Agenda Item 1

Minutes of a meeting of the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Monday, 1 September 2025.

PRESENT

Mrs. K. Knight (in the Chair)

Mrs. L. Broadley CC	Mr. A. Innes CC
Mr. N. Chapman CC	Mr. P. King CC
Mr. G. Cooke CC	Mr. B. Lovegrove CC
Dr. S. Hill CC	Mr. P. Morris CC
Mr. N. Holt CC	Mrs. R. Page CC

In attendance

Mr. C. Abbott CC – Cabinet Lead Member, Adults and Communities
Mr. K. Crook CC – Cabinet Lead Member, Libraries, Heritage and Adult Learning
Mr. M. Bools CC – Chairman, Children and Families OSC (for agenda item 8)
Mrs L. Danks CC – Member, Children and Families OSC (for agenda item 8)
Mrs. D. Taylor CC (virtual) – Member, Children and Families OSC (for agenda item 8)
Mr. K. Bhayani (virtual) – Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire

15. Minutes of the meeting held on 2 June 2025.

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 June 2025 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

16. Question Time.

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

17. 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).

18. To advise of any other items which the Chairman has decided to take as urgent elsewhere on the agenda.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

19. 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.

Mr King declared an other registrable interest agenda item 11: Leicestershire County Council Museum Policy Revision and Accreditation, as he was a member of Harborough District Council.

Mrs. Page declared an other registrable interest agenda item 11: Leicestershire County Council Museum Policy Revision and Accreditation, as she was a member of Harborough District Council.

20. Declarations of the Party Whip in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16.

There were no declarations of the party whip.

21. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 36.

The Chief Executive reported that no petitions had been received under Standing Order 36.

22. Preparation for Adulthood Review.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities which provided an update on the actions taken following recommendations from a peer review on the effectiveness of the current pathway to adulthood and subsequent Corporate Preparation for Adulthood Review (CPfAR), which was a joint review across Children and Family Services and Adults and Communities Department. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 8' is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed the Chairman Mr. Mark Bools, and Spokespersons Mrs Taylor and Mrs Linda Danks of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee to the meeting to hear the presentation of the report.

The Chairman further welcomed Mr. C. Abbott, Cabinet Lead Member for Adults and Communities, and Mr. K. Crook, Cabinet Lead Member for Libraries, Heritage, and Adult Learning, to the meeting.

Arising from discussion, the following points were made:

i. In response to a query, Members were informed that for the project outcomes were reported regularly to the CPfAR Board. Once the final model was established, additional measures would be implemented to assess the project's overall effectiveness. The current model was being reviewed to identify barriers and opportunities when considering how best to embed outcome measures for reporting to the Board, Senior Management Team, and the Committee. The final design phase would be completed by mid-October, after which new ways of working would be implemented towards the end of the year.

ii. A Member questioned given the shortage of suitable housing, how the housing options challenge would be addressed. It was noted the shortage of housing was primarily within the remit of district councils and housing associations. The Assistant Director explained that the Council would work with developers and housing associations to identify and develop suitable properties. There were currently strategic partnerships in place to support the development of new provision for adults with disabilities, including supported living and residential options, and the focus was on

working with housing associations and specialist developers to create step-through facilities, enabling young people to progress towards greater independence.

iii. A Member questioned, with additional staffing and resources, how changes would result in savings. The Assistant Director informed Members the saving were anticipated through early intervention and increased support for young people, enabling them to achieve greater independence as they transitioned to adulthood. By identifying needs earlier and providing targeted support, the aim was to reduce the need for high-cost placements in adulthood. For example, if an intervention reduced a care package by £200 per week, it represented a significant long-term saving. Net savings would be detailed in the October report, alongside the development of a commissioning model to incentivise providers and the market.

iv. A Member queried whether the work around the early identification of individuals in need had already commenced, irrespective of whether the report had been formally adopted. Members were reassured that work had already begun, and that it was recognised that relying solely on EHCPs to identify young people requiring transition support was no longer effective due to the increasing number of EHCPs issued. Digital solutions were being explored to improve identification methods. A workshop had been held to evaluate potential tools, which would be piloted in the coming months independently of the review's formal adoption.

v. Whilst the review was not solely focused on care leavers, they were a key consideration. The review primarily addressed transitions for young people with learning disabilities, autism, or physical health needs. However, there was overlap, and support for care-experienced young people, for example grants for university band further education, would remain integral to ongoing work.

vi. A Member inquired about the number of children included in the review and the types of disabilities presented. The Assistant Director advised that the cohort comprised young people with learning disabilities, autism, and physical or sensory impairments who met adult social care eligibility criteria. As of 2025, over 7,000 young people had an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), though not all would qualify for adult social care under the criteria.

vii. The Young Adults with Disabilities (YAD) team was already in place and supported children and young people transitioning to adult services. Approximately 500 young people were currently estimated to be part of the cohort, based on analysis undertaken as part of the workstream. Detailed findings would be shared with Members following the meeting, with further updates on infrastructure and processes to be presented to Scrutiny in due course.

viii. Concern was raised regarding the use of digital solutions in the process, noting that not all disabled individuals (young or old) had access to or could effectively use digital platforms. It was clarified that the reference to digital solutions was specifically regarding tools used for identifying the appropriate cohort of young people who required transition from children's to adult services, and was not intended that young people themselves use digital platforms to self-identify.

ix. It was queried that, despite the programme being identified as a source of savings within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), there were no financial projections to aid Members to assess the value of the project. Members further referenced the forthcoming local government reorganisation (LGR), and with

structural changes expected, it was queried whether the programme could be embedded and sustained effectively, given that the impact on continuity and delivery could be considerable. The Assistant Director assured Members that significant work was underway to explore the various options and implications. However, the programme remained the right approach for supporting young people to achieve greater independence. It was both the Council's statutory duty and commitment to deliver the support, and there should be no delay in implementing the support that young people required now.

x. A Member noted that some children with learning disabilities did not attend day services, and that parents could be protective, often caring for their child well into adulthood. Concern was raised that this could result in delayed transitions and reduced independence. Officers reported from an adult social care perspective, preparation for adulthood typically began around age 14, allowing professionals to start planning and involving adult services by age 17, and was the expected timeline for transition planning. The Member responded that from experience, beginning the process earlier was more effective to maximise independence.

xi. Members noted that the programme was initiated in March 2023 and queried the length of time taken to reach its current stage. Officers noted that the programme's development had been affected by changes in leadership and direction, including new appointments at Assistant Director level, which had brought renewed focus. Engagement with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) has also introduced additional complexity.

xii. Concerns were raised regarding the absence of clearly defined financial savings, despite the time elapsed. A Member asked what initially prompted the project and whether financial efficiencies were considered from the outset. Extensive financial modelling had been undertaken, but internal estimates were not yet finalised and could not be shared currently but would be included in the final business case. The programme was underpinned by the principle that delivering appropriate support led to efficiencies, and the focus remained on achieving the right outcomes, with savings expected to follow.

xiii. Clarification was sought on the nature of missed contributions due to ineffective transitions from children to adult services. It was reported that missed contributions referred to statutory funding responsibilities, particularly within health, that were not always carried forward from children's services into adulthood, resulting in lost financial support.

xiv. Members commended the quality of parent carer engagement and emphasised the importance of incorporating their feedback. Officers agreed, acknowledging the value of lived experience and confirming that this approach was mirrored in adult services.

RESOLVED:

a) That the Preparation for Adulthood Review report be noted.

b) That the Director be requested to provide figures for the number of children with an EHCP who met adult social care eligibility criteria be provided to Members.

23. Performance Report for Quarter 1 2025/26 (April - June).

The Committee considered a joint report of the Chief Executive and Director of Adults and Communities, which provided an update of the Adults and Communities Department's performance during the first quarter of 2025/26 (April to June 2025). A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 9' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were made:

i. Members highlighted a 7.7% reduction in contacts with the Council in Q1 and queried whether it reflected a long-term trend or a temporary change. Members also stressed the importance of understanding demand patterns when planning future services and questioned the sustainability of the reduction.

ii. Members raised concern regarding the 599 individuals awaiting an assessment and requested clarity on the target timeframe for completing assessments and noted the lack of contextual data regarding the total population. Officers undertook to circulate to members information on assessment timeframe targets.

iii. Members proposed quarterly performance updates and the inclusion of visual aids, such as graphs, in future reports. Officers, in consultation with the Chairman, would consider the most effective format for presenting detailed performance data.

iv. Members considered the drop in number of people waiting for an assessment of need for a service, and asked if there were particular reasons for the reduction in numbers waiting. Officers clarified that work had been undertaken in the department which had increased the number of assessments completed over the quarter. Furthermore, not all individuals awaiting were pending allocation to a social worker and some were awaiting other services.

v. Members asked why there had been an 88% rise in safeguarding reports. Officers clarified that the increase was linked to targeted initiatives and that numbers had peaked in February 2025, and that figures had since stabilised.

vi. Members further queried the handling of 308 safeguarding enquiries, asking whether they had been resolved effectively or posed ongoing risks. Officers clarified that 95% of safeguarding risks were successfully mitigated.

vii. Members praised the use of community libraries, noting the success of them due to local engagement, but stated there existence should be publicised more, and cautioned that conversion to hubs might alter their character.

RESOLVED:

a) That the Performance Report for Quarter 1 2025/26 (April to June) be noted.

b) That enhanced use of visual data to support interpretation and trends be included in future reports.

24. Adult Social Care Statutory Complaints and Compliments Annual Report 2024-25.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities, the purpose of which was to provide a summary of the complaints and compliments received

in respect of adult social care services commissioned or provided by the Adults and Communities Department during 2024-25. The Annual Report was appended to the report. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 10' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were made:

i. A Member reported difficulty contacting adult social care, with no clear phone option and long wait times. Concern was raised about reliance on online forms, which might exclude elderly or vulnerable individuals. Members further emphasised the importance of having a person available at the end of the phone and suggested that a call-back system be looked into to alleviate the frustration that people had in contacting the department. The Chairman mentioned that a look at a broad spectrum of response times for other links on the website as well as adult social care be looked at. Officers acknowledged frustrations and agreed to raise the issue with the Head of Service.

ii. Members expressed concern that increased use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and IT should not compromise personal service. Libraries were cited as an example where community engagement was key.

iii. Members questioned whether the current process captured all complaints, including informal or unresolved complaints. It was reported that only complaints submitted through formal channels were reflected in the report.

iv. Members asked if, in the review of fault cases, they were taken back to root cause in order to understand the cause and put in corrective actions. Officers responded that for those cases where fault has been found service managers would review those cases to ascertain what caused the faults and then that information would drive the corrective action, for example, additional training.

v. The report showed that 38 complaints were escalated to a senior manager during the year due to dissatisfaction with initial responses, which was a decrease from 44 over 2023/24. A Member asked whether the Department had identified reasons for the reduction. Officers undertook to provide further information to Members following the meeting.

vi. Members further asked whether non-fault complaints were reviewed, analysed and if complainants were responded to. Officers stated that a response would be provided to all individuals making a complaint, for example, it might typically be an apology for an issue, or to advise of what action was being taken.

vii. A Member raised concern over the complexity of Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaint procedures and queried if residents fully understood them. Officers responded that detailed information on procedure was provided on the website, and three policies were used: Corporate Complaints Procedure, strategy process for Children's and Families, and one for Adults and Communities.

viii. The report noted 278 compliments, but Members felt positive feedback was underrepresented. They suggested future reports should better reflect learning from complaints and compliments.

ix. Questions were raised about trends in complaint volumes relative to service user numbers, the handling of repeat complaints, and the criteria used by the Ombudsman

to determine complaints, and whether there were financial penalties imposed by the Ombudsman. Officers committed to providing further information.

RESOLVED:

a) That the Adut Social Care Complaints Annual Report, covering the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, be noted.

b) That the Director be requested to look into a call-back system for Adult Social Care.

c) That the Director be requested to provide information on:

- Why there was a reduction of complainants requesting a stage 2 review.
- Trends in complaint volumes relative to service user numbers and repeat complaints.
- The criteria used by the Ombudsman to determine complaints and financial penalties imposed.

25. Leicestershire County Council Museum Policy Revision and Accreditation.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities for information on the draft Museum Access Policy 2021 to 2025 and Collections Development Policy 2021 to 2025, which required approval in 2025. The report also provided information on the Museum Accreditation returns which had been submitted to Arts Council England (ACE). A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 11' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were made:

i. Members asked if, with museum collections' storage, if it had potential impact on accreditation. Officers acknowledged storage challenges, particularly for archival materials, which was separate from museum accreditation. Progress had been made over the past four years, with substandard storage facilities being phased out, with current improvements expected to not negatively affect the museum accreditation application.

ii. A Member requested clarification on the volume and location of stored items, with specific concern raised about large items, for example a coach, possibly deteriorating. Further detail was requested on the reserve collection policy with regards to loan procedures, income generation from loans and acquisition and disposal processes. Officers explained that loans were governed by a detailed collections development framework, including a loans policy, which officers undertook to circulate to Members for information. Members were assured that loans were primarily to accredited museums with no recent damage incidents reported.

iii. Acquisitions were assessed by trained curatorial staff against the collecting policy, whereby items must align within the collection scope and avoid duplication and were signed off by the Collections and Learning Manager. Disposals were also guided by policy and legally overseen. Routine disposals were delegated to the Director of Adults and Communities, with controversial disposal decisions escalated to Members.

iv. Members noted much of the collection was in storage and were concerned they were rarely seen and potentially incurred high storage costs. It was questioned what mechanisms were included in the policy to enable broader public access to what was already available. Officers clarified that there was no statutory requirement for the council to maintain a museum service, however, it was believed that it provided significant value to Leicestershire's residents by representing diverse historical periods and communities. It was further explained that, in addition to the five public museum sites, the collection repositories were open to researchers and supported by staff, and that the section worked closely with higher and further education institutions, often taking materials to them due to space limitations. Digital access was also offered through the museum collections website and exhibitions were rotated across sites and across community groups.

v. The policy included a section on rationalisation and review. The collection was regularly assessed to identify items for disposal, prioritising public rehoming where possible, and those decisions were reported to the Director of Adults and Communities. Officers were open to discussion regarding different approach to collections access.

vi. In response to a question officers confirmed it was common for museums to have 5-8% of their collections on public display at any one time, and that limiting the collection to only what was on display would restrict ability to respond to future needs or changes. In addition, most of the items were donated, and the Council was committed to items' long-term care. Items were only considered for disposal when they no longer served a purpose.

vii. Members noted that in previous years Committee Members were invited to visit collection sites to see firsthand what was in storage and where, as it was important for Members to understand the scale and nature of the collections, and the challenges faced by museums staff. It was suggested that future site visits be arranged for Members.

viii. Members also recognised the importance of collections, for example, a recent book on *The History of Market Harborough*, contained photographs credited to the County Council's Museum collection, which demonstrated the public value of those resources.

ix. It was noted that virtual museums allowed people to explore exhibits online and was a good example of how digital access could complement physical visits and broaden public engagement.

RESOLVED:

a) That the report on the Leicestershire County Council Museum Policy Revision and Accreditation be noted.

b) That the Director be requested to circulate to Members information on the Museum Collections Loans Policy which sat within a collections development framework.

c) That site visits for Committee Members be arranged in consultation with the Chairman and Democratic Services.

26. Overview of Community Life Choices (Day Services).

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities, which provided an overview of the provision of the Community Life Choices (CLC) framework, which included day services and personal assistants. 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 queried if some of the services were provided out of the county area, and if any what were the numbers of individuals supported and the implications for transport costs. The Assistant Director reported that the framework supported just under 600 individuals, all with in-county providers. Contracts were for Leicestershire-based provision, and while there might be a small number supported out-of-county, further data will be provided to Members following the meeting. It was further noted that some providers might be located just outside the geographic area of the county, but the majority of provision was within the county and the market was actively monitored to ensure there was sufficient supply and minimal need for out-of-county placements.

ii. The council was responsible only for individuals residing within Leicestershire County Council's boundaries. Leicester City Council might place individuals into county commissioned services, but they would hold their own contracts and fund those placements independently. Previously, when the County Council operated internal day services, there was some usage from Leicester City, but that provision no longer existed.

iii. In response to a question, it was noted that at the time of transitioning to the CLC framework, it had shown a significant cost saving. In-house services carried fixed staffing costs and void costs when not used to capacity. Under the CLC model, only services delivered were paid for, and there was improved efficiency. In addition, the CLC provision was subject to robust quality assurance and contract monitoring. Officers conducted regular checks, engaged with service users, and reviewed feedback through social workers and direct contacts.

iv. A Member sought clarification on the data presented asking whether the figures included carers or were limited to individuals receiving services. It was reported that the data referred solely to the cared-for individuals. In addition it was clarified that the table only reflected individuals accessing services through the council's commissioned frameworks, and that there was a separate cohort of individuals who used direct payments to independently procure services, and figures for the cohort would be provided to Members.

v. A Member queried whether the stated expenditure of £8.6million on CLC services excluded transport and direct payment recipients, having expressed a need to understand the full cost of supporting individuals with assessed needs, including those outside the framework. The Assistant Director confirmed that comprehensive cost data, including direct payments, would be shared with the Committee. Officers added that direct payments were primarily about offering individuals choice and flexibility, rather than being a result of the council's inability to commission services.

vi. A Member also raised concerns regarding the commissioning bandings and hourly rates, specifically whether they met national minimum and living wage requirements. It was questioned whether individuals employing personal assistants (PAs) directly were

expected to cover employer costs such as national insurance, and whether the banding structure reflected this financial responsibility. It was clarified that Band F, which covered community one-to-one support at £21.47 per hour, applied to agency-employed PAs rather than those directly employed by the cared-for person. Band E (£17.14 per hour) was used for additional care elements on top of existing packages. Bandings were calculated based on average weekly earnings and took into account living wage benchmarks. It was also noted that the Council was reviewing its uplift mechanisms as part of the recommissioning process to ensure alignment with national standards. Officers concluded that services were uplifted annually to reflect inflation and wage changes. A more detailed breakdown of models, bandings, and payment structures would be presented to the Committee in November.

vii. A Member questioned how the service model could actively work to engage with and utilise existing community services to enhance the offer and reduce costs. Officers commented that there was commitment to ensure services were community-focused, with many provisions already utilising local assets, but access was often dependent on the level of support individuals required. For example, a personal assistant might enable someone to visit the library or leisure centre. Support packages were tailored to individual goals, such as travel, training or confidence-building to access services independently. In addition, officers were exploring how providers could support independent living skills, with incentives to encourage innovation. Over the long-term, it could benefit both the council and the individuals supported.

RESOLVED:

a) That the Overview of Community Life Choices (Day Services) report be noted.

b) That the Director be requested to circulate information to Members on:

- The number of people accessing day services external to the Council.
- The number of people external to the County Council accessing services.
- The number of people using direct payments to access services from providers.

Mr Nick Chapman left the meeting at this point and did not return.

27. Draft Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2024-2025.

The Committee considered a report of the Independent Chair of Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Adults Board (LRSAB) for 2024/25. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 13' is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed Ms. Seona Douglas, Independent Chair of the LRSAB to the meeting for this item. During the presentation of the report, there was a short video on 'Self Neglect' shown.

Arising from discussion and questions, the following points were made:

i. The Independent Chair advised the video was just one way of communication to help people in the wider community understand issues relevant to safeguarding to the wider community. Accompanied with learning in the past year, the priorities for the Board for 2025 to 2027 equality, diversity, and inclusion.

ii. Members raised concern given the importance of meeting, that attendance data provided in the report showed the absence of approximately 21% of expected attendees, some of whom had submitted multiple apologies for meetings, and asked the Independent Chair what steps were being taken to improve consistency, which was essential for continuity and progress. The Independent Chair noted it was an important issue that was a concern, but that she was actively engaging with organisations. It was further explained that, in some cases, late apologies were received due to the operational demands on frontline staff.

iii. Referring to the financial section of the report, Members noted that income remained flat in 2023–24 and 2024–25, yet running costs increased significantly in 2024–25, and that reserves were used to cover the shortfall. Clarity was sought on whether contributing partners were expected to maintain their current funding levels for 2025-26, and if so, what steps were being taken to align expenditure with income. It was explained that the Board had operated on a goodwill basis, with contributions from partners remaining unchanged for several years. However, the Independent Chair had been working to establish a more sustainable financial model, including regular reviews and annual percentage increases to reflect rising costs. The financial structure combined adult and children's Safeguarding Board budgets from which reserves had been drawn on the manage increased costs. The Independent Chair was also advocating for a Memorandum of Understanding with all contributing partners to formalise commitments and ensure long-term financial stability, especially in light of changes within the Integrated Care Board. It was confirmed the organisation held £117,000 in reserves.

iv. A Member voiced concern as to why, given the Mental Capacity Act had been in place since 2005, there was such a strong emphasis on training which should be already embedded in practice across organisations and was a fundamental aspect of safeguarding. The Independent Chair responded it was concerning that consistent application was still lacking, but the issue had been identified not only locally but nationally, with safeguarding adult reviews frequently highlighting gaps in mental capacity assessments. Over the past two years, significant work had been undertaken to address the issue, with all partner organisations having responsibility to assess mental capacity, and training has been prioritised to ensure this is understood and implemented. The recurring issues flagged in both local and national reviews underscore the need for continued investment in this area to improve practice and outcomes.

v. In response to a query, it was the responsibility of board members to disseminate information and ensure learning within their own organisations, which was monitored through audit processes and self-assessments. The Board operated as a partnership, and all partners shared equal responsibility for challenge and assurance, both within the Board and sub-groups, to ensure accountability and improvement.

vi. Members reflected on the video on self-neglect and were concerned that, whilst planning to move forward with initiatives around diversity, language access, and technology, gaps in community engagement around isolation and lack of support in local communities had not been addressed. The Independent Chair clarified that the video and associated work aimed to raise awareness and promote engagement across all parts of the community in places such as libraries, places of worship, community halls, and informal gathering spaces, and that people were empowered to

support one another and report concerns. It was recognised that progress was ongoing and that challenges remained.

The Chairman thanked Ms. Douglas for the report.

RESOLVED:

That the annual report of the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Adults Board (LRSAB) for 2024/25 be noted and welcomed.

28. Date of next meeting.

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 3 November at 2.00pm.

2.00pm to 5.20pm
01 September 2025

CHAIRMAN