



Minutes of a meeting of the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Tuesday, 21 January 2014.

PRESENT

Mrs. R. Camamile CC (in the Chair)

Mr. M. H. Charlesworth CC

Mr. P. G. Lewis CC

Mr. S. J. Hampson CC

Ms. Betty Newton CC

Mr. D. Jennings CC

Mr. A. E. Pearson CC

Mr. J. Kaufman CC

Mr. R. Sharp CC

Attendance.

Mr R Blunt CC, Cabinet Lead Member for Heritage, Leisure and Arts (minute 37 refers)

Mr D W Houseman MBE CC, Cabinet Lead Member for Adult Social Care (minute 37 refers)

Mr Brian Voller, Lead Petitioner and Chair of Friends of Snibston (minutes 36 and 37 refer)

30. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2013 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

31. Question Time.

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

32. 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).

33. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

34. Declarations of interest.

The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to declare any interest in respect of items on the agenda for the meeting.

Ms Betty Newton CC declared a personal interest in the item entitled 'Medium Term Financial Strategy 2014/15 – 2017/18', with specific reference to the Better Care Together Fund, as she had two family members who worked for the NHS.

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

There were no declarations of the party whip.

36. Presentation of Petition: The Future of Snibston.

A petition signed by 8047 residents was presented by Mr Brian Voller, as Lead Petitioner and Chair of Friends of Snibston, in the following terms:-

“In the light of overwhelming public support for Snibston Discovery Park, we the undersigned and the Friends of Snibston call upon Leicestershire County Council to honour its civic duty and continue to manage and fund this important local heritage site and resource for learning.”

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the petition be noted and taken into consideration when the savings proposals in respect of Snibston are discussed later in the meeting (minute 37 refers).

37. Medium Term Financial Strategy 2014/15 - 2017/18

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Adults and Communities and Director of Corporate Resources which provided information on the proposed 2014/15 to 2017/18 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as it related to the Adults and Communities Department. A copy of the report marked ‘Agenda Item 8’ is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed Mr D W Houseman MBE CC, Cabinet Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Mr R Blunt CC, Cabinet Lead Member for Heritage, Leisure and Arts to the meeting for this item.

Arising from discussion the following points were raised:-

General

- (i) The Department was facing unprecedented budget restrictions and demand pressures arising from an increasing elderly population and more complex and high cost packages for people with learning disabilities. In response to this challenge the Department had focussed on:-
- Reducing demand by investing in early intervention and prevention;
 - Ensuring care is provided in the most cost effective way which would mean some restriction on choice;
 - Closer working and commissioning of services with partners, particularly the NHS.

Growth

- (ii) The Committee was advised that the Department had a good track record of forecasting demand pressures, using data from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, demographic data and service provision trends;
- (iii) Item G12 – Emergency Duty Team – This growth would enable the service to focus solely on adults;
- (iv) Item G13 - Effective Support efficiency savings – The growth of £2.5million was to meet the shortfall in the programme;

Adult Social Care - Service Reductions

- (v) Item S32 – Community and Day Centre Meals – Whilst noting the need to reduce the subsidy, members sought and obtained an assurance that individual service users would be assessed and those who required it would be provided with support in other ways;
- (vi) Item S33– Limiting service user choice - This would apply to both new and existing users. In respect of existing users, this would be done following the annual review of assessed need;
- (vii) Item S34 – New Models of Early Intervention and Prevention Support – The process would entail a review of existing provision to ensure it was delivering the priorities of the Department at a lower cost. This would mean some services currently provided would cease. The Director undertook to provide a list of providers that were likely to be affected by this proposal (copy attached);

Communities and Wellbeing – Service Reductions

- (viii) Item S35 – Redevelopment of Snibston - At the request of the Chairman, Mr Voller, Lead Petitioner, addressed the Committee. He requested the Council to reconsider the current proposal which would see a refocusing of the Snibston offer on mining and the scheduled ancient monument. He drew attention to the fact that approximately 48% of the 8047 signatories to the petition resided in the Coalville area and that Snibston was an important local facility. He urged the Council to consider alternatives including partnership options, which would see the retention of Snibston on the current basis.

The Committee also noted a written submission made by the local member, Dr T Eynon CC, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

In reply to questions and comments the Committee was advised as follows:-

- The significant financial pressures facing the County Council had meant that all services of the Council needed to look critically at how they operated and make a contribution to savings requirements;
- The proposals to refocus on mining and the scheduled ancient monument and to reduce the current level of subsidy provided to Snibston Museum would be worked up in greater detail over the coming weeks once the Council had agreed the budget proposals;

- The detailed proposals setting out the proposed new ‘Snibston offer’ would be the subject of consultation with local community and other interested parties and there would be an opportunity for elected members to contribute to the debate prior to a decision being taken. This further work would include details about the cost of operating the future offer as well as any costs that would be incurred in terms of repayment of Heritage Lottery Fund grants and any costs that would arise from securing the museum’s collections. This information together with details of the agreement reached with the National Coal Board regarding the use of the land would be made available to members prior to the meeting of the Scrutiny Commission;
- The County Council had a good track record of working with volunteers and local communities and as part of the consultation on the future of Snibston interested community groups and organisations would be asked to put forward proposals of their own if they wished. Any such proposal received would be evaluated and would have to demonstrate that it was sustainable.

The Committee expressed the view that given that a significant number of Coalville residents had signed the petition and there was a clear view emerging that Snibston was a valuable local resource, North West Leicestershire District Council should, as a number of other District Councils had done, provide financial support for their local museum. It was noted that the District Council would be debating the matter later in the day.

“It was moved by Mr Sharp and seconded by Mr Charlesworth:-

- (a) That the attention of the Cabinet be drawn to the petition containing 8047 signatures of people requesting the County Council to honour its civic duty and continue to manage and fund this important local heritage site and resource for learning;
- (b) That, whilst accepting the requirement to make the savings identified, the Cabinet be asked to defer the current working assumption to refocus the existing Snibston offer on mining and the Scheduled Ancient Monument and to work with the Friends of Snibston over the next twelve months to develop an on-going and sustainable solution which will retain the existing Snibston offer within the new reduced financial envelope now proposed.”

The motion was put and not carried, four members voting for the motion and five against.

(The Committee was advised that in line with normal practice the contents of the resolution above, which was not carried, would be drawn to the attention of the Cabinet.)

- (ix) Item S37 – Reduction in Funding for Community Libraries - A paper setting out details of all community libraries, their opening hours and budgets was circulated at the meeting and a copy is attached to these minutes;

- (x) The Committee was advised that the Council would provide professional support to communities who would wish to operate a library service. The exact nature of this support would be clarified in the next stage of the work;
- (xi) It was recognised that the role and function of libraries had changed significantly. This offered opportunities for communities and parish councils to work with the County Council to ensure that local facilities could be retained to provide not only library services but other community activities. The County Council was keen to explore such a solution rather than closing library facilities;
- (xii) The work required to ensure informed discussions could be held with local communities and parishes had yet to be completed and the County Council would look carefully at the work done by other local authorities in this area to learn lessons. It was recognised that there was a need for early engagement with local communities and parishes. In undertaking this work the Council would be mindful to understand and provide details of the proximity of other library and community facilities to local communities to assist them in their deliberations;

Health and Social Care Integration

- (xiii) The Committee was advised that the Better Care Fund (BCF) was aimed at stimulating the integration of health and social care. Whilst the final details had yet to be agreed by the Boards of the two Clinical Commissioning Groups there had been good engagement at officer level. The total allocation by 2015-2016 would be £38.3 million. It was estimated that approximately 40% of the BCF would be required to protect adult social care services. However, there were conditions attached and these included using resources to ensure:-
 - A reduction in delayed discharges;
 - A plan for community based services to reduce hospital admissions;
 - More care provided closer to home;
 - More re-ablement services.

Members welcomed the proposals now outlined and urged health and social care providers to engage with local communities and locality groups in developing proposals.

Capital Programme

- (xiv) The Committee was advised as follows:-
 - That a risk assessment would be undertaken before users of the Limes Day Centre were relocated to Hinckley Library;
 - The Extra Care Scheme in Melton had not been included in the Capital Programme at this stage as it was still in the early stages of planning.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report and information now provided be noted;
- (b) That the comments made at the meeting be forwarded to the Scrutiny Commission for consideration at its meeting on 29 January 2014.

38. Date of next meeting.

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 25 March 2014 at 2.00pm.

2.00 - 4.35 pm
21 January 2014

CHAIRMAN