costs. The Director acknowledged that this was an area the Department needed to look into for future years to ensure the best comparisons could be made.
- (iii) A member raised concern that not enough money was being spent on care for older adults in Leicestershire. It was commented that whilst care services in Leicestershire were excellent it was concerning that spend was significantly less than neighbouring authorities for this cohort which suggested that local residents were not being provided with the full level of services they perhaps should be. It was felt that this was the result of years of austerity and lack of fair funding for Leicestershire. In response to a question raised, the Director confirmed that the proportion of the Council's total budget spent on Adult Social Care was consistent with other Shires/two-tier local authorities.

RESOLVED:

That the report regarding the Use of Resources in Adult Social Care in 2020/21 be noted.

65. Date of next meeting.

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 6 June 2022 at 2.00pm.

2.00 – 3.47pm
7 March 2022

CHAIRMAN