



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
ADULT SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: THURSDAY, 15 JANUARY 2026 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor March - Chair

Councillor Batool

Councillor Kaur Saini

Councillor Russell

Councillor Joannou

Councillor Orton

Councillor Sahu

In Attendance

Assistant City Mayor Councillor Dawood

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154. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies for absence were received from Kash Bhayani of Healthwatch who joined online.

155. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

The Chair asked members to declare any interests in proceedings for which there were none.

156. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Chair highlighted that the minutes from the meeting held on Thursday 13th November 2025 were included in the agenda pack and asked Members to confirm whether they were an accurate record. It was noted that:

- The minutes for the Declarations of Interest segment should be corrected to state for The Chair: 'Councillor March's employer had been mentioned in the CQC inspection.'
- The Chair clarified a recommendation made for the CQC Report item regarding digital exclusion, was broader than language barriers.
- Social contact and the voluntary and community sector had also been discussed.
- It was noted that Assistant City Mayor Councillor Dawood had not been noted as being in attendance at the previous meeting but was indeed present.

AGREED:

- 1) That the minutes of 13th November 2025 be confirmed as a correct record, subject to the above amendments.

157. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None were made.

158. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

It was noted that none had been received.

159. PETITIONS

It was noted that none had been received.

160. DRAFT GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2026/27 AND DRAFT THREE YEAR CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2026/27

The Director of Finance submitted a report setting out the City Mayor's proposed Draft General Fund Revenue Budget for 2026/27, and a report on the City Mayor's proposed Draft Three-Year Capital Programme 2026/27.

As the reports on the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme were related, they were taken as one item.

The Head of Finance (Education and Social Care) gave an overview of the reports, key points to note were as follows:

- The General Fund Revenue Budget set out the budget for 2026/27 and the medium term strategy for the following two years.
- The recent conclusion of the Government's Fair Funding consultation would be included in the final budget presented to Council in February.
- A budget gap continued to be forecasted, and previous the strategy would continue with five strands:
 - Budget savings of £23m
 - Constraining growth in areas such as Social Care and homelessness
 - A reduction in the Capital programme
 - Releasing one off monies
 - A programme of property sales
- The scope for additional investment in services was limited but included areas which had previously been awarded grants.
- For Adult Social Care, the budget would provide additional growth, taking the net budget from £179m in 2025/26 to £191.5m, mainly due to the increasing costs of providing care.
- Cost increases were due to the need to support more people,

particularly those of working age, and due to inflation driven by an increase in the National Living Wage.

- There was an aim to reduce costs by decreasing the numbers of new entrants to Adult Social Care, and through partnership work.
- There was a funded action plan in place relating to the CQC assessment.
- The Three-Year Draft Capital Programme worth £129m. It was fully financed from council resources, government grants and borrowing.
- The final budget would be updated and presented to Council in February 2026 and would include the finance settlement.

The Chair invited questions and comments from the Commission. The following key points were discussed:

- Members questioned whether the budget could support demand to progress from the most recent CQC “requires improvement” rating. It was noted that investment was supported by Equalities Impact Assessments and depended on effective budget management and available reserves.
- Savings from reoccurring vacancies had been reinvested.
- Creative thinking around vacancies could have immediate benefits but could mean a change of culture. Training processes could mitigate new risks.
- Members supported an approach of positive communications to boost recruitment.
- The social care levy position had increased but the growth of adult social care needs far exceeded this.
- Members queried if there was partnership work with universities to aid with recruitment shortfalls. It was confirmed that there was an apprenticeship / student placement scheme in place with De Montfort University for Social Work Degrees. Social Work apprenticeships were run by Warwickshire University and OT placements were offered at Coventry University.
- Members requested a budget amendment to specify the amount that comes in through the Adult Social Care precept, versus the amount the budget needs to increase by to meet need, to emphasise the point of the adult social care levy and show how the gap needs to be funded.
- Members requested a budget amendment to emphasise within the Capital Programme that there was a policy provision around supported living.
- In reference to a previous paper relating to the enhanced element of PIP it was noted that the report identified the maximum that could theoretically be achieved based on assumed rates of benefits awards, but this was not budgeted for in full. The change came into policy this year relating to higher rates of benefits (the mobility element is excluded). The budget included a £250k additional income provision. Around £500k had been achieved, nothing that assumed income is reduced in the first year as there were additional staffing costs for implementation, along with appeals to changes.

- Members requested figures on income to the Council from disability benefits and asked how much additional money was required for staffing.
- Regarding right sizing of care packages, it was confirmed that statutory support would remain in place as required, there was an Early Action programme leading to less requirement for support.

AGREED:

- 1) That the reports be noted.
- 2) Members requested a budget amendment to highlight the policy provision for supported living within the Capital Programme.
- 3) Members requested a budget amendment to specify the amount that comes in through the Adult Social Care precept, versus the amount the budget needs to increase by to meet need. Also, to emphasise the point of the ASC social levy and show how the gap needs to be funded.
- 4) Members requested figures on Council income from disability benefits.
- 5) Members requested figures on how much additional money was needed for staffing.

161. LEICESTER SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025

Agenda Variance – The chair made a change to the order of items to accommodate officer's timings. Leicester Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2024-2025 was taken next.

Cllr Russell noted that whilst she was not required to make a Declaration of Interest, she would not be taking part in the scrutiny of this item due to having been a participatory observer on the board for the period covered by the report.

The Leicester Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB) submitted their 2024/25 Annual Report which was presented by the LSAB Independent Chair.

The following was noted:

- The Leicester Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB) was enshrined in the Care Act 2014 Legislation. This required that a Safeguarding Board should be set up in the area a strategic plan and an annual report must be produced and the LSAB commissioned Safeguarding Adult Reviews. There was a need to meet the needs of people in Leicester.
- Whilst the LSAB is separate as a board, it operates in joint arrangements with the Leicestershire and Rutland SAB. The arrangement had been successful for some time.
- In 2024 the Minister for Housing and Homelessness had issued guidance on the responsibility of Safeguarding Adults Boards relating to people who are rough sleeping. There had been debate about the implications of this, as many felt that a wider group of people without an address were vulnerable. However, there was a specific focus on rough sleeping, a requirement to have partners on the board with housing

responsibility for rough sleepers and to commission Safeguarding Adult Reviews where deaths of rough sleepers were identified as meeting the statutory criteria. Next year would be the first year of reporting on this.

- In terms of data, alert numbers had decreased, and numbers of safeguarding enquiries had risen. This was in line with the national picture across data seen. Factors behind this included people's health and the economic environment. Additionally, people were living longer and were sometimes in poorer health for longer periods of time. Benchmarking had been done against national data.
- Specific areas of work included the representation of safeguarding enquiries against demographics. It was recognised that in care homes, the white population was more represented, and this is a highly regulated area, meaning that safeguarding concerns are more visible and reported. This may explain, in part, the overrepresentation.
- Work had been carried out in the community to meet with community groups and raise awareness. The report included feedback on this. The numbers in other communities had increased and members were in contact with people in the community so they could encourage people to explore engagement.
- Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse in the older community was an area of concern and elected members could help to get the message out. This was also picked up through the 'See Something, Say Something' campaign, and messaging had been carried out via YouTube. The types of abuse seen were consistent and consistent with the national picture.
- Financial abuse was an increasing issue. Additionally, physical abuse was rising. This was often symptomatic of wider issues, for example, where people did not want to pay for care, this could lead to safeguarding issues.
- It was important to involve people in enquiries and understand what they wanted from enquiries. If agencies found that people were affected by abuse, it could sometimes be the case that the individual did not want action taken, however, there was a duty for the Local Authority to act, for example to avoid the risk of harm to others.
- Safeguarding review referrals sometimes went across years. There were currently four reviews ongoing, including one being completed jointly as a domestic homicide review.
- Some issues raised as safeguarding were more appropriately addressed outside the process, for example by care and support assessments.
- It was important to learn from experiences and improve the learning offer and look at opportunities for development.
- It was aimed to promote the voice of people who use safeguarding support in the report. It was aimed to be a live process and there was a need to use opportunities where people could feed back.
- It was necessary to look wider than the Midlands and to look nationally when drawing data comparisons.
- There had been a self-neglect audit, and safeguarding safety plans were in place.
- Priorities for 2026/27 included Equality, Diversity and Inclusion priorities,

and also timeliness and proportionality of safeguarding alerts and also learning opportunities.

In discussion with Members, the following was noted:

- In terms of types of abuse, the picture was consistent across the three Local Authorities, and this had been similar to the previous year. There had been a small increase in self-neglect enquiries, however, this had been expected due to a change in the process.
- Figures could be checked regarding psychological abuse enquiry rates.
- Organisational abuse was abuse conducted at an organisational level, this could include, for example, care homes having inadequate support plans for people at risk.
- With regard to abuse in care homes, this was a broad scope and could encompass many things. For example, it could include falls, neglect, not providing food and/or fluids and medication errors. The CQC required care homes to report many issues, and more was witnessed in care homes. It was important to consider how care homes responded to this. Often appropriate action was taken.
- It was further clarified that 34% of enquiries were about incidents in care homes. There was oversight of care in care homes, and it would be likely that most care homes had raised an alert at some point with the Local Authority. This did not mean that they were unsafe or failing as it was part of the reporting process, it meant that issues were being picked up. Many care homes acted quickly and addressed matters actively.
- It was important to note that some incidents took place between residents, so the issue was not always to do with care by staff.
- The public could report through open referral. People could contact the Council directly, through email or phone, but also through their own social workers or the police. The information on the website was clear that people were encouraged to make contact if there were concerns. The duty numbers and email address could be shared with members.
- In terms of disparity between ethnic groups, part of the reason that various communities were engaged with was to aim to get into the community at a local level, however there had been some limitations as organisations needed staff to do sessions. The issue was on the agenda and the Board were aware of sensitivities around language. Members could help as they had access to communities. The issue was a wider partnership responsibility and anyone who could support would be helpful. The issue was being tackled, and it was aimed to get through barriers and train staff with skills. Training money was within the organisations and most training happened within the organisations; however, the Board undertook some of the work around YouTube and language issues.
- It was suggested that safeguarding messages could be embedded through English as a Second Language (ESOL) classes as people would already be attending classes. This suggestion would be taken back to the Engagement Committee.
- The Assistant Mayor for Adult Social Care was happy to meet with

officers on how the issue could be tackled.

- Overrepresentation had reduced and numbers had increased on the Asian British population.
- In response to a query on the conversion rate, it was clarified that the fact that there was a conversion rate meant that people were picking up on the right things. It was a recognition that there was right targeting, and people were receiving the support they required.
- When a large number of enquiries was looked at, it could be that there had been a bulge or a care home or provider with a large number of concerns had come through. Therefore, there were a variety of reasons behind conversion rates, however, the conversion rate was monitored and audits were undertaken to ensure that people were protected.
- Where risk remained, the challenge was that sometimes people made the choice not to receive support. Professionals would in most situations need to respect people's choices.
- Some information went out in different languages, but this would be confirmed.

AGREED:

- 1) That the update be noted.
- 2) That comments made by members of this commission to be taken into account by the lead officers.
- 3) That consideration be given to embedding safeguarding learning through ESOL.
- 4) To look into recirculating The Making it Real group's leaflet co-produced with safeguarding in accessible languages.
- 5) To provide figures on psychological abuse.
- 6) To share the duty line numbers with commission members.

162. ADULT SOCIAL CARE QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE (APRIL-SEPTEMBER 2025) AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

The Strategic Director of Social Care and Education submitted a report and gave a slide presentation providing an update on performance in Adult Social Care, and information on monitoring and improving quality. Key points to note were as follows:

- A new performance dashboard was being implemented.
- The figures presented were subject to a built-in reporting delay to allow for data analysis and were therefore not fully up to date.
- At the end quarter 2 the waits for review that were over a 24-month period were still an area of risk hadn't got better or worse. Review team capacity had been increased but the number of cases requiring review had also risen.
- Vacancies among Social Workers and other Social Care practitioners were noted, with recruitment and retention challenges recognised as a sector-wide issue. Improvements to HR arrangements, included the appointment of a dedicated

Human Resources Business Partner. Work was underway on a workforce plan covering recruitment and retention. A Social Care Academy built upon apprenticeship programmes and university partnerships. A head of the academy was now in place.

- Positive performance included a reduction in discharges to care homes.
- Overall waiting times benchmarked well across the East Midlands.
- The bespoke Quality Assurance Framework provided a mixture of reporting and allowed for interrogation of practice.
- Providers were rigorously assessed against service specification standards and underwent due diligence before contracting. A regular internal reporting regime monitored KPIs, and intelligence from multiple sources was used to risk-manage providers.
- Regarding CQC ratings, an improvement had been made in relation to ranking across the East Midlands.
- Next steps included developing a more consistent methodology for Quality Assurance, risk and complaint management would be among the areas for analysis and feedback was a key driver.
- New streams incorporated the Leading Performance Initiative which covered psychology motivation, using data and Ethical leadership and social justice.
- There would be a significant piece of work on Diversity and Inclusion which would involve a lived experience forum and co-production. A maturity matrix would be developed along with Diverse by Design tools.

In discussion with Members, the following was noted:

- Reviews were a significant priority and an explanation was given on how they were prioritised, such as monitoring last contacts.
- Benchmarking with other local authorities continued.
- For performance subgroups, figures would be clarified on specific abuse categories.
- The item could come back to scrutiny to review trajectories.
- Early warning indicators included staff feedback, social work engagement surveys, and workforce metrics such as lone working and absence levels to identify stress factors, with only a small number of reportable instances identified.
- There was a strong managerial focus within the organisation, with an opportunity to further develop leadership by strengthening motivation, promoting a values-based approach, and aligning this with a broad range of skills.
- Members noted the need to measure effectiveness, improve consistency in the use of quality markers, and establish a baseline to assess future results.
- Regarding recruitment, there was an expanded establishment, including both qualified social workers and social care practitioners, but there was a need to better understand retention. A report would be going to the

Overview Select Scrutiny Committee on recruitment. Members noted that it would be useful for details to come back to ASC Scrutiny.

- There was a need to connect with schools and education providers to promote social work careers locally, many training in the city come from elsewhere and were likely to leave.
- Members suggested inviting the new Head of Academy to attend ASC Scrutiny, once established within the role and this invite could also include members of the Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission.
- Members suggested consideration of supporting career changers and diverse career backgrounds, while also raising profile through wider promotion to match other career options.

Councillors Orton and Joannou left the meeting during the consideration of this item.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) For the commission to receive a hyperlink to view the dashboard next time the item comes to scrutiny.
- 3) For the Assistant City Mayor Cllr Dawood and any interested parties to meet with the board and officers to consider challenges around definitions of abuse relating to demographics and population movement.
- 4) For the commission to receive the current figures on those awaiting a review.
- 5) For the item to come back to ASC scrutiny.
- 6) To invite the new Head of Academy to attend ASC Scrutiny, once established within the role. For the invitation to also include the Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission members.

163. REABLEMENT PROVIDER SERVICE INSPECTION - VERBAL UPDATE

The Assistant City Mayor gave an introduction to the item noting there had been many changes since the previous inspection. The work of the managers was commended with positive results were being seen.

The Director of Adult Social Care and Safeguarding explained that the framework was different to the CQC for Local Authority Assessment. Five domains were included, four of which had received a rating of 'outstanding' and one had been rated 'good'. One area rated was 'Well Led' and a score of above 90% had been achieved.

The latest CQC feedback included praise of staff and service leadership had been found to be exceptional and distinctive.

The work of the Head of Service and his management team was noted

together with the efforts of front-line staff.

The Chair asked acknowledged this was a good report and gave thanks. It was requested that the item return to scrutiny as the report is published.

AGREED:

- 1) That the update be noted.
- 2) There was a request to bring the item back to scrutiny

164. SELF-NEGLECT AND SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE: AN OVERVIEW

The Director of Adult Social Care and Safeguarding submitted a report providing the ASC Scrutiny Commission with an overview of the issues relating to self-neglect, from the perspective of Adult Social Care.

The following was noted:

- The report drew on the challenging and tragic circumstances and learning from reviews.
- Mental Capacity assessments could determine the legal options of professionals for intervention.
- Adult Social Care could be challenged as to inaction, however, there was not always a legal route to act without consent and cooperation.
- Two examples were set out in the slides as attached with the agenda.

In discussion with Members, the following was noted:

- The approach had moved on from using a vulnerable adults risk management framework into safeguarding adults procedures. Increased self-neglect training had drawn in examples, and workshops had been undertaken. Multi-agency work was in place and had been strengthened by pulling it into the safeguarding process.
- In terms of benchmarking, it was important to consider who to look at. There was a need to look at what was being aimed for if data was benchmarked. Numbers didn't always demonstrate if work was effective.
- It could be considered as to how to identify and report issues in different communities.
- In terms of campaigning, the nature of self-neglect meant that people did not engage, therefore, persistence and consistency were needed.
- In terms of how Leicester compared to the national picture, themes were consistent both nationally and locally. Section 42 of the report looked at enquiries taken at an individual level, and the Safeguarding Adults Review was covered in Section 44. A small proportion of around 5-6% were situations which required a review. It was very complex, and it was difficult to maintain consistency, this was often due to a lack of engagement.

- Locally, training, development and learning were supported. Self-neglect was a theme in the safeguarding process, and it was checked as to whether the data was moving in the right direction and areas that had been weaknesses were addressed.
- The possibility of an information campaign on the issue was discussed. It was suggested that it would need to remain a partnership issue. It was added that much of this was done with government money, but there were pathways through safeguarding information.
- In response to a query on how front-line staff were supported, it was explained that staff were supported through looking at resources and sharing learning on mental capacity and understanding. The guidance was new, but the process was consolidating existing practices. Additionally, a recruitment process was under way for a Safeguarding Adults Practice Lead, so there would be a dedicated staff member whose role was safeguarding practice.
- In response to a query on whether there was a threshold on where intervention appeared necessary, it was explained that mental capacity was not binary, so the issue was more complex than just a threshold. It was important to recognise that people had a right to make decisions about their lives.

AGREED:

- 1) That the update be noted.
- 2) That comments made by members of this commission to be taken into account by the lead officers.
- 3) To be considered as to how to identify and report issues in different communities.
- 4) That consideration be given to an information campaign.

165. WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair reminded Members that should there be any items they wish to be considered for the work programme then to share these with her and the governance officer.

166. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 19:50