



Leicestershire
County Council

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2019/20



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What is Overview and Scrutiny?

Some Council meetings, such as the Cabinet, are “decision making” bodies. Overview and Scrutiny does not make decisions but is instead made up of several bodies who monitor and influence those meetings that do. The Overview and Scrutiny role, carried out by non-Cabinet members, is designed to support the work of the Council in the following ways:

- **By reviewing and scrutinising decisions taken by the Cabinet, also known as acting as a “critical friend”**
 - **By considering aspects of the Council’s performance**
 - **By assisting in research, policy review and development**
 - **By involving itself with external organisations operating in the County to ensure that the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working**
 - **By providing a means of involving the community in the Council's work**
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In Leicestershire we have the Scrutiny Commission, the lead Overview and Scrutiny body, and four service-based Committees for Adults and Communities, Children and Families, Environment and Transport and Health. Each Committee has a role in performance monitoring, enabling members to scrutinise detailed performance information and service delivery.

In addition to the committee-based work they carry out, Overview and Scrutiny Committees can also initiate task and finish work to look at a particular issue in more detail. Scrutiny Review Panels, as they are known, are made up of usually five members and their recommendations, which may suggest a change in policy or service provision, are submitted to the relevant parent committee prior to consideration by the Cabinet.

All Overview and Scrutiny meetings are held in public session and attendance and involvement of the public is actively encouraged either via questions or petitions to be put at our meetings or suggestions for our work programme.

For further information about the Overview and Scrutiny process and how you can get involved please visit our website: www.leicestershire.gov.uk/overview-and-scrutiny

Foreword by the Scrutiny Commissioners

As we began to prepare this annual report at the end of the 2019/20 financial year unprecedented changes were being made across the Country to tackle the coronavirus outbreak. As a country we are going through a very difficult time and everyone has been affected in some way. The County Council has been doing all it can to support the most vulnerable in our society and staff have adapted their working practices, working tirelessly to support and protect the residents of the County. We wish to thank all staff involved in the delivery of direct services, and those behind the scenes providing support, for all their hard work.

One significant change arising from the coronavirus pandemic has been to the operation of the Council's public meetings. The government has temporarily removed the legal requirement for local authorities to hold public meetings in person. The County Council has quickly adapted and made use of the technology available to hold public meetings virtually, therefore continuing to make critical decisions on the delivery of its services for Leicestershire residents in a way that is both transparent and accessible to the public. Where appropriate, scrutiny will continue to play a key role in that process, ensuring local democracy continues to thrive in this difficult time. The Scrutiny Commission successfully held its first virtual meeting on 8th April 2020 and that meeting was webcast live allowing the public to engage in the process whilst still following government advice to stay at home.

Looking back over the last 12 months environmental concerns have been at the top of the agenda for a number of our committees. We are taking every opportunity to ensure that environmental considerations form part of every policy and decision, whether in relation to the carbon friendly nature of our plans for economic development, the need for major transport infrastructure to also promote sustainable travel and tackle air quality issues or the need for the health and social care economy to make environmental and sustainability issues a priority. We are pleased that the Council's Strategic Plan and Environment Strategy have been amended to reflect the climate emergency and look forward to monitoring achievements against the targets that have been set, noting that some of these will need to be reviewed in light of the coronavirus outbreak.

As our own response to the climate emergency declared by the County Council in May 2019, the Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee has taken the lead and started a successful trial of paperless meetings. We hope to see this rolled out across all overview and scrutiny committee meetings by the end of the year. Unknowingly, this work has proved invaluable in managing meetings during the coronavirus outbreak. As a result of the processes established during the trial, the Council's Democratic Services team have been able to implement paperless meetings for all Council committees, enabling officers to operate from home in line with government guidance.

The level of public interest in our work has continued to grow, with a record 33 questions being asked by members of the public, 10 questions from elected members and our health overview and scrutiny committees have had two agenda items put forward by the public. We hope to see this continue and will work to raise awareness in local communities of the role of overview and scrutiny.

Elsewhere, we have continued to hold our Cabinet colleagues to account for the performance and delivery of services within their portfolios. Each Scrutiny body has received regular performance updates and whilst we have been reassured that in many areas departments are performing well, we have also highlighted a range of issues where performance was below expectations and we will be seeking to address these going forward. Issues raised have included slippage in the capital programme and the need for clearer delivery plans for the Council's major infrastructure projects (the Scrutiny Commission), biodiversity and emissions (Environment and Transport), cancer wait metrics and delayed transfers of care (Health) and the completion of assessments within the 45 day time limit (Children and Families). We will also continue to monitor the progress of transformation projects such as the transition to SMART libraries and the implementation of the Target Operating Model across the Adults and Communities Department.

We are grateful to our Cabinet colleagues for attending our meetings and answering our questions. We would also like to place on record our appreciation for the support and advice of officers, who play a valuable role in supporting us and the scrutiny process.

This Annual Report is not a complete commentary of everything we have achieved this past year; rather it is a summary of some key highlights of our work during 2019/20. We hope it reflects the variety of issues we have considered during another busy year and that you enjoy reading it. You can of course find out more about our meetings [here](#).



Simon Galton CC



Peter Bedford CC



Terri Eynon CC



Rosita Page CC

The four Scrutiny Commissioners are responsible for leading the Overview and Scrutiny process, deciding on priority issues for Overview and Scrutiny Committees and areas that merit review by a Scrutiny Panel.

1.

The Scrutiny Commission

The Scrutiny Commission is the lead Overview and Scrutiny body, looking at the Council's budget and performance as well as the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP), which is responsible for the economy and strategic transport covering the County and Leicester City. The Commission also has a role to look at issues that cover the remit of more than one Overview and Scrutiny Committee and acts as the Council's Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Highlights

Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) and Local Industrial Strategy

We heard from the Chief Executive of the LLEP on two occasions. In June we were brought up-to-date with how the LLEP works and its financial position, including the process it uses to allocate funds. We were pleased to hear that these tended to be directed to support areas which were not growing so fast and that every project had to demonstrate that it would deliver economic benefits for Leicester and Leicestershire.

In September, we discussed the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS). We supported the areas of focus that had been identified and made several suggestions. In terms of infrastructure, we felt the LIS needed to respond to climate change through consideration of cycleways and electric charging points for vehicles. We also emphasised the importance of digital connectivity. Looking at education, we asked the LLEP to make a case to the Government to improve further education in Leicester and Leicestershire. We also suggested that the LLEP should lobby the Government to provide incentives for attracting knowledge-based business into the area.

Tourism Growth Plan

When we were given the opportunity to comment on the draft Tourism Growth Plan, we raised several concerns. These focused on the lack of reference to Leicestershire's industrial heritage, and to the variety of smaller museums and tourist attractions across Leicestershire. We also felt that the Plan needed to respond to the ways in which tourism was changing and consider new developments such as the extension to Fosse Park. We were really pleased to see that our comments were taken on board and reflected in the final version of the Plan, which was agreed by the Cabinet in October.

Unitary Business Case

We spent a lot of time last year looking at the proposals for a unitary authority for Leicestershire, and this autumn we were consulted on the business case itself. We noted that support from District Council Leaders remained lacking and continued to have concerns about how the business case would be received by the Government. However, we were pleased to see that some of the proposals in the business case had been changed following our earlier feedback, especially those relating to democracy at a locality level. Planning decisions would now be taken at a locality level by members representing the local area, there were firm proposals for working with parish and town councils and the proposals for Area Committees suggested they would make a real difference in their localities. At the end of the meeting, we concluded that most members appeared supportive of the business case, although a minority remained concerned or were opposed to the proposal.

Economic Growth

We have been following the development of the scheme for the East of Lutterworth Strategic Development Area with interest and received an update in November where we were consulted on the potential options available for delivery of the scheme. We supported the proposal for a 50/50 Joint Venture partnership with a strategic partner to be explored, noting that the approach is a departure from previous practice and therefore carries additional financial risks. We felt that the risks were outweighed by the potential rewards, particularly to the reputation of the Council from delivering a successful exemplar project. We were pleased to see the proposals for 40% affordable housing and for the ambition of the development being carbon friendly.

In November we were also advised of a potential Strategic Development Area at Junction 2 of the M69. We noted that this proposal was at a very early stage and had been identified through the call by Blaby District Council for potential sites to be identified as part of their local plan process. We commented that the County Council owned land could be useful in protecting and providing a green space between any new developments and the villages of Sapcote and Stoney Stanton. We also expressed concern about local employment opportunities and the type and cost of housing involved but were advised that this would need to be considered in the Local Plan process.

Medium Term Financial Strategy

We had an interesting discussion with the Leader and Deputy Leader at our meeting in January. We welcomed their insight into national developments such as the Fair Funding Review, Devolution White Paper, Comprehensive Spending Review and changes to the New Homes Bonus, all of which would have an impact on Leicestershire's finances.

The Council's financial position has been challenging since 2021, so we were pleased to see the first budget since that time which included a meaningful increase in funding from Central Government. We understand that, despite this, the budget contains several challenges and risks, notably the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) budget, which we will continue to have oversight of through our regular MTFS monitoring reports. We felt that, overall, the MTFS represented good financial management but recognised that opportunities to make savings in the future were limited.

Equality Strategy 2020-2024

We welcomed the opportunity to comment on the draft Equality Strategy. We felt that staff had done their absolute best in consulting on the Strategy and engaging with interested groups but were still disappointed with the level of response. The Council's consultation process is an area we have identified for more in-depth scrutiny in the coming year. We felt that the Strategy itself addressed all the right areas but made some suggestions about the need for consistency of language and greater clarity to show that the focus was on equity of outcome rather than equality. We also identified the need to talk about human rights responsibilities, not just the rights themselves.

Environment Strategy and Strategic Plan

Having been considered by the Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Commission took a broader view of the revised Environment Strategy and Strategic Plan and its impact across all Council departments. Despite the outbreak of Covid-19 members welcomed plans to proceed with the proposed revised documents in response to the Council's declaration of a climate emergency since its ambitions in this regard remained unchanged.

We noted that the coronavirus outbreak would impact timescales for targets as business as usual was put on hold in some areas due to the restrictions put in place. However, we were pleased to note that the Environment Strategy Action Plan was sufficiently flexible to take account of this and suggested this be updated to record the need for further work as a result. We noted plans to undertake a further full review later this year of the Strategic Plan which would also allow for the impact of Covid-19 to be considered against wider policy commitments. The Commission will be pleased to see the outcome of that review at the appropriate time.

Whilst there are many negatives arising from the coronavirus pandemic, the Commission highlighted the changes to working practices which appeared to be showing a positive impact environmentally and we were pleased to hear that this step change in how we live and work could offer a positive 'kick-start' to our journey to net zero. However, we also raised concerns that a focus on rebuilding the local economy in future months could put pressure on local planning authorities to prioritise housing growth over the Council's environmental ambitions and we asked the Cabinet to consider the need to seek central government support in this area.



2.

Adults and Communities

The Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee looks at issues around adult social care and communities and wellbeing, including issues such as libraries and museums. It also has a role to monitor the work the Health and Wellbeing Board carries out in relation to integrated commissioning.

Highlights

Home Care Service: Post November 2020

The Cabinet, in February 2020, approved the proposals for the new Home Care service. Prior to the decision, we considered and commented on a number of detailed reports outlining the proposed way forward for the new service. We asked officers to consider whether a longer-term contract could provide greater service stability and were pleased that consideration was being given to carers receiving the appropriate remuneration for non-contact time, such as for the travel required to carry out their duties.

We fully supported the proposals set out in the report we received in January 2020 and commended officers on the excellent work that had been undertaken so far; it was particularly reassuring to see that lessons learnt from the previous procurement had been used to design and shape the future service. This included a phased approach to implementation and different pricing bands to reflect rurality and the difficulties experienced in providing services in some of the more rural areas.



Adult Social Care Target Operating Model

In June and November 2019, we received updates on the progress of developing and implementing the Adult Social Care Target Operating Model, including the benefits the Department had already begun to realise in the early stages of the programme.

We received assurance that the approach being adopted was not about cutting services but instead, focussed on service improvement. It was pleasing to note the intention that the predicted non-cashable savings would be re-invested back into the Department to improve service quality and customer satisfaction.

It was reassuring that the additional capacity already identified was being used to improve the service user review process and that new cases were being assessed more quickly, with a higher rate of reviews also taking place for long-term service users.

Next Steps in Library Provision

At our meeting in September 2019, we received an update on the progress with and provided comments on the options for shaping the future direction of library services. We provided feedback on our experiences and those of our constituents whilst visiting a number of community-managed libraries. Overall, this was positive, as these libraries were seen to be thriving and embodying a positive community spirit.

We noted the challenges that some community managed libraries will face when the tapered funding from the County Council ceased. We welcomed the innovative approach that some community managed libraries, such as Earl Shilton, had been taking to source new funding streams in order to sustain services. We were advised that a report on the findings of the review, being commissioned by the Department on this matter, would be provided to us at a future meeting.

Adults and Communities Department Ambitions and Draft Strategy 2020-24

We were pleased to note that the Strategy would be integrated across the Department and confirmed our support of the draft Strategy and the proposals for the consultation, although we did suggest some amendments. At our suggestion, an additional question has been added to the questionnaire to seek views on how the department could improve the service user experience.

We also requested that consideration be made to the language used within the Strategy (and the associated documentation), prior to Cabinet approval being sought for the public consultation to proceed, to ensure this was as clear and understandable as possible. It was felt that some of the headings and definitions in particular, could be strengthened and better aligned to the consultation survey questions.

3.

Children and Families

The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee looks at issues around social service provision for children and families, educational attainment at schools and academies and youth support services. It also monitors the performance and activities of the Leicestershire Children and Young People's Partnership Board, the Local Safeguarding Children Board, the Children's Social Care Panel and any other partnerships as appropriate that are associated with the executive functions outlined above.

Highlights

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Developments

Throughout the year, we received updates on the development of new SEND provisions as part of the High Needs Block Development Plan and the results of associated public consultation. We were informed that the 2018/19 year end budget position for the High Needs Block was an overspend of £2.3m but the department had been able to use reserves and some underspend within the Dedicated Schools Grant to offset this. An increase in expenditure was anticipated for the next three years before a reduction would be seen in 2022/23.

We acknowledged that Leicestershire was one of the lowest funded authorities in the country and expressed concern that a continued increase in the number of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) would not be sustainable without additional funding. However, we were reassured that although financial pressures continued to increase, the service remained committed to supporting children in the best way.

We also heard about the work undertaken around the provision of short break services to families where a child had a disability. Although we felt that the changes appeared to be positive, we agreed that it would be useful to receive a specific report on this work at a future meeting. A further progress update was received at our meeting on 3 March 2020. This primarily detailed the work undertaken by the Children and Family Wellbeing Service in relation to short breaks, direct payments, summer schemes and domiciliary care.

At our meeting in November 2019, we received a further update on SEND improvements. We welcomed the Parliamentary Review of SEND reforms and also noted the development of the Oakfield site and the delivery of the Social, Emotional and Mental Health school by September 2020.

Recruitment and Retention

We welcomed the continued success in the recruitment and retention of permanent staff. There were still vacant posts and we acknowledged that agency staff were still being used, partly to cover these vacancies. A dedicated strategy had been developed and of the 24 identified actions in the implementation plan, 20 had been completed. As a Committee, we agreed that we would continue to monitor progress by receiving regular updates.

Annual Report of the Local Safeguarding Children Board

At our meeting in September 2019, we received the final annual report of the Local Safeguarding Children Board prior to it being replaced by multi-agency safeguarding arrangements which would be managed through the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership. During the discussion, concern was raised around the increase in the number of children who were electively home educated. This was subsequently the subject of a separate report, but we received reassurance around the robust monitoring and work being undertaken by the Inclusion Team. Concern was also raised that over one fifth of children who went missing in Leicestershire and Rutland who were looked after children, had been placed in the county from elsewhere. The issues of missing and elective home education had been identified as key areas to monitor by the new Partnership.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

We received a presentation on ACEs and heard that the County Council was undertaking a range of work to help prevent ACEs, including a renewed focus on the first 1001 critical days of a child's life. We also welcomed that the Children and Family Wellbeing Service had developed evidence based approaches to parenting to help reduce parental conflict and that the Children and Families Partnership would be holding multi-agency workshop events to develop the work around ACEs.

Corporate Parenting Strategy

We welcomed the revised Corporate Parenting Strategy, in particular the section on the responsibility of elected members as corporate parents. The Scrutiny Review Panel had recommended the introduction of three member champions in the specific areas of education, training and work, housing and accommodation and health and meetings had now been arranged. We were also extremely pleased that the department had agreed with district/borough councils that care leavers up to the age of 25 would not pay council tax.



Ofsted Inspection

At our meeting on 5 November 2019, we received an update on the outcome from the Ofsted inspection which had taken place in September and October. The Director informed the Committee that Ofsted had been clear that progress had been made since the last inspection in 2016, it had acknowledged that significant improvements had been made across all areas and identified positive impacts for children in some service areas. However, whilst services for children in care and overall leadership were good, they were not experiencing consistently good practice enough across all services. As a result, the overall judgement remained one of 'requires improvement'. We were very disappointed with this outcome as we felt that this did not reflect the significant progress achieved by the department and Ofsted had identified a number of strengths and had confirmed that children in Leicestershire were experiencing better outcomes. The Director reported that six recommendations had been set out in the report and the department had produced an action plan to respond to these. We acknowledged that the department was currently in the third year of its four year continuous improvement action plan and the recommendations from the 2019 inspection would fit into the existing themes already recorded in the ongoing action plan. We look forward to receiving further progress updates.

Children's Social Care Investment Plan

At our meeting in January 2020, we heard that approval had been given to a design brief around residential provision. This was further detailed at our meeting on 3 March 2020. The proposal contained three elements which would be delivered in two phases. Phase one was the development of an Assessment and Resource Team who would work with young people in an outreach capacity. Phase two included the creation of a Hub containing three assessment beds and three multi-functional properties. Further work still needed to be undertaken and we will receive an update on the residential design brief in September 2020 and a general progress update in March 2021.

4.

Environment and Transport

The Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee looks at issues around roads and road safety, public transport and waste and recycling. It also acts as the Council's Flood Risk Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Highlights

Public Participation

As a committee scrutinising the provision of universal services, we have noticed increased public participation via petitions, questions and representations covering a variety of subjects including Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Transport, Public Transport, Active Travel Modes, Hugglescote Road Traffic Issues, the Proposed Bardon Waste Transfer Site and peat usage by the County Council.

A511 Improvements

In November we undertook a site visit to consider the growth proposals for the A511. The scheme will help to improve congestion, unlock further homes and jobs in the area and improve journey times for residents and users of the corridor. It will also help to improve the resilience of the A42 and M1 – which are 'gateways' to the East Midlands Airport. These improvements are seen as essential to boost housing and employment in an area of Leicestershire which is rapidly growing. Whilst welcoming the scheme and its objectives to alleviate the current issues around air quality and congestion, we remained concerned that the Scheme did not give adequate consideration to sustainable transport options and urged the Council and Lead Member to continue to engage and lobby the Department for Transport to include sustainable transport in its restrictive funding formula.

Flooding

Following the extreme weather events of October and November 2019 we considered a report on the actions the County Council has taken as Lead Local Flood Authority and Highways Authority. This report clarified the responsibility of the Council and other Risk Management Authorities. We raised concern about the increased extreme weather events and the role within the planning process for new developments. Arising from the discussion, we agreed to set up a Flooding Scrutiny Review Panel to undertake a more detailed investigation of the concerns raised by Members and residents.

Tree Management Strategy

We were consulted on the draft Tree Management Strategy and Planting Plan and supported officers dialogue with partners such as the National Forest Company to increase forestry in Leicestershire. We also felt that the Strategy needed to go further to act as an inspirational document for all Leicestershire tree owners, not just as a guide for the County Council. We are pleased that our comments have been taken on board and included in the final version of the Strategy that has been approved by the Cabinet.



Revised Environment Strategy and Revised Strategic Plan

We welcomed the return of the revised Environment Strategy and Strategic Plan with stronger wording to reflect the climate emergency. We were pleased with work officers were undertaking to help address the climate emergency agreed in May 2019. While it is clear that most emissions in Leicestershire are not directly under the Council's control, we welcomed the proposal for a second tranche of the Carbon Reduction Plan, which will look at how the Council could influence and address wider issues within Leicestershire.

Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Transport Priorities

We received the draft Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Transport Priorities as part of the public consultation. We welcomed mention of the possible re-opening of the Leicester to Burton railway line to aid the connectivity of places along the route and requested it was referenced more consistently throughout the document. We highlighted concerns in relation to the connectivity of public transport around Leicestershire, the lack of integration between modes of travel and the lack of reference to journeys to work within the plan. We also felt that the plan conflated county towns, cities and villages within Leicestershire, and recommended that it was revised to consider the issues faced by each. We hope that the Government's proposed funding for public transport will help address our concerns and look at how rural mobility could be evolved.

5.

Health

The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee looks at the planning and provision of health services in the County and the work of the Council's Public Health Department. It also scrutinises the activities of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Highlights

Primary Care Networks

We have been closely monitoring the development of Primary Care Networks (PCNs) across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland and the issue was on the agenda at two separate Committee meetings. We have taken note of the population criteria for PCNs and the geographical area covered by individual PCNs including the fact that not all PCNs are contiguous with county boundaries. We have sought reassurances on how the changes relating to GP Practices would be explained to the public and what the impact on the public would be.

Given the additional staffing that PCNs will require, particularly pharmacists and physiotherapists, we raised concerns regarding recruitment and retention of staff. In response, reassurances were received regarding work which was ongoing to promote Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland as a good place to live and work in the NHS. In addition, we noted that an international recruitment campaign had taken place which resulted in 16 new GPs for Leicestershire and a further 16 were to be recruited in 2020.

We have regularly raised concerns regarding whether the primary care infrastructure would be able to meet the housing growth in Leicestershire and whether maximum use is being made of Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. We have been reassured by the CCGs that these issues are being considered as part of development of the Primary Care Estates Strategy, including through mapping the condition of buildings and what they could be used for. We look forward to hearing about the results of this review at a future Committee meeting.

Director of Public Health

During the year we have scrutinised the work of the County Council's Public Health Department including the proposals for the new model for Homelessness and Housing, the Substance Misuse Strategy and the Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan.

We were pleased that the model for homeless and housing built on the work of First Contact Plus and Local Area Co-ordinators but sought reassurances that there was capacity within those services to meet the demand.

We noted the good work being carried out by Turning Point in relation to substance misuse, though noted that Turning Point were increasingly managing people addicted to prescription drugs which was not part of their core remit. We were pleased that work was taking place to prevent people becoming addicted to prescription drugs in the first place.

We were reassured that the Suicide Prevention Strategy gave consideration to the overlap between physical and mental health and that there were services available to provide mental health support for those patients with long term physical disabilities.



Community Services in West Leicestershire

Over the year we have scrutinised West Leicestershire CCG regarding Community Services in both Hinckley and Ashby de la Zouch. The issue which received the most publicity was the proposed reinstatement and relocation of the x-ray machine at Hinckley and District Hospital ahead of formal public consultation on the remaining services at Hinckley. We supported the proposal to install the new x-ray equipment directly into Hinckley Health Centre but were pleased to hear that the wider consultation would not be prejudiced by the decision to locate the x-ray machine at the hospital.

During the year we received representations from Ashby de la Zouch Civic Society raising concerns that the new community services in Ashby had not materialised as promised. Representatives from the Civic Society and West Leicestershire CCG were invited to a meeting to explain their position and we gained reassurances from the CCG that work was taking place to ensure the community services were adequate. We have resolved to monitor progress and will consider the matter again at a future Committee meeting.

QIPP

In June 2019 the Committee received an update on the 2018/19 Quality, Innovation, Productivity and Prevention (QIPP) programme and the planned 2019/20 QIPP programme. We raised concerns that the savings target identified in the programme was unrealistic. We also asked the CCGs to ensure that the QIPP schemes did not have a negative impact on service users and gained reassurances that impact assessments were carried out. In March 2020 we reviewed the 2019/20 QIPP programme and noted that the savings target had not been reached. We are pleased that the CCGs are now being more realistic about their ability to deliver savings.

Healthwatch

We have received reports from Healthwatch Leicester and Leicestershire in relation to patients' experience of health services in the County and used them to hold health providers to account for performance. In particular, these reports have focused on discharge from acute settings, prescribing and medication management. We gained reassurances that when patients were discharged from hospital they were provided with sufficient medication.

We were pleased that UHL recognised the need for improvements to the speed and efficiency of the discharge process and that measures had been taken to address the problem, including adding pharmacists to ward rounds and ensuring prescriptions were written earlier in the discharge process so they were ready as soon as the patient was able to leave hospital.

Single Strategic Commissioner

We have considered the options set out by the CCGs regarding the role and form of a Single Strategic Commissioner for an integrated care system in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, and have voiced strong support for the option to form one new Clinical Commissioning Group for the whole area.

Joint Scrutiny

Members of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee have also attended meetings of the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee where issues such as Community Services Redesign, the acute and maternity services reconfiguration at UHL and the £450 million investment in Leicester's Hospitals have been discussed.

6.

Scrutiny Review Panels

Scrutiny Reviews represent an opportunity for Overview and Scrutiny Members to delve deeper into a particular subject or issue to find out more, speak to the individuals responsible and recommend any ways in which things might be improved at a level of scrutiny not always possible within the time limits and formal setting associated with Committee meetings.

Highlights

Consolidation of Level 3 Intensive Care Services

Recognising the high levels of public concern regarding the lack of public consultation on proposals to transfer level 3 (i.e. for the 'sickest of the sick') intensive care unit beds from the General Hospital to the Glenfield Hospital and the Leicester Royal Infirmary, we considered this issue over the course of two meetings in September. We heard representations from a number of members of the public who were opposed to the proposals, which had been put forward on the grounds of clinical safety.

We recognised the strong clinical case supporting the proposal to move these services, but expressed deep regret that the CCGs and the University Hospitals of Leicester (UHL) did not listen to public calls for increased engagement and consultation after the Business Case had been approved by their Boards in November 2017. We requested regular updates on the matter, including any concerns that are raised regarding the implementation of the proposals. The Committee also voted to request the CCGs and UHL to undertake public consultation before continuing with their proposals, as we were not convinced that the reasons given precluded the responsibility to carry out public consultation.

Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust – CQC Inspection

We had significant concerns following the publication of LPT's CQC report, which gave LPT an overall rating of 'requires improvement' and found the 'well led' domain to be inadequate. We are disappointed with LPT's lack of progress; this is the fourth CQC inspection to find that the Trust requires improvement and the majority of concerns raised this time have also been raised previously.

We noted that the Chief Executive of LPT is taking early retirement and a number of senior posts are either new or interim appointments. However, this did not give us sufficient assurance that the issues relating to leadership are being addressed and we will continue to monitor performance in this area closely.

Corporate Parenting

Following the completion of the Corporate Parenting Review Panel in June 2019, it is really pleasing to see that the Panel's recommendations have been followed. The revised Corporate Parenting Strategy, which was approved by the Council in February 2020, includes the clear role description for elected members; a training session has been held for all members and, most importantly, we now have three member champions for Education, Training and Work, Accommodation, and Housing. These member champions have already started their work.

The member champion for Housing, Geoff Welsh CC, has met with district council Chief Executives to discuss the development of a covenant setting out how the district councils will work in partnership with the County Council. This covenant includes the following four things: allocation policies to remove the local connection for care leavers, to provide housing skills training to all, to include debt advice and tenancy support, trying to get the Citizen's Advice Bureau to offer specific money and budgeting advice and to support care leavers when moving into properties by decorating them and giving handy person support.

Multi Academy Trusts

The Children and Families Services department has a good relationship with Multi Academy Trusts (MATs), nevertheless there is currently a perceived gap in the relationship between elected members and MATs. Following some concerns raised by members regarding accountability, engagement and the effectiveness of MATs, we agreed to undertake a scrutiny review in this area.

The Panel met on four occasions and heard from the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of two MATs in Leicestershire. We recommended that MATs be encouraged to appoint elected members to their local governing bodies, as this will ensure better alignment between MATs, members and the County Council. We also recommended that the Academy CEO network group be asked to consider arranging visits to local schools for elected members in order to develop and maintain a local link. We felt that details of local elected members should be sent to relevant schools to enable them to make contact, should they wish, and that the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee should receive an annual progress report from the Schools Effectiveness Team. Finally, we recommended that further work should take place to ensure that members understand how and where to raise concerns around a MAT.

We are delighted that the Cabinet accepted all recommendations and look forward to seeing a strengthening of the relationship between elected members and MATs in the future.

Flooding

We are setting up a Scrutiny Review Panel to consider the role of the County Council as Lead Local Flooding Authority (LLFA) and its links with other Risk Management Authorities. Although the County Council has a good relationship with partners involved in responding to flooding, there is current interest amongst members regarding accountability, engagement and the effectiveness of existing structures. Members are particularly interested in how the LLFA co-ordinates and effect actions from partners. The lack of influence the LLFA has over recommendations arising from its Section 19 Investigations and its influences over other risk management authorities are also causes for concern.

We look forward to seeing the outcome of this review.

7.

Looking ahead to 2020/21

A key area of focus for the future will inevitably be the impact of the Coronavirus including its impact on services and the Council's finances. We will also need to look at what lessons can be learnt from the Council's response to the crisis and plans for recovery both in the short, medium and longer term.

Environmental concerns will continue to play a large part in our work during 2020/21. We will look carefully at the new ways of working implemented as a result of the coronavirus pandemic and assess whether we should be changing any of our practices in the long term. Our ambition is for a greater number of meetings to be paperless and for meetings to be held remotely where appropriate.

We will continue to keep a close eye on the budget pressures facing the County Council, particularly those relating to SEND and children's social care. Given its size, we will also be monitoring closely the delivery of the Capital Programme. The following topics will also be considered:

Scrutiny Commission

The Scrutiny Commission will maintain oversight of the Council's budget and finances, including the performance of the Capital Programme. We will continue to focus on economic development including through more regular scrutiny of the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) and our oversight of the use of the Corporate Asset Investment Fund. We will also look closely at the Council's consultation processes and the arrangement made across departments to support communities.

Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

There is no doubt that we will need look at how services have been affected by the Coronavirus outbreak and monitor the process for recovery, particularly where residential care is concerned. As well as our usual oversight of performance and complaints, we also plan to review the status of community managed libraries and the museums accreditation and collection policy. We will also keep updated on the plans to move the Records Office and will continue to monitor the implementation of the Target Operating Model across the Department.

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

We will continue to receive regular updates around the Ofsted Continuous Improvement Action Plan and Recruitment and Retention and we will monitor performance against the targets set within that Plan. We will also receive the inspection report of the SEND Service, a progress update on the new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements, the Children's Social Care Investment Plan, an update on the Children and Family Wellbeing Service, the High Needs Development Plan and the Children's Innovation Partnership.

Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Looking ahead the Committee will remain focused on the Council's response to the climate emergency and how it hopes to expand its work to influence wider county emissions. As part of this we also hope to start looking more in depth at the issue of biodiversity within Leicestershire. We will continue to monitor performance and scrutinise policy changes to Community and Passenger Transport, as well as SEND Transport following the conclusion of the judicial review. The Committee will also use the opportunity to oversee development of major roads or projects across the County to the benefit of the communities they affect.

Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

It will be only right for us to look at the impact of the coronavirus on the NHS and Public Health. Subject to both areas being able to resume business as usual, we intend to consider changes to daytime minor injury services and community services in the Hinckley area. We have also asked to receive reports on cancer performance and will continue to monitor the position regarding delayed transfers of care. We will also keep an eye on structural changes made by the CCGs and ensure that quality of service is not affected. Through the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee we intend to respond to the consultation on the reconfiguration of services at the University Hospitals of Leicester and to monitor the transformation of mental health services by Leicestershire Partnership Trust.

Overview and Scrutiny in Numbers: 2019/20



Overview and Scrutiny Members 2019/20

The Scrutiny Commission

Tom Barkley CC
 Peter Bedford CC
 David Bill MBE CC
 Bill Boulter CC
 Dr Terri Eynon CC
 Dr Kevin Feltham CC
 Hilary Fryer CC
 Simon Galton CC (Chairman)
 Dan Harrison CC
 Rosita Page CC
 Alan Pearson CC
 Terry Richardson CC
 Michael Wyatt CC

Adults and Communities

Dr Paul Bremner CC
 Linda Broadley CC
 Bill Crooks CC
 Hilary Fryer CC
 Bill Liquorish JP CC
 Jewel Miah CC
 Ted Parton CC
 Terry Richardson CC (Chairman)
 Maggie Wright CC

Environment and Transport

David Bill MBE, CC
 Bill Boulter CC
 Dan Harrison CC
 Max Hunt CC
 Jonathan Morgan CC
 Alan Pearson CC (Chairman)
 Les Phillimore CC
 James Poland CC
 Janice Richards CC

Children and Families

Dr Kevin Feltham CC
 Hilary Fryer CC (Chairman)
 Jeffrey Kaufman CC
 Canon Carolyn Lewis
 Rosita Page CC
 Ted Parton CC
 Brenda Seaton CC
 Sean Sheahan CC
 Geoff Welsh CC
 Amanda Wright CC

Health

Tom Barkley CC
 David Bill MBE CC
 Dr Kevin Feltham CC (Chairman)
 Tony Gillard CC
 Amanda Hack CC
 Dr Sarah Hill CC
 Jonathan Morgan CC
 Brenda Seaton CC
 Maggie Wright CC

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Democratic Services
Chief Executive's Department
Leicestershire County Council

**For further details on the contents of this report
please email: democracy@leics.gov.uk**



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