



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
ADULT SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: THURSDAY, 9 JANUARY 2025 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor March (Chair)
Councillor Cole (Vice Chair)

Councillor Kaur Saini
Councillor O'Neill

Councillor Singh Sangha

Councillor Orton
Councillor Sahu

In Attendance

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93. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Joannou.

94. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillor March declared she had a conflict of interest with the items relating to cuts in Council Tax support.

95. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED:

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 14th November 2024 were confirmed as a correct record.

96. CHAIRS ANNOUCEMENTS

The Chair thanked Councillor Russell for all of her excellent work and support as Executive Member to the Commission.

97. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer noted than none had been received.

98. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer noted than none had been received.

99. DRAFT GENERAL REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2025/26

The Director of Finance submitted a report detailing the proposed Revenue Budget and Capital Programme for 2025/26.

The Head of Finance gave an overview of the report, key points to note were as follows:

- The medium-term financial outlook is the most severe we have ever known. Like many authorities, Leicester City Council faces increasing difficulties in being able to balance our budget. Some authorities had already reached this position and been forced to issue a formal report under section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.
- Social Care has had to pay its share of cost savings and reducing scope to reduce pressures not currently met by previous years grants. Leicester City Council have been fortunate to have reserve funds to support the gap.
- Following the Chancellors announcement in October there may be additional funds available for the Adult Social Sector.
- The Council had already made substantial cost savings since 2010/11 during the decade of austerity. These actions have helped the Council to balance the budget and remove the worry of Section 114.
- A strategy was developed to implement revised budget projections:
 - Strand One – Releasing one off monies of £110m to buy time.
 - Strand Two – Reductions of £13m in the approved Capital Programme, which will reduce the borrowing required.
 - Strand Three – Embark on an ambitious programme to sell property, with the aim of securing an additional £80m of one off monies.
 - Strand Four – Continue to take steps to constrain growth in those statutory services that are under demand led pressure in Social Care Services and Homelessness.
 - Strand Five – make ongoing savings to the revenue budget of £20m per year.
- If successful, the implementation of the strategy would result in the revised budget projections of, £46.7m in 2025/25 and rises to £90m in 2027/28.
- A Council Tax increase of £2.4m will go to Full Council.
- The next 3 years budget is balanced as shown in the report. With the strategy comes risk, which has been identified under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003.

In response to questions and comments from Members, it was noted that:

- The phenomenal work of the Adult Social Care team, moving to a strength based approach through Scrutiny and work together over the last 3 years has stopped the Council facing a significant worse stance.
- Specific details haven't been named yet on which surplus properties that aren't producing any costs will be sold in the Capital Programme Budget.
- The cost increase in Council Tax has already been factored and the report will go to Full Council on 16th January.
- The report didn't included Inequality Impact Assessments for Care Leavers. A line would be added in section 15.3 of the report t included Care Leavers in to the Councils Protected Characteristics.

AGREED:

1. The Commission noted the report.
2. Section 15.3 of the budget report will be updated for Care Leaver to be included in the Councils Protected Characteristics.
3. An update on supported living will be presented at the next meeting.
4. Members to be updated once properties which are determined to be sold under the Capital Programme have been decided.

100. ADULT SOCIAL CARE COST MITIGATION PROGRAMME

The Deputy City Mayor for Social Care, Health and Community Safety introduced the item, highlighting the efforts of both senior and front-line staff and the complexity of the budget. Work was now being undertaken on a new level to meet the needs of people requiring support, whilst addressing the financial challenges.

The Director for Adult Social Care Commissioning submitted a report providing the commission with an overview of the development and progress of the Adult Social Cost Mitigation Programme. Key points noted were:

- The focus of the report was on current project work taking place.
- Adult Social Care had embarked on work with Ernst & Young in the Summer of 2023.
- Considerations on infrastructure and routes to Lead Members had been made.
- A positive response had been received throughout the department.
- An intensive work programme had ensued to support an Early Action and Prevention model.
- There had been an emphasis on reducing cost pressures.
- Initiatives including Leading Better Lives had moved forward.
- A robust methodology had now been developed for Adult Social Care.

- Workstreams were as follows:
 1. To reduce the costs of care, improve efficiency and examine improvement opportunities.
 2. To reduce new entrants and manage demand.
 3. To improve efficiency with Adult Social Care.
 4. To emphasise partnership working.
- The lens was on delivering to people's requirements, maintaining independence and appropriate costing.
- A Transport Sequencing project had gained regional interest.
- The programme had been presented to the City Mayor and the Executive for consideration. This confirmed that the programme was on track concerning commissioning. Recommendations included examination of opportunities for cost mitigation.
- It was noted that Leicester was not an affluent city, yet there remains a statutory duty to provide social care. Key challenges were identified, including the need to address underlying route issues. Programme delivery commenced in November 2023 and it was acknowledged that a completely new way of working had been introduced.
- A delivery group was established, meeting fortnightly to discuss matters concerning deliverance and project progress.
- Outcomes for people requiring support were of key focus with projects being reviewed to ensure the best results.
- The programme enabled consideration of resources, ensuring that these were targeted to make a difference.
- People requiring Adult Social Care support often came with complex needs and individual circumstances.
- Children aging out of SEND care often transitioned into Adult Social Care.
- It was noted that increased life expectancy, combined with people living longer but in ill health had contributed to growing pressures on Social Care Services.,
- There was considerable cross-departmental work, with the mitigation programme running alongside Adult Social Care. A holistic approach had been encouraged.
- The Outcome Support Sequence considered individual capabilities in order to form the appropriate care package.
- The shared care record resulted in quicker access to information.
- Observations had taken place to ensure cost efficiency.
- Positive outcomes had included an upward revision to expected income. This was due to grant income being higher than expected and the joint-funded care package income.
- Forecasting based on the last three years of the Adult Social Care budget have proved useful, allowing for contingency.

Questions and comments were welcomed by the Chair and responses to note were:

- The cost of engaging Ernst & Young was £80k. The work concluded in November 2023.

- Regarding transport sequencing for children, priorities were examined across the social care department, children were included in this. Leicester did not have separate departments for Adult and Children's Social Care, unlike other local authorities. The Strategic Director of Social Care and Education discussed complexities arising with the children's aspect and explained that learning was ongoing.
- Extended life expectancy was cited as a reason for the reduced budget target for care packages. Also, figures showed a better delivery had been achieved than what had been expected. It remained that there was a statutory duty of care meaning that those in need would receive the support required.
- Considerable work had taken place examining care options through family and community where appropriate, rather than automatically offering care packages. A close working relationship with the NHS helped to facilitate this. This in turn allowed for different targets and could lead to annual financial increases.
- It was anticipated that the following three years would see increasing complexity of needs. Levels of support for deprived communities would be a key focus. The emphasis would be on early preventative action.
- Smart spending was expected to pay dividends.
- It would be important to ensure that cross services were aligned.
- The pathway for children coming to Adult Social Care was important.
- Discussions amongst the committee on the use of the phrase 'leavers' and it was agreed that this language could be explored further.
- Regarding the observation work carried out, it was clarified that this had been actioned with sensitivity and had not caused disruption. The focus had generally been on learning disabilities and good relationships had been established with providers. Findings had shown that there could be more effective ways of working. This was being fed back to providers. Digital elements could come into use, but this would not lead to the elimination of personal care.

Agreed:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That an item on loneliness be added to the Work Programme.
- 3) An item on increasing complexity of needs be added to the Work Programme.
- 4) An item on SEND children transitioning to Adult Social Care be added to the Work Programme.
- 5) Consideration of language to take place, in particular to the use of the phrase 'leavers' when referring to SEND children aging out of the children's social care phase.

101. SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE WHO SELF-FUND THEIR SOCIAL CARE

The Director of Social Care and Safeguarding submitted a report to give the commission an overview on how Adult Social Care provides support for people who self-fund their care.

It was noted that:

- A person with assets of more than £23,250 is regarded as a self-funder of their care and support.
- What constitutes an asset depends on the setting of care required, this could be residential or non-residential. This may include savings, stocks or shares and property. The value of a person's home is not considered an asset where they are receiving community-based support at home.
- Self-funders have the right to request needs assessments and be provided with an assessment report.
- The Local Authority has the power to charge for support at full cost and to charge an arrangement fee, when support is provided and arrangements are made on peoples behalf, and they are self-funders.
- Self-funders have the right to access the universal support a Local Authority provides under the Care Act, including information, advice and guidance, preventative support and support that might promote general wellbeing.
- If a person's assets were to approach the threshold of £23,250, they could approach the Local Authority for an assessment, to determine their eligibility for care and support and a financial assessment to determine what contributions the Local Authority could provide for support arrangements.
- It is difficult to state accurately how many people do self-fund in Leicester City. National Estimates state between 18-23% of people who require Adult Social Care in Leicester may be able to self-fund their care.
- It is in the Council's interests to ensure that people's independence is maximised, as this promotes wellbeing and reduces the need for people to use their assets to pay for care that could have been avoided. Therefore, self-funders have full access to crisis response services and reablement, which are provided at no cost to anyone requiring this support, including people who would self-fund their longer-term care.
- Leicester City Council does not currently charge for support in arranging a person's care, where it is being self-funded.
- The Council is currently making arrangements for 53 self-funding individuals. In which 21 receiving non-residential care and 32 people receiving residential care.
- A person who has self-funded an independently chosen care home is likely to be paying a higher weekly rate that a person placed by a Local Authority.
- The Council may not agree to fund the care that is currently in place for a person on a self-funding basis. Where a person is already living in a care home, this could present a challenge and would require exploring alternative settings, either in the community or in a less expensive care home that adequately meets an individual's needs. This can be

upsetting for individuals and families, who, understandably, do not wish to move from their current home. Each year, the Council will work with a small number of individuals faced with this situation.

- In 2023/24 275 people were newly admitted into Adult Social Care. 20 of these people were new admissions into Council funded care due to their savings dropping below the threshold., but were already in care at the point of approaching the Council.

In response to questions and comments from Members, it was noted that:

- The structure on how assets are reviewed for people self-funding care in the community does not include the house they or their family currently live. The Charging Framework is a national policy and should be followed at a local level.
- When an individual is already in a care placement and they drop below the threshold to receive state funded care, it is reasonable to consider moving them to a lesser costing facility that still meets the required care needs. This would be subject to careful assessment including of any wellbeing impact. People who may move would still have a choice and support in negotiating with providers across the City or wider, to support with their care move. This scenario affects only a very small number of people each year.

AGREED:

1. That Members note the report.
2. Health Watch Leicester to circulate flyer with details of support available for Members and the wider Council.
3. Any further questions be sent over to the Director of Adult Social Care and Safeguarding.

102. CQC ASSESSMENT UPDATE

The Strategic Director of Social Care and Education provided a verbal update on the Care Quality Commission Assessment progress.

There a been a process over last few weeks of submitting evidence to the Care Commission.

Key points noted:

- A detailed presentation had taken place to aid the commission in understanding the key issues for Leicester.
- The commission would be joining in the first week of February 2025.
- There would be a range of activity including, interviews and focus groups.
- Immediate feedback was not expected, gradings and comments would come later.
- This marked the first occasion in which the Care Quality Commission would be involved in such a way.
- The Strategic Director of Social Care and Education welcomed this direction

and looked to the resulting insights for the future.

- Healthwatch advised that they had been approached for feedback.

Agreed:

- 1) That the report be noted.

103. 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 senior governance officer.

It was noted that complex needs of young people with SEND entering Adult Social Care.

104. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

With there being no further business, the meeting closed at 6.41pm.