

Minutes of a meeting of the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Monday, 3 June 2024.

PRESENT

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

Mr. G. A. Boulter CC  
Mr. B. Champion CC  
Mr. N. Chapman CC

Mr. L. Hadji-Nikolaou CC  
Mr. P. King CC  
Mr. J. Miah CC

In attendance

Mrs. C. Radford CC – Lead Member for Adults and Communities  
Mr. T. Parton CC – Cabinet Support Member

1. Appointment of Chairman.

RESOLVED:

That Mr. T. J. Richardson CC be appointed Chairman for the period ending with the date of the Annual Meeting of the County Council in 2025.

Mr. T. J. Richardson CC in the Chair

2. Appointment of Deputy Chairman.

RESOLVED:

That M. N. Chapman CC be elected Deputy Chairman for the period ending with the date of the Annual Meeting of the County Council in 2025.

3. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 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 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).

6. Urgent items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

7. Declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda.

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 in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16.

There were no declarations of the party whip.

9. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 35.

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

10. Performance Report 2023/24 - Position at March 2024.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities which provided an update of the Adults and Communities Department's performance for the year 2023/24. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 9' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion the following points were made:

- i. Members were encouraged to hear how libraries had morphed from simply lending books, to providing other services, and welcomed the increase in volunteers. It was queried how more could be done to encourage others to use libraries to deliver services from the County Council in a more cost-effective way.
- ii. Members mentioned that there was a substantial increase in income from people accessing care. The Director said it was a discussion being had across the country in terms of how to balance out the increased demand for people in receipt of adult social care, which in turn increased revenue from contributions, with the cost of delivering those services.
- iii. The Director continued that up to the first half of 2023/24, there had been a 1.5% increase in the number of people receiving services. However, through mitigations put in place for the latter half of the year, there had been a 4.5% reduction in the number of people in receipt of long-term support. He added that when put into financial context at the half-year point in 2023, Adult Social Care were £7million overspent, looking at potentially over £10million by the end of the financial year. Through mitigation of some of the increased demand, however, the overspend had been reduced to £2.5million (about 1% of the budget).
- iv. A Member queried, if the outcomes of the 49.6k recorded contacts from people asking for advice and support could be broken down into types of enquiry. The Director confirmed that a report had been brought to the Committee in June 2023 entitled 'Care Data Matters' which outlined a change in data and the information

being reported by local authorities and providers of adult social care, one aspect of which was statutory reporting to NHS England. As a result, sequels to contacts that had previously been 'mapped' against layers of the Strategy for the Adults and Communities Department, namely 'Prevent', 'Reduce', 'Delay' and 'Meet' need, would need to adjust over the coming year and as such the format of the report was changing to reflect the new government data requirements. The Director undertook to provide further detail behind the contacts to Members for information.

- v. A Member questioned in what format the 49.6k enquiries had been made, for example, by email, telephone or through the website, and if, it had been easy for people to find out information. Members were assured that the website and effectiveness of it, particularly for Adults and Communities, and been looked at over the years. The Director reported that there was a programme of work currently looking at improving Adults and Communities customer service, particularly focussing on some of the work that took place inside the Customer Service Centre. A report on the outcome of this work would be brought to the Committee later in the year detailing operational activity, trend analysis, and objectives going forward.

#### RESOLVED:

- a) That the Performance Report 2023/24 – Position at March 24, be noted and welcomed.
- b) That a further report be brought to the Committee under the new reporting format, to provide trend analysis on sources of referral.

#### 11. Outcome of the Consultation on the Future of the Transitions Learning Programme.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities the purpose of which was to share the findings of the consultation on the future of the Transitions Learning Programme (TLP) and to seek the views of the Committee on the proposals to close the service. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 11' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion the following points were made:

- i. Two young people continued to access the TLP, both of whom had profound, multiple learning difficulties. When consulting on the service, other similar provision was discussed that would meet the needs of the young people, however, both of the young people's families felt that those schools weren't appropriate.
- ii. Discussions continued with the families, and packages were being developed around each of the young people, each of whom had an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP), which meant there was a statutory obligation upon the County Council to deliver the provision set out within these. Members were assured that this did not change with regards to their educational needs which would still have to be met. The packages would also need to ensure other provisions, such as access to occupational therapy and a speech and language therapist.
- iii. From a legal perspective the packages would come under education other than in schools, which were packages developed for other children and young people in

Leicestershire. The packages for the two young people involved would be highly complex, because of the complex needs of the two young people, but from a multi-agency perspective. By working with the families, there was confidence that adequate provision would be put in place to satisfy their ongoing needs as currently required in their EHCPs.

- iv. Members queried what the difference would be for the two young people affected in terms of the service currently provided against what might be proposed, and how their transition across to the new provision would be managed. Members sought assurance that the process would be made as comfortable as possible for the young people and their families. Officers reported that there were concerns raised by the parents in terms of provision being delivered in the home environment. It was recognised that providing this outside the home did provide an important respite element for the families. However, by looking at alternative providers and working with NHS colleagues to provide a community base that could accommodate equipment required, it was felt that a package could be put in place. Parents would be involved in the discussions throughout to ensure any disruption during the transition would be minimised.
- v. Members queried if the new provision would be detrimental or better than the current TLP provision. Officers reported that the provision would meet the needs detailed with the young people's EHCP but that this would be different, and it was recognised that for young people with significant disabilities, any change could be disruptive and a time of upheaval and stress, for them and their families. Officers would however seek to minimise this as much as possible through continued discussion with the families.
- vi. Work would continue to ensure the new package for the two young people affected was put in place for September. It was acknowledged that the timing would be tight, but that as conversations had taken place over a period of time, with the needs and views of families being considered throughout, officers considered this to be achievable.
- vii. Members were reassured that the young people had some respite outside of school time and that this would remain unchanged irrespective of whether or not the TLP continued.
- viii. In response to a query, Members were informed that each young person with an EHCP had an annual review, so the packages of the two young people would be reviewed in this way and the views of the parents and carers, and the views of both the young people, would be taken into account as part of this process. Though the young people had very limited ability to express views, it was possible to know whether they were happy or experiencing distress and so the position would be monitored throughout.
- ix. Members acknowledged the financial reasons for the removal of the TLP. Members were reminded that the service cost around £350,000 per annum, but at full capacity it would still run at a deficit, as it was costing more than the funding received to run the service. The Programme could accommodate 7 young people in total and so was currently operating at a bigger deficit due to there being only two learners within the programme. The Director explained that the TLP was funded through three routes: Special Educational Needs; Adult and Community Services; Adult Education Services. Funding through special educational needs

was funded on an individual basis, therefore, the fewer learners enrolled, the less funding was allocated, which meant the funding received was less than the cost of provision.

- x. A Member queried what would happen if the alternative external provision cost the Council more than the current provision should a provider increase its costs in the future. Officers reported that for the two young people there would need to be very specific commissioning, therefore the package would have a cost implication, but with planning and working with special schools and colleges moving forward provision would be ensured within the system to be able to manage these costs effectively.
- xi. Members sought assurance that they would be kept informed on the transition of the two young people to their new service provision. The Director undertook to provide Committee Members with an update after a period of settlement.
- xii. Members noted that the support provided to the individuals would, from September 2024, fall under the remit of the Children and Family Services Department and would therefore be reported, as appropriate, to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Members urged that there be continued monitoring of the provision to the young learners included in the recommendation to the Cabinet.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the report on the Outcome of the Consultation on the Future of the Transitions Learning Programme be noted.
- b) That, should the Cabinet's decision be to close the TLP, the Director be requested to, provide an update on the transition of the two young people affected following a period of settlement and that the Chairman of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee be notified of the Committee's concerns regarding their transition and urged to also monitor their progress as considered appropriate, in discussion with the Director of Children and Family Services.

12. Archives, Collections and Learning Centre.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities which provided an update on the outcome of the private scrutiny workshop held regarding the Archives, Collections and Learning (ACL) Centre. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 12' is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman thanked all officers and Members who attended the workshop, which importantly had provided a holistic view of the issues and involved property and finance officers, as well as officers from the Adults and Communities Department. He also thanked the Cabinet Lead Member who had also participated in the discussion.

In presenting the report, the Director advised that:

- i. Accreditation status from The National Archives (TNA) had been retained for two years (usually six years) on the proviso that within the next two years the County Council resolved the ongoing issues around the storage and access to records,

alongside another recommendation that digital records were progressed.

- ii. There would be an Arts Council England accreditation assessment of the museum service. A date for this was yet to be confirmed but it was expected imminently.
- iii. The capital and revenue projections requested at the workshop to cover a 25-year period for storage off site and retrieval, was being worked upon. It was the view of the Director that it would be a similar revenue cost to capital cost, so would likely be in the region of £20million. It was further noted that the £5million cost over the first five-year period included £1.7million capital requirement to maintain the Record Office at Wigston.

Arising from discussion, the following points were made:

- iv. In light of the financial information made available during the private workshop, Members concluded that the cost of borrowing money to proceed with the new ACL Centre would not be dissimilar to the revenue required for the alternative options and would result in the Council having a building that would meet growing demand as was required for accreditation. It was recognised that further work was needed to fully assess costs over a 25-year period to inform the Cabinet's decision which was being produced.
- v. Members noted that the risk of losing accreditation would mean the County Council could be instructed on how to store items by the appropriate bodies with no regard as to the cost which would still need to be met by the Authority.
- vi. A Member queried if there was an opportunity to dispose of collection items to reduce the space required and raise some funds. The Director reported that there was a slight difference to museum collections and archive collections. The Museums Service had had an active programme of rationalisation and disposal since 2015, and there had been a reduction in collections over that time. With regards to the Record Office there was very little that was taken in to be stored that did not need to be retained, and with regards to the public record had an obligation to keep. No further space was being sought for museum collections as with a different configuration the number of buildings currently being used could be consolidated and reduced. With regards to the record office provision, the County Council are required by the TNA to have 25-years growth space and provision for that growth had to be secured to retain accreditation beyond the two years.
- vii. The Director reported that other areas of funding had been explored but the County Council was precluded from most grant funding because the storage of records was a statutory requirement the Council had to budget for.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the report regarding the Archives, Collections and Learning Centre be noted and welcomed.
- b) That the report and comments of the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration at its meeting on 21 June 2024.

- c) That in light of the discussions held the Cabinet be advised that the recommendation of the Adults and Communities Overview and Committee was that the development of the ACL Centre be reaffirmed, and consideration given to funding being allocated to deliver this in the refreshed MTFS for 2024/25 – 2028/29.

13. Dates of future meetings.

The dates of future meetings of the Committee scheduled to take place on the following dates, all on a Monday at 2.00pm, were noted:

2 September 2024  
4 November 2024  
20 January 2025  
3 March 2025  
2 June 2025  
1 September 2025  
3 November 2025

2.00pm to 3.16pm  
03 June 2024

CHAIRMAN