



Leicester
City Council

MINUTE EXTRACT

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 Kitterick

Councillor Kaur Saini

In Attendance

Councillor Russell - Deputy City Mayor for Social Care and Anti-Poverty
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 editions 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 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 procurement processes. Once this was completed the proposal would go to the market 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 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 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 procurement process and there was a 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 amount would need to be contributed to the development of Tilling Road and Hampden 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 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 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, however this 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. £5.4 billion of which will go to Adult Social Care over three years. It noted that the bulk of the money would be used to address the reduction in individuals care contributions 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 technology. 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 on fee rates for next year. The request from was to provide information on Home Care and if possible, on care homes and a national methodology had been developed by the Department for Health and Social Care 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 cut was not as a result for taking away services but ensuring that we are not giving service users something extra
- 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 intuitive 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 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 apparent that they 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 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 were more than that in the commercial sector and although these services can be provided inhouse, 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 inhouse and were requested that this option for a well-run, well-managed and well-planned inhouse 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 inhouse 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.

