



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
ADULT SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: TUESDAY, 19 JANUARY 2021 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Joshi (Chair)
Councillor March (Vice Chair)

Councillor Batool
Councillor Kaur Saini

Councillor Kitterick
Councillor Thalukdar

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86. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, and reminded everyone it was a virtual meeting, as permitted under Section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 to enable meetings to take place whilst observing social distancing measures. The procedure for the meeting was outlined to those present. At the invitation of the Chair, all Members and officers present at the meeting introduced themselves.

87. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Joshi declared an Other Disclosable Interest in that his wife worked for the Reablement Team at Leicester City Council.

88. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED:

That the minutes of the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission Meeting held on 10 November 2020 be confirmed as a correct record.

89. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that none were received.

90. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer reported that that none were received.

91. LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY CARE LIMITED (LCCL) - VERBAL UPDATE

The Director of Social Care and Education gave context into the agenda item and the reason for inviting a representative from Leicestershire County Care Limited. The Chair thanked the Director for his update and was pleased to hear that an agreement had been reached between the Council and Leicestershire County Care Limited. The Chair then invited the representative from Leicestershire County Care Limited to address the commission to help reassure members. It was noted that the company was resolute on paying the outstanding £200,000 due to the ongoing pandemic there had been delays and occupancy within the care home was down by 20% and the Government grants and support aided the company to stay afloat.

Following the bad press in the media, the representative reassured Members that the company still provided the highest quality of care as reported by the compliance team and no areas of concern were raised and the Care Quality Commission were also kept updated.

It was reported that the cost of running the Care homes were going up whilst occupancy had decreased resulting in a decrease in income. Grants provided were going towards staffing, training and visiting pods.

The representative thanked the Council for the ongoing support and understanding the company during difficult conditions.

As part of the discussions the Chair thanked the representative for their attendance and reassuring update and felt it was important as part of the scrutiny process for inviting Leicestershire County Care Limited.

Members were concerned with the reduction in staffing, issues in other care homes the outstanding debt and the concern the CQC raised with leadership. It was noted that due to the decrease in occupancy this had resulted in contract changes where rate of pay hours were introduced and transport allowances were reduced. The company did as much as they could to preserve jobs and maintain the service. Following the concerns raised the by the CQC the company had fully recruited 2 external auditors to meet the concerns.

Members were reassured that the closure of the care homes in Essex was a result of losing a local authority contract as the Council were grossly underfunded and it was not viable over the subscribed area. It was an urgent decision to close the care home from CQC at the height of the pandemic and the company facilitated the safe movement of residence and closed. It was noted that lessons were learned and since then CQC inspections were good and the company continued to work with local authorities.

Following Unison's deep concerns which suggested staff were given an ultimatum. It was noted that this was blown out of proportion and every staff stayed on to work for the company with no reduction in their pay. The changes were carried out in the interest of all parties.

It was noted that the company were budgeting to mitigate the 20% decrease in occupancy and although the external perception was bad as a result of the report of the media internally the company had held one to one consultations with staff and preserved jobs and improved governance and management.

The situation with the care homes in Essex was different to the ones in Leicester and both Councils had been very supportive of the family run company that aimed to get back to where they were.

The Deputy City Mayor for Social Care and Anti-Poverty supported restoring additional support to staff to enable a stable work force and investigate how to retain care home staff to deliver a quality service.

AGREED:

- 1) That, the company consider the comments made by the Commission and provide good working conditions for frontline staff;
- 2) That the company restore business relationships with Leicester City Council;
- 3) And that, the company ensure that the financial debt is resolved by the end of the financial year.

92. LEICESTER SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

The Chair of the Leicester Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB) delivered the annual report for 2019/20 and shared her condolences with those who's lives had been touched by the pandemic.

It was noted that the board held short focussed meetings with statutory partners focussed on adults with care and support needs. The board were exploring areas of domestic abuse, the implications of the lockdown, governance in the most efficient forms and the Local Resilience Forum.

The board had also tried to engage with prisons, the justice system and housing providers and were focussing on developing further to continue functioning by trying to reach all communities and gather data around inequalities and the Black Lives Matter movement.

The Director of Social Care and Education noted that anti-racism sessions had been delivered across departments with over 100 staff involved to understand the issues faced. An anti-racism group had been set up to review the evidence collected and address the areas of concern. This would help in evaluating whether certain communities are receiving effective support as a result of lack of knowledge and understanding.

Members raised their concerns with how enquires were being concluded, with 93% of enquiries reduced or eliminated and 7% where risks remain and how these figures compared with other. It was noted that these were not unusual figures and there were instances where it was difficult to reach conclusions. The Director for Adult Social Care and Safeguarding noted that the service were in a similar position to other authorities and there were a small number of people who's risk couldn't be mitigated and that formal benchmarking data could be provided outside of the meeting.

Members of the Commission raised their concerns with the BAME community figures and queried whether this was a result of a lack of awareness or a case of people not coming forward. It was noted that there were a range of different issues within communities and this was not uncommon. The service were linking frontline workers with communities to deliver an effective level of service.

It was noted that liquid logic was used to collect data to create the overall picture with ethnicity data being collected at different points. The service tried to speak to people when they were comfortable to speak and had a highly representative staff group to maintain a quality of service where people were comfortable to speak.

Members suggested that there were prevalent issues and how were the service working on improving the service. It was noted that it was important to build the trust of the communities and to ensure confidentiality. The Deputy City Mayor for Social Care and Anti-Poverty suggested that Ward Councillors had the opportunity to play a positive role within local communities to help avoid people being reluctant where everyone could receive high levels of support from a very skilled team of staff.

Agreed:

That the members of the Commission be requested to note the report.

93. DRAFT GENERAL FUND BUDGET AND DRAFT CAPITAL BUDGET 2021/21

The Director of Finance submitted a report setting out the City Mayor's proposed budget for 2021/22. The Commission was recommended to consider and comment on the Adult Social Care element of the budget. The Commission's comments would be forwarded to the Overview Select Committee as part of its consideration of the report before presentation to the meeting of Council in February 2021.

Martin Judson the Head of Finance presented the report to the Commission and noted that the draft budget was a stop gap one-year budget with minimal changes and that finances were to be reviewed again this year in the light of greater certainty over government funding and the impact of the pandemic.

It was noted that an additional £10 Million had been allocated to the adult social care budget, £3 Million of which was funded through central government

funding and £3.6m would be raised from the social care precept on the Council Tax. The overall council budget has been balanced in 2021/22 by using £20 million from reserves.

As part of the discussions the Commission discussed extensively the areas of the budget for Adult Social Care. It was noted that the £5.5 Million Substance Misuse budget was now part of the Public Health budget. It was noted that the cost of care packages were budgeted to increase by 9.3% annually as a result of increasing need together with fee increases of 2.3% which are determined mainly by the increase in national living wage rates in 2021/22

It was noted that the department were ensuring preventative services were commissioned and that there was investment in the reablement and enablement services.

Members of the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission raised their concerns over the increase in care package costs of £12.5 million. It was suggested that a detailed report be brought back to the Commission to allow for in depth scrutiny.

The Deputy City Mayor noted that the Adult Social Care cost increases were a national issue. The government have been promising to reform the funding for adult social care for a number of years and we are still waiting for the green paper.

Members of the Commission were concerned with the pressure on communities that a rise in Council Tax would have as a result of the social care precept. It was noted that there was a range of support available for those vulnerable families that would be impacted with the increase in Council Tax.

The Director of Adult Social Care noted that, the department undertake significant benchmarking of the spend and how it is distributed, closely and extensively with other cities. The Commission were reassured that necessary services would continue.

AGREED:

that:

1. The Commission note the report,
2. And that, a detailed report be brought back to the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission on the increasing cost of packages of £12.5 million.

94. COVID-19 RECOVERY PLANS UPDATE

The Director of Social Care and Education provided a verbal update on the Covid-19 recovery plans.

It was noted that there were currently high levels of infection resulting on significant pressures on the NHS and the intensive care units (ICU's), where operating theatres had to be converted into ICU's.

It was noted that the government had allocated £149 million to support the infection control work and a further £120 million for additional testing. Free PPE was also available from a range of suppliers.

Staff within care homes were being tested twice weekly and residents every four weeks. It was suggested that staff of the working age of 30-59 were bringing the virus into care homes which resulted in an increase in cases within the care home settings across the country.

The Commission were made Aware that all over 65's would be vaccinated by the end of Sunday 24 January 2021 and the government were on track to achieve this.

It was noted that the vaccination programme was an NHS service and that it was being delivered in phases to ensure they were ready to deliver. There would be 24 sites in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland with additional hospital sites and vaccination centres.

Members of the Commission asked whether re-admission figures were kept. It was noted that hospitals did track and monitor these figures and this could be provided.

Members of the Commission thanked the Director of Social Care and Education for the update and thanked everyone for their input and ongoing work. Members suggested that people appreciated the work being carried out by the authorities.

95. RESPONSE TO THE ADULT SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMISSION TASK GROUP REVIEW INTO SOCIAL CARE EXTERNAL WORKFORCE

The Deputy City Mayor for Social Care and Anti-Poverty addressed the Commission and on a response from the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission Task Group Review. It was suggested that as a result of the task group areas had been identified that required further work to be carried out on specific areas but was positive with the long term aspirations.

The Vice Chair of the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission suggested that the areas that had been responded to, should be brought to the scrutiny commission to move the recommendations forward.

AGREED:

That the responses from the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission Task Group Review be brought to the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission for discussions on particular subjects.

96. WORK PROGRAMME

It was noted that the Scrutiny Policy Officer would share an updated list of items to be considered for future Commissions with Members.

97. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There being no items of urgent business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 08:11pm.