

Minutes of a meeting of the Adults and Cultural Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Monday, 1 June 2026.

PRESENT

Mrs. K. Knight CC (in the Chair)

Mr. N. Chapman CC
Mr. G. Cooke CC
Mr. N. Holt CC
Mr. P. King CC

Mr. B. Lovegrove CC
Mr. P. Morris CC
Dr. D. North CC
Mrs. R. Page CC

In attendance

Mrs Fiona Barber – Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire

1. Appointment of Chairman.

That it be noted that Mrs. K. Knight CC be appointed Chairman for the period ending with the date of the Annual Meeting of the County Council in 2027, in accordance with Rule 6(a) of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Part 4E of the County Council's Constitution).

2. Appointment of Vice-Chairman.

It was moved by Mrs. Kerry Knight and seconded by Mr. Andrew Innes:

“That Mr. Peter Morris be elected Vice-Chairman for the period until the next Annual Meeting of the Council.”

It was moved by Mr. Brian Lovegrove and seconded by Mrs. Rosita Page:

“That Mr. Phil King be elected Vice-Chairman for the period until the next Annual Meeting of the Council.”

The Chief Executive informed members that both candidates had been duly proposed and seconded and in accordance with Standing Order 25 a secret ballot would therefore take place.

The Chief Executive announced the results of the ballot as follows:

Five votes for Mr. Peter Morris, four votes for Mr. Phil King and one abstention. The motion “That Mr. Peter Morris be elected Vice-Chairman for the period until the next Annual Meeting of the Council” was therefore carried.

RESOLVED:

That Mr. Peter Morris be elected Vice-Chairman for the period until the next Annual Meeting of the Council.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2026 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

4. Question Time.

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

5. Questions asked by Members under Standing Order 32(1).

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 32(1).

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 in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16.

There were no declarations of the party whip.

9. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 33.

The Chief Executive reported that no petitions had been received under Standing Order 33.

10. Change of Order to the Order of Business.

The Chairman sought and obtained the consent of the Committee to vary the order of business from that set out in the agenda for the meeting.

11. Cultural Services.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Adults and Cultural Services, the purpose of which was to provide an introduction to the three new services areas that had moved into Adults and Cultural Services from May 2026: Country Parks, Beaumanor Hall and Park, and The Century Theatre. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 12' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were made:

- i. A Member referred to recent increased fees and charges, including car parking charges at country parks, and questioned if an assessment had been undertaken of the likely impact on users and visitors. The Member also asked if similar information was available in relation to other services, including Beaumanor Hall and its use for weddings, and whether the impact of any changes could be reported to a future meeting.
- ii. Officers advised that the issue would be taken away for further consideration. In relation to country parks car parking charges, officers undertook to review the decision-making process for the daily parking charge increase, noting that it had been implemented from 1 April 2026, and was likely to have been considered through the previous year's scrutiny and Cabinet processes.
- iii. It was noted there was a proposed increase to annual passes for country parks, which was still being developed as a savings proposal and would require further business case and impact assessment work. Officers confirmed they would check the position and provide further information.
- iv. Members noted that the services discussed represented new areas of scrutiny for the Committee and requested further detailed information, including working hyperlinks to supporting documentation. It was also noted that Century Theatre and Beaumanor Hall had been the subject of previous discussions about viability. Members indicated that information on uptake, visitor numbers and related performance data would be helpful.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the report on Cultural Services be noted.
 - b) That the Assistant Director be requested to provide a briefing note on current and additional areas now supported by the Department to be circulated to Members following the meeting.
 - c) The Chairman requested that should Members require further information following circulation of the briefing note, a separate meeting would be arranged to discuss the three new service areas.
12. Care Quality Commission Assessment 2025, Improvement Plan Delivery Update.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Adults and Cultural Services, the purpose of which was to provide an update of the progress made to deliver the Care Quality Commission (CQC) Improvement Plan, prior to submission of the progress update to the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) due 17 June 2026. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 10' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were made:

- i. For such reports in future, Members requested a traffic light system, or similar, to clearly show how delivery against the Improvement Plan was being measured, what the targets were, or what the Department aimed to achieve, which would provide clearer oversight and identify areas at risk of delay.

- ii. In response to a query, officers advised that paragraph 35 of the report summarised work on equity of access and experience, including rural communities. Access to services for unpaid carers in rural areas would be considered through the draft Carers Strategy and future commissioning, with dementia support cited as an example. Officers would consider how rural initiatives could be presented more clearly in future reports.
- iii. The Healthwatch representative described the Improvement Plan as an ongoing journey and asked how people's experience of services would differ from around 15 months earlier. Officers advised that progress had been made on assessment timeliness, with short and long-term actions to reduce waiting times, improve understanding of waiting lists, and strengthen monitoring.
- iv. Members were advised that 551 people were awaiting an Occupational Therapy assessment at the end of April 2026, down from 605 at the end of March 2026. Work was also taking place through the Customer Service Centre to improve how people contacted and accessed the Council.
- v. The Healthwatch representative referred to the Waiting Well policy in Appendix A and asked what Members could expect from the work. Officers advised that staff engagement and audit feedback was informing updated guidance, tools and practice. Future guidance would set expectations on waiting times, ambitions for people awaiting assessment, and a risk-based approach to prioritising referrals using professional judgement.
- vi. The Healthwatch representative asked how engagement and communication feedback was being used. Officers advised that the Council's engagement panel, involving people who used services, had informed work such as the Dementia Strategy. A staff engagement panel had also been established to gather staff views on service delivery.
- vii. Officers added that staff communications and briefings were highlighting changes to reporting dashboards and improvement plan activity. Staff engagement was also informing telephone system changes, expected by August 2026.
- viii. A Member asked how many further appointments were needed to increase Reablement Team capacity, when previous efficiency work had identified reablement savings, and asked how this related to the planned staffing increase. Officers explained that the CQC had identified a need to strengthen reablement capacity, including weekend working and discharges and that rolling recruitment was underway to ensure capacity of the team was kept up into the future. The efficiency work built on increased capacity to maximise independence, support discharge and prevent avoidable hospital admissions. Officers were requested to provide further detail to Members on remaining vacancies to be appointed to after the meeting.
- ix. On carers, officers reported that consultation on the draft Carers Strategy was due to conclude during Carers Week, with results to inform the final strategy, actions and future service design. The existing carers contract required strengthening, and a business case was being developed for the future service offer and expected impact.
- x. Members were advised that £600,000 had been identified for carers as part of CQC improvement activity, comprising £200,000 per year for three years to support

voluntary sector provision. Officers acknowledged the challenge of balancing delivery of the improvement plan with departmental savings.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the report be noted.
- b) That officers be requested to consider how rural initiatives could be presented more clearly in future reports.
- c) That the Director of Adults and Cultural Services be requested to provide information on the remaining recruitment requirements to the Reablement Team to Members.

13. Performance Report 2025/26 - Position at March 2026.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities, which provided an update of the Adults and Cultural Services Department's performance for the year 2025/26. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 11' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were made:

- i. A Member referred to the library loans data in the Performance Report and noted that, while total library loans had increased, junior loans and community library issues had fallen. Clarification was sought on the age range for junior loans, whether community library issues were included in the overall figure, and what support was being provided to increase use of community libraries.
- ii. In response, it was explained that the main library loans figure related to Council-managed libraries and that community managed library figures were reported separately. Officers outlined the support provided through a dedicated team and engagement with trustees and volunteers, and highlighted the wider community role of community libraries beyond book lending. Officers acknowledged the apparent reduction in community library issues and undertook to review the data and bring further information to a future meeting.
- iii. In response to a question on Care Act assessment waits, it was explained that the figure of 83 referred to people awaiting allocation for assessment at the end of March 2026. It was confirmed that no one had waited more than six months, compared with 19 people at the end of March 2025.
- iv. A Member asked what action was taken where performance indicators were red, particularly on social contact and access to information. Officers advised that more detailed survey analysis was being used to identify issues by demographic and geographic factors and to inform service improvement. This work aligned with the Care Quality Commission Improvement Plan, including actions on contact, consistency, rural access and support for carers and people with dementia.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the report be noted.

- b) That the Director of Adults and Cultural Services be requested to review the data for community library issues and bring further information to a future meeting.

14. Date of next meeting.

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 1 September 2026, at 2.00pm.

2.00 - 3.22 pm
01 June 2026

CHAIRMAN