



Leicester
City Council

MINUTE EXTRACT

Minutes of the Meeting of the
ADULT SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: THURSDAY, 19 JANUARY 2023 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Joshi (Chair)

Councillor Batool
Councillor Kaur Saini

Councillor March
Councillor Patel

In Attendance

Councillor Russell – Deputy City Mayor for Social Care and Anti-Poverty

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22. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair led on introductions. It was noted that the item on the Hastings Road Day Care Centre will be taken first on the agenda, whilst the technical issue was resolved.

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Singh Johal.

23. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair declared that his wife worked in the Reablement Team at Leicester City Council.

24. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission 8 December 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

25. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer noted that none had been received.

26. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer noted that none had been received.

27. DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET AND DRAFT CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023/24

Draft Revenue Budget

The Head of Finance introduced the report and provided a summary of the Draft Revenue Budget in relation to the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission.

As part of the summary, it was noted that £33million of managed reserves helped bridge the gap of estimated expenditure in the coming financial year, but it would not be possible in 2024/25 to cover the £44million needed to cover the gap between expenditure and funding coming in, since there would only be £22million left in reserves at the beginning of that year. Work was ongoing to bridge the gap and realign expenditure with £6million identified in savings during the current financial year and savings would be brought forward with appropriate consultations to reduce the gap.

The background behind the authority being in this situation was 10 years of austerity, the rising cost of social care, inadequate funding and moreover no additional funding for recent inflation. For example there was no additional funding in the settlement this year to address the future pay increases, the additional £10million estimate for additional energy costs and the Biffa Waste contract payments indexed to RPI. There was also the potential for further austerity beyond 2025.

Additional £12.6million that had been earmarked nationally for local implementation of reforms had been added to the budget to deal with current pressures, but it was noted that there was no systematic additional funding to address the underlying growth in demand. The estimated additional cost for Adult Social Care of £19million was estimated as being required for the growth in numbers of those who require care, the growth in the size of care packages to suit individual needs and the growth in the unit cost of care. Central government had allocated the funding based on the presumption that local authorities would raise council tax by 5%.

As part of the discussions with Members, it was noted that:

- There were no tangible savings made in 2022/23, but the service did not see as much growth in demand as had been expected and the increase had been accounted for in the overall budget for 2022/23
- The strength-based approach had slowed down the increase in expenditure and the budget for 2023/24 was based on the lower rate of increase
- The average amount of care provided had increased faster than in the rest of the country, the number of people of working age that required care had been growing and the local demographics meant that the service

were supporting a greater number of people but were focussed on a strength-based approach

The Strategic Director for Social Care and Education noted that the most efficient way to control the budget was to do the right thing with the right person at the right time and that over-providing care created a culture of dependency which resulted in a shorter and unhealthier life. Applying the strength-based practice was the best model that enabled staff to work with people where the outcome was not a service.

In response to Members' queries about the strength-based practice, it was noted that teams within the service worked with the individuals and family to set goals to try and reverse their decline in independence and build techniques to increase individual's capacities by setting goals and then reviewing. Each individual's cases were different, and reviews were based on goals set with the individuals based on their needs and there had been no fundamental disputes.

In further discussions it was noted that:

- Provisions had been made to cover the potential cost of reforms, with £5million in the budget which may or may not be required
- There were uncertainties around the 'fair cost of care' exercise and the government had indicated the level of funding that would be provided to cover the 'fair cost of care' rate but this should not be the rate for commissioning
- Best estimates were in place and with time this would be clearer

Members suggested that central government were unpredictable and setting budgets had been a difficult process. Members were reassured that the level of reserves supported the budgetary requirements, that the expectations that savings would be made in 2023/24 to support the budget in the following year, and that there would not be major cuts to the service.

The Chair noted that currently the situation was volatile and that predicting the future was difficult with funding for the service not matching the expenditure and that the savings made by the service were made from good estimates from officers setting budgets and underspending without cutting services but using the strength-based approach.

The Deputy City Mayor for Social Care and Anti-Poverty noted that the future could hold catastrophic levels of under funding would leave local authorities in a position that would be difficult to recover from and that the predictions were not accurate as the situation was ever changing.

AGREED:

- 1) That the Strategic Director for Social Care and Education and supporting Officers be thanked for the work carried out during such volatile times
- 2) That the concerns raised by the Commission be noted, and
- 3) That the Strategic Director for Social Care and Education be requested to continue to seek additional funding to support the service.

Draft Capital Programme

The Head of Finance introduced the report and provided a summary of the Draft Capital Programme in relation to the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission.

As part of the discussions Members of the Commission requested that the item on Supported Living be brought to the Commission as an update.

AGREED:

- 1) That the Strategic Director for Social Care and Education be requested to provide an update report on Supported Living. And
- 2) That the Draft Capital Programme report be noted.