

Minutes of a meeting of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 5 June 2024.

PRESENT

Mr. M. H. Charlesworth CC
Mr. D. Harrison CC
Mr. R. Hills CC

Mr. J. Morgan CC
Ms. Betty Newton CC
Mrs B. Seaton CC

In attendance

Mrs. L. Richardson CC – Cabinet Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing.
Hardip Chohan – Voluntary Action LeicesterShire

1. Appointment of Chairman.

RESOLVED:

That Mr. J. Morgan CC be appointed Chairman of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the period ending with the date of the Annual Meeting of the County Council in 2025.

Mr. J. Morgan CC in the Chair

2. Appointment of Vice-Chairman.

RESOLVED:

That Mrs. B. Seaton CC be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the period ending with the date of the Annual Meeting of the County Council in 2025.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2024 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

4. Question Time.

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

5. Questions asked by members.

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

6. Urgent items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

7. 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.

8. Declarations of the Party Whip.

There were no declarations of the party whip in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16.

9. Presentation of Petitions.

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

10. Probation Health Trainer Service.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Public Health which sought views on the proposals for the future of the Probation Health Trainer Service, as part of the engagement currently being undertaken. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 10', is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussions the following points were noted:

- (i) The Probation Health Trainer Service was jointly commissioned by Leicestershire County Council and Leicester City Council. The County Council had been commissioning the Probation Health Trainer Service since 2019 and the current contract began in 2022 and would end on 31st March 2025. As a separate Local Authority the County Council was entitled to make its own decision on whether it continued to commission the service and if so what format the service took. There was no specific statutory duty on the County Council to provide the service, however a case could be made that the service came under the Public Health department's overall duty to improve the health of people living in Leicestershire. Leicester City Council had not yet announced their proposals for the Service and the matter was still proceeding through their governance processes.
- (ii) The Probation Health Trainer Service had 3 full time equivalent members of Ingeus staff that covered the Leicestershire area. It was possible that if the service was decommissioned those 3 members of staff could be made redundant. There were also some volunteer positions associated with the service that could be affected.
- (iii) In 2022/23 the Service worked with 40 individuals from Leicestershire and in 2023/24 this rose to 119. A member asked what percentage this was of the overall offenders released from prison during those periods and in response it was explained that the statistics were not held by the County Council but the matter could be investigated and the statistics included in the report to Cabinet if available.
- (iv) In response to a question from a member about the level of impact the Probation Health Trainer Service had on offenders it was explained that this was hard to

measure because of the variety of factors that affect a person's life and the different services that worked with offenders.

- (v) Whilst the Probation Health Trainers Service was separate to the work of the Probation Service, the two services worked closely together and had a good relationship. Conversations were taking place with the Probation Service regarding how the health of offenders would be managed if the Probation Health Trainers Service was decommissioned. The impact of the decommissioning was likely to be most strongly felt by the Probation Service.
- (vi) Members noted that the County Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2023/24 – 2026/27 included a requirement for Public Health to save £90,000 by 1st April 2025 through a review of commissioned services and therefore understood why it was being proposed to decommission the service. Given the small amount of people the service worked with it was questioned whether it was value for money. However, members sought reassurances that the work would be picked up by other organisations when it was no longer funded by the County Council. It was queried whether the Police and Crime Commissioner could fund the service and the Director of Public Health agreed to look into this. The Director also emphasised that whilst it was proposed that Public Health would no longer fund the specific service for offenders, some of the other services that Public Health provided could tackle health issues faced by offenders such as substance misuse. Work needed to take place on the pathways for offenders to be referred into the services to ensure that offenders would get the help they needed.

RESOLVED:

That the proposal to decommission the Probation Health Trainer Service be supported, but the Director of Public Health be requested to note the Committee's desire for some support for the health needs of offenders to remain in place.

11. Public Health Overview and Annual Review.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Public Health which provided an overview and update on the work of Public Health aimed at improving health and wellbeing. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 11', is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussions the following points were noted:

- (i) Members welcomed the format and content of the report as it gave a broad overview of the department's work and performance levels.
- (ii) There were a range of measures by which the Public Health department measured the outcomes of its work including NICE guidance and health research, needs assessments, performance monitoring of public health services delivered, departmental scorecards, and benchmarking against other authorities. The Leicestershire County Council Public Health department took part in national meetings where best practice was shared between local authorities. Other authorities regularly sought advice from Leicestershire County Council on best practice and how outcomes were achieved in Leicestershire. The Cabinet Lead Member for Health emphasised that it could take a long time for the impact of public health interventions to be seen. It was also emphasised that without the prevention work undertaken by public health there could be an increase in the workload for

other Council departments later in time. Ideally if the department had more funding the community-based prevention services would be strengthened.

- (iii) In recent years Public Health had decommissioned some non-statutory services and a member queried how much of the remaining services were non-statutory and therefore could potentially be decommissioned in the future. In response the Director explained that the department had specific statutory services which approximately 62% of the Public Health Grant was spent on but it could be argued that all the remaining 38% of the Grant was spent on the Public Health department's overall statutory duty to improve the health of people living in Leicestershire. Public Health were required to report 3 times a year to the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) on how the Grant money was being spent and DCHS had clear expectations on which priority areas needed to be covered.
- (iv) Members raised concerns that air pollution was not being tackled as effectively as it could be due to the different roles played by District councils and the County Council. In response some reassurance was given that Public Health were working with the planning departments at Councils to ensure that the design of developments incorporated measures for improving public health. It was also noted that air quality had improved significantly over the years.
- (v) In response to a query from a member as to what work was being undertaken in Leicestershire with regards to 'dying well', it was explained that the Integrated Care Board and the Health and Wellbeing Board had carried out a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and held development sessions to help understand the level of care currently being provided. It was important to have early conversations with people about their needs when coming to the end of life though it was acknowledged some people would find these conversations uncomfortable. The member asked for a report to come to a future meeting of the Committee regarding this work. It was noted that this topic was relevant to the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee therefore some joint scrutiny may have to take place.

RESOLVED:

That the overview and update on the work of Public Health be noted and the good performance welcomed.

12. Noting the work programme of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Joint Health Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee considered the work programme of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Joint Health Scrutiny Committee, a copy of which marked 'Agenda Item 12', is filed with these minutes.

It was noted that the next meeting of the Joint Committee had now been confirmed for Wednesday 17 July 2024 at 10.00am.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the work programme be noted.

13. Dates of future meetings.

RESOLVED:

That future meetings of the Committee take place on the following dates all at 2.00pm:

Wednesday 11 September 2024;
Wednesday 13 November 2024;
Wednesday 15 January 2025;
Wednesday 5 March 2025;
Wednesday 4 June 2025;
Wednesday 3 September 2025;
Wednesday 5 November 2025.

2.00 - 3.17 pm
05 June 2024

CHAIRMAN