

**CABINET - 17 DECEMBER 2024****DRAFT ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES DEPARTMENT STRATEGY  
2025-2029****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES****PART A****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the Cabinet's approval to consult on the draft Adults and Communities Strategy 2025-2029, attached as Appendix A to this report.

**Recommendations**

2. It is recommended that:
  - a) The draft Adults and Communities Strategy 2025-2029, attached as Appendix A to this report, be approved for consultation.
  - b) A further report be submitted to the Cabinet in the summer of 2025 presenting the outcome of the consultation and the final Strategy for approval.

**Reasons for Recommendation**

3. The Strategy provides a framework for policy, process and ways of working for the Adults and Communities Department and supports the delivery of the County Council's statutory duties, national policy and statutory guidance.

**Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)**

4. Subject to the Cabinet's approval an eight week public consultation will commence in February 2025.
5. The outcome of the consultation will be reported back to the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a view to the final Strategy being approved by the Cabinet in the summer of 2025.
6. Subject to the Cabinet's approval the Strategy will then be published.

### **Policy Framework and Previous Decisions**

7. The draft Strategy follows on from the Delivering Wellbeing and Opportunities: Adults and Communities Department Ambitions and Strategy for 2020–2024 and provides a framework for policy, process and ways of working for the Adults and Communities Department.
8. All services operate within the County Council's frameworks and corporate strategies such as the County Council's Strategic Plan 2022–2026, the People Strategy 2024–2028, and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.
9. The draft Strategy aims to support the Council to meet its statutory duties including those cited in the Care Act 2014; The Mental Health Act 1983; Mental Capacity Act 2005; Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964.
10. It also supports the Department in delivering the requirements of the following:
  - a) The Care Quality Commission's (CQC) assessment of the Department's adult social care service;
  - b) Arts Council England and The National Archives Accreditation Schemes;
  - c) The Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme;
  - d) Ofsted's assessment of Leicestershire's Adult Learning Service.
11. The Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report on 4 November 2024 and its comments are set out in paragraph 24 of the report.

### **Resource Implications**

12. There will be some costs associated with the consultation process, and provision of information about the Strategy in a range of accessible formats, such as easy-read and a proposed video. This will be met from the existing Adults and Communities budgets.
13. The Strategy does not make a direct link to the Medium Term Financial Strategy, but it does reference the cost and demand pressures that the County Council is facing, and the effective use of available budgets and resources required for it to be successful.
14. The Director of Corporate Resources and Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on the content of this report.

### **Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure**

15. This report will be circulated to all Members of the County Council.

**Officers to Contact**

Jon Wilson  
Director of Adults and Communities  
Adults and Communities Department  
Telephone: 0116 305 7454  
Email: [jon.wilson@leics.gov.uk](mailto:jon.wilson@leics.gov.uk)

Inderjit Lahel  
Assistant Director (Strategic Commissioning)  
Adults and Communities Department  
Telephone: 0116 305 8821  
Email: [inderjit.lahel@leics.gov.uk](mailto:inderjit.lahel@leics.gov.uk)

Stephen Shippey, Improvement Manager  
Adults and Communities Department  
Telephone: 0116 305 3194  
Email: [stephen.shippey@leics.gov.uk](mailto:stephen.shippey@leics.gov.uk)

## PART B

### Background

16. The current Strategy is due to reach its conclusion by the end of this financial year and focussed on a time when the Council was experiencing the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.
17. To support the Department in planning for the next four years, a new, updated Strategy is required. This focuses on how the Department will work on key themes such as promoting independence, community cohesion, and increased opportunities for the people of Leicestershire.
18. The draft Strategy features the service areas within the Adults and Communities Department - Adult Social Care, Culture Leicestershire and the Adult Learning Service.
19. The Strategy continues the strategic approach of the existing Strategy, focussing on the model of Wellbeing, Prevent, Delay, Reduce and Meet need and provides the aims for the different services across the Department over 2025–2029.
20. There are ambitions embedded within the current Strategy which are still valid for this refreshed version. These themes are to continue with new, updated descriptors about how the ambitions will be realised. The ambitions include:
 

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved customer experience and satisfaction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing high quality information and advice</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting wellbeing through universal services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seamless transition from children to adult services</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing and supporting inward investment for new social care accommodation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building a flexible, talented, motivated workforce including apprentices</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting independence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved use of technology</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working effectively with partners including co-production, co-design and engagement</li> </ul>	
21. The draft Strategy has been created through engagement and co-production with people who draw on the different service areas in Adults and Communities, officers and managers within the Department, and care providers.
22. The Adults and Communities Engagement Panel has reviewed the draft Strategy for its use of plain language and ease of read.

## **Consultation**

23. The Communication and Engagement Plan for the Strategy is attached as Appendix B to this report. In summary the consultation is intended to commence in February 2025 and run for a period of eight weeks utilising the following consultation methods:

- postal surveys;
- online surveys, social media and public website;
- consultation events with groups of the public;
- staff briefings, intranet pages;
- provider briefings and provider portal;
- Viva Engage;
- roadshows when Strategy is live.

## **Comments from the Adults and Communities Scrutiny Committee**

24. The Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee discussed the draft Strategy at its meeting on 4 November 2024. The Committee commented that the draft Strategy was easy to read, well laid out and set out well the Department's future direction.

## **Comments from Healthwatch**

25. At the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 4 November, Healthwatch commented on the proposed Communication and Engagement Plan, attached as Appendix B. Healthwatch recognised the work in preparing the stakeholder mapping section within the Communication and Engagement Plan, and under the General Public Section, they asked whether a separate category of 'service user' has been considered, stating that the lived experience of people accessing the Department's services can often be helpful in shaping future planning at a strategic level alongside a more generic response.

26. In response to the above comment, the Communication and Engagement Plan B has been amended to address this point and now references 'General Public and people with experience of services'.

27. In addition, within the same section, under 'How We Communicate', an amendment has also been made to include consultation group meetings with targeted groups. Prior to the creation of the draft Strategy, people who draw on different provision of the Department supported the co-production of the Strategy layout, content and language.

## **Conclusion**

28. The Cabinet is requested to approve an eight week public consultation on the draft Adults and Communities Strategy 2025-2029 which will commence in February 2025.

### **Equality Implications**

29. There is an Equality Impact Assessment, attached as Appendix C to this report, which aims to cover the broad impact of the Strategy. This highlights mainly positive impacts upon people with protected characteristics. These are as follows:
- It makes reference to the County Council's People Strategy and its commitment to ensuring Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) remain a strong focus over the new Strategy period.
  - Within the service offer of Culture Leicestershire and Adult Learning, it makes reference to bringing communities together; providing learning to overcome barriers; offering courses in a range of formats and venues to suit the learning needs of people.
  - Culture Leicestershire also has an aim within the Strategy to reach more diverse communities across the County.
  - The Strategy references the aim to tackle digital exclusion so that if information is provided on the internet, via email, or another electronic means, people who would struggle to access information in this way will have the opportunity to have the means and skills to do so.
  - The Department and Strategy will also support vulnerable people and people living with disabilities within their communities.
30. However the following are mitigations that apply to the Strategy.
- There is an aim within the Strategy to work with partners to provide people with the skills needed to tackle digital exclusion.
  - There will be an easy read version of the Strategy for people to access if they have certain disabilities or for those who find it difficult to read the Strategy document in its current format.
  - The Department will monitor the data of the local population, demographic data around the people who access its services and feedback received to ensure these services are accessible and inclusive and offer good outcomes for all.
31. The Strategy covers the aims and outcomes of a wide range of services that form the Adults and Communities Department. If there are any changes to the delivery of these services or how the public will engage with these services, this change should be subject to an individual Impact Assessment.

### **Human Rights Implications**

32. The revised Strategy aims to have a positive impact on a person's Human Rights through delivery of statutory provision, meeting legislative duties, a focus on rights based practice and the promotion of family life and independent living.

### **Health Implications**

33. The new Strategy aims to have a positive impact on seven of the identified 12 Health Impact domains. The remaining five have been assessed as neutral. A Health Impact Assessment is attached as Appendix D to this report.

### **Partnership Working and Associated Issues**

34. The Strategy references partnership working with agencies such as the Police, the Integrated Care Board and the charity and voluntary sector.

### **Background Papers**

- Delivering Wellbeing and opportunity in Leicestershire – Adults and Communities Department Ambitions and Strategy for 2020-24
- Leicestershire County Council Strategic Plan 2022-26
- Leicestershire County Council People Strategy 2024-2028
- Equality, Diversion and Inclusion Strategy-2024-2028
- Report to Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 4 November 2024 - Draft Adults and Communities Department Strategy 2025-2029

### **Appendices**

- Appendix A – Draft Adults and Communities Strategy 2024-2029  
Appendix B - Communication and Engagement Plan  
Appendix C – Equalities Impact Assessment  
Appendix D – Health Impact Assessment

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