



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
ADULT SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: TUESDAY, 25 SEPTEMBER 2018 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Cleaver (Chair)
Councillor Joshi (Vice Chair)

Councillor Aldred
Councillor Osman

Councillor Thalukdar
Councillor Unsworth

In Attendance

Councillor Dempster, Assistant City Mayor – Adult Social Care and Wellbeing

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27. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Chaplin.

28. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any interest they may have in the business to be discussed on the agenda.

There were no declarations of interest made.

29. VCS REVIEW PHASE 1: CARERS' SUPPORT, LUNCH CLUBS AND VISUAL & DUAL SENSORY SUPPORT

The Strategic Director for Social Care and Education submitted a report and Equality Impact Assessments which updated the Adult Social Care (ASC) Scrutiny Commission on the outcome of Phase 1 of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Review as reported at the ASC Scrutiny Commission meeting on 28th August 2018. The Commission was recommended to note the report and provide comments.

The Chair stated it was important to note the services affected were non-statutory, and could not be run in the same way due to government funding cuts, and that it was essential to prioritise the provision of statutory services. She added the authority had difficult decisions to make.

It was noted that at the previous ASC Scrutiny Commission meeting held on 28th August 2018, a verbal update had been received on the VCS Review Phase 1, and detailed discussion had taken place. Members had requested a report to expand on the information received verbally, alongside an EIA for each affected service area.

The Strategic Director for Social Care and Education said that the ASC Department had looked at non-statutory services to consider whether they could evidence whether they prevented or delayed individuals requiring statutory support. Therefore, in the current financial climate, difficult decisions had to be made to deliver the overall savings of £790k for 2018/19. He added that an annual growth pressure of £5million a year also needed to be met. He reminded those present that whilst the Department had been efficient over the previous three years, there had been no change in the Government's position with regards to funding. It was noted that the Green Paper on care and support for older people had not yet come forward. However, communication from central Government indicated that it would not be available for at least another couple of months. The Department had moved on with the savings put in place, and the reports presented to the meeting related to non-statutory spend.

The Chair stated she sympathised with the position faced by the Department, and felt it was important that the Commission were able to seek reassurance that with the services being changed, service users and carers would be reassured and signposted adequately.

The Strategic Director for Social Care and Education responded the Members' questions with the following information:

- Carers support offered advice and guidance, but not practical care. Carers support would continue through advice, guidance and signposting to appropriate support.
- Lunch clubs were predominantly used by older people, or occasionally younger people with a disability or other need.
- The visual and dual sensory impairment support was a service which commissioned a range of sub-services with some statutory provision, for example, it was a statutory requirement to maintain a register of individuals using the service. Vista support service also guided people as to what equipment was available, and offered reablement support.
- Some advocacy support contracts provided a combination of statutory (as defined by the Care Act 2014) and non-statutory advocacy, for example, supporting individuals with the engagement with the DWP, housing, etc. It was noted that there were other services that offered that support and guidance, for example, the Council's own Housing Department. The Council's Welfare Advice section was being re-procured and restructured to deal with lower level cases at Tier 1, through to more complex tribunal cases at Tier 3.
- Stroke support was a long-running service with a small investment. Predominantly used by older people, the city residents who attended for support could be assessed for statutory support if necessary.

- The Disabled Persons' Support service was an infrastructure service and previously driven by disabled user organisations, but the contract had now served its time. Therefore, it was proposed to cease the service and to create a Service User Participation service so enable the Council to engage directly to arrange, which is a requirement of the Care Act 2014.
- The organisations affected by phased reductions in lunch club funding as listed in the report were:
 - Provider A – Age UK
 - Provider B – Asian Towers
 - Provider C – Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre
 - Provider D – East West
 - Provider E – Guru Nanak
 - Provider F – Guru Tegh
 - Provider G – Hindu Centre
 - Provider H – Chinese Group
 - Provider I – Wisp
 - Provider J – Shalom
 - Provider K – Sikh Group
 - Provider L – Ramgarhia
 - Provider M – Silver Strand
 - Provider N – St Peters Group
- It was noted that during the consultation, concern was more about social interaction being lost, rather than the loss of the meal. The groups would be assisted over the phased 3-year period to enable them to become self-sufficient, for example, look at cheaper accommodation, different menus, charging attendees the full cost for the food etc.

The Chair noted that the lunch clubs were not a statutory service, and rather than being cut brutally, VAL and officers would work with the groups to support them to seek other funding opportunities so they can become self-sufficient to ensure they are in line with other groups around the city that did not receive funding.

She added individuals could request to have an ASC assessment to see if they required support. Five years ago, the Council was receiving sufficient funding to enable the Department to provide the small support and extra services for users. This was no longer possible as funding cuts meant non-statutory services could not be maintained alongside the provision of statutory services.

The Vice-Chair echoed the Chair's comments, saying he appreciated the three-year time-period to enable the lunch clubs to prepare themselves and reduce anxiety for them. He added there were many groups in Leicester that already operated on a private basis, with people contributing towards the club for a good, nutritional meal. He noted that the funding had been given ad hoc historically, and the time had come whereby funding could not continue. He agreed with the report, and recommended the groups receive help and support over the coming years so the service could continue to ensure older people who were isolated continued to receive good nutritional food, and reduce social isolation.

Members supported the comments that had been made, though concern was raised that over a long time the resources had been provided in some areas, and outer estates had not benefitted. The reasoning behind the cuts outlined in the report were supported, and it was hoped with assistance the groups would still be in existence in four years, as other areas in the city had proved groups could be self-sufficient.

In response to a further question from Members it was noted that in terms of Halal food, grant agreements included the requirement that food provided was appropriate to the group, and that a certain hygiene level was reached. But in terms of food provided, the nutritional value of the food was up to the organisation and was not monitored. Contracts stated the food had to be appropriate. It was further noted that Age UK supplied food to groups with a lot of Muslim members, which was Halal.

Members queried why some groups provided detail on ethnicity of its users and some didn't. In response it was noted the Council had a clear definition on what information was provided under contracts and what was provided through grants, and that there was no requirement in grant arrangements as to what was normally expected under contracts, for example, the number of people coming through the doors; ethnicity.

The current information was for grants that had been rolled on for years, and the decision-making process for how the organisations had originally received the grants could not be identified, was disparate and made no rational sense. The point raised by members on detail on ethnicity and equal opportunities for new grants would be taken on board.

Members were further informed the Service had no legal duty to feed anyone, nor a legal duty to fund groups, for example, there was no legal duty to fund meals on wheels whereby people paid a contribution, but the requirement was to ensure food was accessible.

The Chair noted that due to funding cuts, not only would the Department be looking at non-statutory services, but Members in the future would also have to look at savings on statutory services as was the case already in other areas of the country.

The Chair informed the meeting that she had received comments from Councillor Chaplin prior to the meeting, and that Councillor Chaplin was against the proposals outlined in the reports.

The Chair said that considering the comments heard at the meeting, it was suggested that Members note the proposals put forward and the difficult decisions being taken acknowledged. She asked the service to note the concerns raised by Members, and continue to reassure people, where services were being changed, particularly those who were vulnerable and accessing more than one of these services, and ensure adequate support during the phased implementation of the new proposals.

The Chair asked that the contents of the report on VCS Review Phase 1: Carers' Support, Lunch Clubs and Visual & Dual Sensory Support be noted. The Chair requested that a further update with monitoring information be brought back at an appropriate time to the ASC Scrutiny Commission on progress.

It was AGREED that:

1. The report be noted;
2. The service noted the concerns raised by Members, and continue to reassure people where services being changed, particularly those who were vulnerable and those accessing more than one of the services be adequately supported during the phased implementation of the new proposals;
3. A further update with monitoring information be brought back to a future meeting of the ASC Scrutiny Commission on progress.

30. VCS REVIEW PHASE 2: ADVOCACY, STROKE SUPPORT AND DISABLED PEOPLES' SUPPORT SERVICE

The Strategic Director for Social Care and Education submitted a report which updated the Commission on the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Review Phase 2 on Advocacy, Stroke Support and Disabled Peoples' Support Service. The Commission was recommended to note the report and provide comments.

The report was taken with the report on VCS Review Phase 1: Carers' Support, Lunch Clubs and Visual & Dual Sensory Support at Appendix 1, as noted above.

The Chair asked that the contents of the report on VCS Review Phase 2: Advocacy, Stroke Support and Disabled Peoples' Support Service be noted. The Chair requested that a further update with monitoring information be brought back at an appropriate time to the ASC Scrutiny Commission on progress.

It was AGREED that:

1. The report be noted;
2. The service note the concerns raised by Members, and continue to reassure people where services being changed, particularly those who were vulnerable and those accessing more than one of the services be adequately supported during the phased implementation of the new proposals;
3. A further update with monitoring information be brought back to a future meeting of the ASC Scrutiny Commission on progress.

31. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 6.20pm.

