Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
ADULT SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: THURSDAY, 13 JANUARY 2022 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor March (Chair)

Councillor Broadwell
Councillor Moore
Councillor Kaur Saini
Councillor Kitterick

In Attendance
Deputy City Mayor for Social Care and Anti-Poverty, Councillor Russell
Councillor Joshi

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50. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Monitoring Officer noted that none had been received.

51. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Joshi noted that he had a standing declaration in that his wife worked for the Reablement Team at Leicester City Council.

52. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

It was noted that an adjustment be requested to be made to the minutes of the previous meeting to read that the Members of the Commission recommended that the Chief Operating Officer consider the options for providing the Flu Jab to staff and that a formal response be requested on the practicalities of this recommendation.

It was also requested that the minutes reflect the 40% figure of the backlog of outstanding reviews be outlined.

AGREED:

That the minutes of the Meeting of the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission from 12 December 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

53. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer noted that none had been received.

54. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer noted that none had been received.

55. DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET AND DRAFT CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2022-2023

The Head of Finance delivered the report on the Draft Capital Programme to the Commission.

It was noted that the Capital Programme covered any new additions to the programme of which there were none in Adult Social Care. There were current schemes and policy provisions which were detailed in the report which also covered the Extra Care Scheme.

As part of the discussions on the Draft Capital Programme Members of the Commission shared their concerns on the lack of progress on the Extra Care Provision scheme and requested reassurance from Officers that substantial progress on its development would be achieved over the next 12 months.

It was noted that significant work had been made before the consortium pulled out in 2021. Following this a soft market test had just been completed and currently the department were going through the evaluation processes. Once this was completed the proposal would aim to go to the market in a form that would have potential interest to the market. Furthermore, a virtual session with potential providers had been undertaken where there were 40 participants. The proposals would be taken to the Executive in the upcoming months, following which the procurement process would commence where it was anticipated contracts would be agreed in 9-12 months and the final build process was estimated to take 18 months.

Members of the Commission shared their disappointment in the extensive time process, the market dictating on public money and questioned whether the project would develop any further in the upcoming year.

The Deputy City Mayor for Social Care and Anti-Poverty noted that everyone felt the same frustrations and that all legal options were being considered following the consortium pulling out and considered a range of alternative options. Resources had been dedicated towards achieving this and this result was not for a want of trying. Going forward the department would have to go

through the full procurement process and there was a strong corporate desire to deliver this project.

Members of the Commission noted that over the last decade at this time of year the situation had been similar. With ever growing pressures on Adult Social Care and everyone associated to this department as a result of the rise in cost and fewer resources to deliver, this was a difficult and concerning situation the department finds itself in.

It was further noted that £9.3 million had been set aside for the Extra Care Schemes which will be spent over time. Officers also noted that this was considerably lower than the actual cost of the schemes and a substantial capital amount would need to be contributed to the development of Tilling Road and Hamelin Road by the developers.

Members of the Commission supported the provision of disabled toilets and changing rooms. The Chair echoed her support of these facilities and further noted that she was not a fan of the market. After the extensive work put in to develop the project further, the market had failed the department and she shared her frustrations on the law not allowing for the authority to deliver the project independently.

AGREED:

1) That the Strategic Director for Social Care and Education be requested to bring back a comprehensive report following any progress on the Extra Care Scheme;
2) That the Strategic Director for Social Care and Education be requested to consider the option for bringing parts of the service delivery in house, and;
3) That the Draft Capital Programme be welcomed and noted.

The Head of Finance delivered an overview of the report on the Draft Revenue Budget.

It was noted that the main issues that formed the background of this budget were the pandemic, social care funding crisis and 10 years of austerity. The spending review programme had served the department well over time and the service have been able to manage the cuts in funding and avoid any crisis.

The pandemic had a major short-term impact, this had resulted in the delay of budget reviews over the last two years. The 2021/22 budget would be balanced by using one off money of £17 million of one-off reserves and the draft budget for 2022/23 would also need to be balanced with one-off reserves of £30

million. Following a financial settlement, it was suggested that the authority was £5-6 million better off than what had been suggested at the time of publishing the report.

It was further noted that the main issue remained to be the increasing cost of adult social care and the fact that the available funding had still not increased to match the increase in cost.

It was suggested that over the years there had been additional funding in ad hoc fashion through grants, the Better Care Fund and increase in the council tax precept this, however did not deliver anything systematically to address the increasing cost.

Following a comprehensive spending review there had been additional funding to the local authority but there would be nothing beyond 2022/23. As a result, this was a 1-year budget once again this year.

Following the social care reforms, the Health and Social Care Levy will raise £12 billion of new money each year. Only a total of £5.4 billion of that will go to Adult Social Care over three years, with the remainder going to the NHS. It noted that the bulk of the money for social care would be used to address the reduction in individuals' financial contributions towards the cost of their care and therefore, a reduction in the income to the Council. Any further amount of money will be set aside by government to equalise the cost of care between those who self-fund and those funded through the Council. A smaller amount of money would be set aside for general reforms which would address things like greater use of technology and training of the workforce. It was noted that the general estimations would suggest that the money set aside would not be sufficient to cover the additional cost for councils.

It was noted that the net growth for Adult Social Care was £16.5 million and this had been incorporated into the draft budget.

The Strategic Director for Social Care and Education noted that the Department for Health and Social Care had asked every local authority to do a cost of care exercise for this calendar year in order to inform fee rates. The request from the DHSC was to provide information on Home Care and if possible, on care homes and a national methodology had been developed by the Local Government Association as a recommended approach.

As part of the discussions, it was noted that:

- The report was a minefield of words and numbers to find the information

that Commission Members required for scrutiny.

- It was noted that £17 million was the one-off money that would be required to cover the shortfall
- It was noted that the £17.5 million figure had been incorporated into the budget which included the trend rate in which care packages increase over the year. The trend rate of increase in care packages had been lower over the two years as a result of the pandemic.
- The increase in the budget didn't improve services but reflected the increase in the national minimum wage which was absolutely deserved by staff
- It was noted that the £1.9 million reduction was not as a result for taking away services but ensuring that we are not providing people with services that they did not require
- Members of the Commission requested Officers to provide a figure on how much money had been saved following package reviews in the last 12 months to understand whether the figures provided were realistic
- The Strategic Director for Social Care and Education noted that the department had not been looking for savings from package reviews, but packages had been increasing at a faster rate than most other parts of the country which suggested that this would be an area where there would be scope for savings
- Members of the Commission noted that for many years it had been suggested that the review of care packages would allow for savings to be made and this generally had not been the case, as the trend showed that reviewing care packages generally meant that the cost went in an upward direction
- The Deputy City Mayor for Social Care and Anti-Poverty noted that the delay in reviews was not intentional and was a result of staff resources being deployed to other urgent matters within care
- Members queried the initiative of exploring using technology before putting care packages in place. It was noted that a report would be provided at a later date on the technology aspect, but assistive technology was available to continue to provide a level of service
- Members of the Commission suggested that although assistive technology would allow for a continued service and may improve the quality of care it was unclear as to how this would help make savings
- It was noted that with an aging population with needs increasing, an alternative nationally commissioned care service, nationally organised on the same lines of the NHS would help reduce pressures on local authorities
- Members noted that the additional cost of care packages in 2023/24 would increase to £42 million. The Commission's task group review had considered the cost of domiciliary care and it was asserted that this

appeared to show that these were paying for private profits. It was suggested that as we had no provisions in-house, we had to use the market who were interested in making profits. Members were interested in what parts of the service could be delivered in house as it was argued that the private sector had not delivered on what we were told.

- It was noted that it was perfectly legal for local authorities to provide services in house, with Derbyshire having a substantial service inhouse. The cost of these services was significantly more than was the case in the commercial sector and although these services could be provided in-house, members of the public had the right to use whichever service they wished to.
- Members of the Commission supported the idea of services being provided in-house and requested that this option for a well-run, well-managed and well-planned in-house service be considered further.

AGREED:

1) That the Strategic Director for Social Care and Education be requested to work with colleagues in the NHS and with other systems better to outline challenges the department face.
2) That the ongoing Task Group review be treated seriously and carry out an additional review.
3) That the Strategic Director for Social Care and Education be requested to find the £1.9 million in savings following the reviews.
4) That the Strategic Director for Social Care and Education be requested to use the avenues available to ensure that the comments from the Commission be added to the growing pressures for fairer solution.
5) That the Strategic Director for Social Care and Education be requested to consider the options of bringing services in-house with consideration given to the charity and co-operative sector.
6) And that the staff working within the Social Care system be thanked for their continuous efforts.

56. COVID19 UPDATE

The Strategic Director for Social Care and Education provided an update to the Commission. It was noted that:

- The infection rate was similar to that of this time last year which was the highest ever
- Large number of homes had outbreaks of the virus
- There were staff shortages and hospitals were under pressure
- There were a small number of fatalities, but the number of deaths were within the 5-year average mortality rate.
- All ICU patients in hospitals were unvaccinated
- The system had existing winter pressures and additional strain from

covid, services were just about coping
- Everything was focussed on the day to day delivery of services this was resulting in a build-up of backlogs
- There had been a significant concern on the uptake of the booster vaccination programme which was well below where it was hoped to be
- A plan was being produced to ensure every care home has a clinician visit to administer the booster vaccine
- There was still a strong emphasis on dealing with the vaccine hesitancy

It was further noted that the mandatory vaccination for everyone employed with a CQC registered service would be in place on 1 April 2022. The current statistics suggested that 1/6 staff had not yet had the first dose of vaccination, 1/5 had not yet had the second dose of vaccination and this could result in future staff shortages.

AGREED:
1) That the Strategic Director for Social Care and Education be requested to continue with the work on encouraging the vaccination programme, and
2) That the Strategic Director for Social Care and Education be commended for the continuous efforts.

57. MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY 2021-2025

The Head of Commissioning delivered a brief overview of the report on the Mental Health Strategy following the draft report coming of the report coming to the Commission in April last year.

The Chair noted that the action plan outlined in the report was reflective on what the service felt like to the Service User and it was important to obtain the additional funding to deliver the service. It was suggested that the integrated system gave the opportunity to provide funding for the delivery of the Mental Health Strategy.

It was further noted that following the challenges faced in the past by all it was anticipate that the service would require a robust strategy in this area.

AGREED:
1) That the Strategic Director for Social Care and Education be thanked for the report, and:
2) That the Mental Health Strategy be kept on the Work Programme.

58. CARERS STRATEGY REPORT

The Joint Integrated Commissioning Board Lead Officer introduced the report and provided the Commission with an overview and highlighted thae work that the service had delivered.

As part of the discussions it was noted that:

- It was encouraging to see an increase in the number of people registering with their GP as a carer
- The general overview was that carers are certainly under increased pressure as a result of the pandemic
- Carers continued to provide excellent support to their loved ones
- Although the support required by service users was different, it was suggested that family members providing care for their loved ones where the service user was comfortable was an area where investment should be directed.
- A Co-productive nature of service delivery was absolutely necessary to the Service.

AGREED:

1) That the Strategic Director for Social Care and Education be requested to provide future updates to the Commission on key developments in this service area, and;
2) That the report be noted.

59. SCRUTINY TASK GROUP REVIEW - PROGRESS UPDATE

The Chair of the Scrutiny Task Group Review provided the Commission with an update. It was noted that:

- The majority of the evidence gathering process was complete
- Details into the accounts for providers was being investigated
- A draft report in the findings had been prepared and this would be reviewed following the Commission meeting and new findings.

60. WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair recommended that the following items be added to the Work Programme and that Officers be requested to provide reports to future Commission meetings:

- The role of technology in delivering care
- Deprivation of Liberty Protection
- HealthWatch Leicester and Leicestershire

61. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There being no items of urgent business the meeting closed at 7:25pm