

Minutes of a meeting of the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Monday, 6 June 2022.

PRESENT

Mr. T. J. Richardson CC (in the Chair)

Mrs. L. Broadley CC
Mr. B. Champion CC
Mrs. H. J. Fryer CC

Mr. J. Miah CC
Mr. J. Morgan CC

In attendance

Mrs. C. M. Radford CC – Cabinet Lead Member for Adults and Communities

1. Appointment of Chairman.

RESOLVED:

That Mr. T. J. Richardson CC be appointed Chairman for the period ending with the date of the Annual Meeting of the County Council in 2023.

2. Election of Deputy Chairman.

RESOLVED:

That Mr. N. Chapman CC be elected Deputy Chairman for the period ending with the date of the Annual Meeting of the County Council in 2023.

3. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2022 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

4. Question Time.

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 34.

5. Questions asked by members under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

6. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

7. Declarations of interest.

The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to declare any interest in respect of items on the agenda for the meeting.

No declarations were made.

8. Declarations of the Party Whip in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16.

There were no declarations of the party whip.

9. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 35.

The Chief Executive reported that no petitions had been received under Standing Order 35.

10. Consultation on Draft Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Carers Strategy 2022-2025.

The Committee considered a joint report of the Directors of Adults and Communities, Children and Family Services and Public Health, the purpose of which was to advise on the outcomes of an engagement exercise and invite comments on the draft joint Leicestershire, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) Carers Strategy 2022 – 2025, as part of the formal consultation process. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 10', is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed Mr. J. Morgan CC, in his capacity as Chairman of the Council's Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and Mrs. H. Fryer CC, in her capacity as the Chairman of the Council's Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to the meeting for this item.

Arising from discussion the following points were made:

- (i) Members felt that more needed to be done to identify carers early and raise awareness of the support services available across the County. Concern was raised over the level of reliance on GPs and hospitals to identify carers and the limited action that was taken in this regard. In response to questions raised, the following points were confirmed:
 - a. Given the front line service they provided, GPs had the principal duty to identify and register people who were carers. Once registered, the person identified would go on to receive assessments of their caring responsibilities from both Primary Care and Adult Social Care to assess types and level of need.
 - b. A key area of the Strategy partners would be focusing on was improving the quality of and access to the information carers needed. Information was already publicised in a number of ways – outside of the Health System this included in Council buildings and on its websites. However, it was recognised that there were more opportunities, such as through the Council's library and education services, to be explored. The new Carers' Support Service was expected to be a key part of getting information out more widely.

- c. Feedback previously received from carers had suggested that the best place to publicise information and advice for carers was through GP surgeries/Primary Care services. Though it was acknowledged that the changes that had occurred over the last few years (e.g. less physical visits taking place in GP surgeries) would need to be taken into account going forward. There would be an opportunity for the Council to influence health related actions via the local Carers' Delivery Group.
 - d. Regarding whether the Council was able to access carer registration details stored on Health managed databases to support with the identification of carers and coordination of services, it was stated that due to data protection the Council could only access personal information on a 'need to know' basis. However, including a 'carers flag' on the LLR Shared Care Record was something that would be considered with NHS colleagues developing the Record.
- (ii) Members suggested the following ways to promote information for carers and to help those with caring responsibilities recognise themselves as carers:
 - a. By working with District Councils through the services they delivered.
 - b. Articles could be included in each Leicestershire Matters newsletter distributed to every residents in the County. Hangers on dustbins could also include the same information.
 - c. County Councillors to be kept informed about the support available to discuss with their constituents. For example, provide them with leaflets to handout at community social group meetings.
 - d. Information should be kept simple and advice on completing forms, that could often be long and complex, could be usefully provided.
- (iii) The physical and mental strain on people (who may be challenged by their own health problems) caring for family members was highlighted. It was commented that such people were integral to supporting the NHS and the economy. Members were reassured that improving support for such people would be a key area of focus. It was acknowledged that many were carers because they wanted to care for their loved ones, but the right support needed to be put in place to help them remain as carers. A key issue was that many people also worked alongside their caring duties so promotion of work life balance and the support available through the private sector/businesses was an avenue that would be explored. Members noted that the proposed contract for the new Carers' Support Service also factored in the need to attract inward investment into the County to support such carers.
- (iv) In reference to who the Strategy was for, it was suggested that those suffering from cognitive decline be specifically referenced as a cohort that carers provided support for. It was felt that whilst this was a condition that a number of the cohorts already referenced within the Strategy may experience (such as those living with Mental Health or Substance Misuse needs), there were other groups such as older people that also suffered from this condition who might not identify with the existing references.
- (v) In response to a question raised around how the outcomes of the engagement event undertaken in 2021 had been used to inform the draft Strategy, the Director advised that overall, the event had confirmed the priorities identified within the

draft Strategy to be accurate. However, it had highlighted that more focus was needed to make improvements around information and advice and promoting the use of digital options available (in line with the Department's Delivering Wellbeing and Opportunity in Leicestershire Strategy and direction being taken nationally).

- (vi) Members were further advised that young carers had not wanted their own priority which had been taken into account. However, given that many aspects of the Strategy related to young carers efforts had been made to ensure this cohort was sufficiently referenced throughout. Mrs Fryer CC commented that the disruptions to the education system during the pandemic may have had an effect on the number of young carers being identified which was something the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be keeping under review.
- (vii) It was commented that schools were able to offer additional support to children with a recognised health condition such as by providing extra equipment or time to complete exams. It was suggested there was potential to match the offer for young carers in education.
- (viii) In terms of the options to improve the support package available to carers a Member suggested that with smart phones being commonly used, having an app specifically designed for Leicestershire for people to download might be an effective and accessible way for information and advice to be provided all in one place. Having a webmail facility attached to the Customer Service Centre might also be helpful for answering any queries. A number of other Members highlighted that whilst digital technology could be useful for some not everyone could work a smart phone so there needed to be a range of options available.
- (ix) There were mixed views on whether the target audiences to engage with on the Strategy should be gender focussed given the large majority of respondents to the engagement undertaken in 2021 were female. A number of Members felt that many people, particularly men, may not identify themselves as carers so the consultation needed to be as inclusive as possible to encourage a greater response.
- (x) The Committee thanked the Director for the report and acknowledged that delivering the Strategy relied on each partner delivering their areas of responsibility. It was requested that Members be updated as appropriate on progress with the new Carers Support Service for Leicestershire contract.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Director be requested to consider the comments now raised regarding the draft refreshed LLR Carers' Strategy 2022-2025 and action plan as part of the formal consultation process.
- (b) That Members be updated as appropriate on progress with the new Carers Support Service for Leicestershire contract.

11. Progress Update on the Development of the Archives, Collections and Learning Hub.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities which provided an update on work undertaken on the development of the Archives, Collections and Learning Hub, following a pause in activity due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The report

set out information on proposed next steps and included indicative timelines for delivery. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 11', is filed with these minutes.

[Mr. J. Morgan CC left the meeting at this point and did not return to the meeting.]

At this point of the meeting, Mrs. H. Fryer CC declared a non-registerable interest in this item as the Collections Resource Centre was currently situated in Barrow upon Soar, which was one of the electoral divisions she represented.

Arising from discussion the following points were raised:

- (i) Members felt that implementing the preferred 'Option C' as a priority would be key to the preservation and security of the archives. A Member commented on their recent visits to the existing Archives and Collections sites managed by the County Council where it was evident that storage conditions needed improving. The risk of losing valuable items unable to be replaced and the keenness of the dedicated staff working at the sites to progress the proposals were highlighted. In response to a question raised the Director confirmed that the design stage would be crucial to understanding the affordability and the timescales for delivery of the project.
- (ii) It was questioned, given the legal duties associated with maintaining the archives, what the options were if capital funding could not be allocated, and the project could not be progressed. In response it was acknowledged that such a situation would risk the Council's Museum and archive accreditation being renewed. However, the reliance on the Capital Programme, which was under significant pressure, to fund the project meant there were other priorities such as around Highways and Schools that would also need to be considered. Members emphasised the need to ensure any savings identified by the proposals were clearly outlined against the costs when presenting the case to inform future decisions.
- (iii) A member commented that residents in the electoral divisions they represented (Oadby and Wigston) had previously expressed disappointment there would no longer be a Record Office in Wigston. In response to a concern raised regarding ensuring accessibility for all local residents, the Director acknowledged that unfortunately there would be disappointment for some residents who had become familiar with the current location. However, the new development was expected to make the archives and collections accessible to more people across the whole County. Assurance was provided that a full travel plan would be drawn up at the design stage of the development and a reduction in parking spaces on the County Hall site was expected to be minimal.
- (iv) The Committee confirmed its support for the preferred 'Option C' and requested that officers and the Cabinet Lead Member for Adults and Communities seek delivery of the proposals as quickly as possible.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the proposed next steps be welcomed and the preferred 'Option C' be supported.
- (b) That officers and the Cabinet Lead Member for Adults and Communities be requested to seek delivery of the proposals as quickly as possible.

12. Update on the Social Care Reform Programme.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities, the purpose of which was to inform Committee members on the work that was underway to prepare for the Social Care Reform Programme set out in a previous report to the Committee in January 2022. A presentation that included more details on the proposed Assurance by the Care Quality Commission of Local Authority Adult Social Care Provision (one of the key areas of the reforms) was also given as part of this item. Copies of the report marked 'Agenda Item 12' and slides presented, are filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion the following points were noted:

- (i) The Government planned to introduce a new £86,000 cap on the amount anyone in England would spend on their personal care over their lifetime. Concern was raised about the large financial impact this was expected to have on the Council. It was questioned, given the cap was due to be introduced as soon as October 2023, when the full impact was likely to be known. The Director advised that given the excessive costs expected, a largescale exercise (involving support from various organisations such as Newton Europe) was underway to firm up the figures to factor into the Council's budgeting process. Many factors (such as the total assets held by each person who funded their own care) were unknown which added a level of complexity. However, current predictions suggested the Reform Programme was likely to cost the Council in the region of £20-60m extra a year (over a 10-year period). It was hoped that further details would be available to present to the Committee at its next meeting.
- (ii) There were a number of different timelines for the areas of work (set out across the three Government White Papers to reform Adult Social Care) to be completed. The Director undertook to include a summary of key milestones of the Reform Programme in a future update to the Committee.
- (iii) The Committee noted the substantial amount of work the Reform Programme was expected to have on the Council and welcomed future updates. Given the effect the Reform Programme would have on local residents it was expected that all Members would need to be kept updated and offer their support at the appropriate stages.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That report on the work underway to prepare for the Adult Social Care Reforms be noted.
- (b) That a summary of key milestones of the Adult Social Care Reform Programme be included in a future update to the Committee.

13. Peer Review of the Customer Services Centre.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities which provided an update on a peer review of the Customer Services Centre (CSC) managed and operated by Corporate Resources (Tier 1) and the Adults and Communities Department (Tier 2) conducted by a team led by the Corporate Director of People at Nottingham City Council on 2 March 2022. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 13', is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion the following points were made:

- (i) Members suggested that extending the opening hours of the CSC would enable the Council to offer a greater choice of working patterns to those (such as people with young children) applying to work at the CSC, which could help improve recruitment and retention. The Director confirmed this was something that was being considered by the Department and explored in other parts of the Council. For example, a trial had recently taken place in the Council's ICT Department to test internal demand.
- (ii) The Committee welcomed the report and confirmed its support for the next steps proposed. It was felt that the potential to merge the two tiers of the Customer Service Centre, enabling the aspects relating to adult social care to be managed under one structure, would be particularly beneficial to provide a more streamlined and personal response for service users.

RESOLVED:

That the findings of the Peer Review of the Customer Service Centre be noted and the proposals resulting from it be supported.

14. Learning Disability Employment Performance Update.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities which provided an update (as previously requested by the Committee) on the numbers of people with learning disabilities known to the County Council who were in employment, and which advised on the emerging feasibility work being undertaken to develop more supported employment opportunities. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 14', is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion the following points were made:

- (i) In response to a question raised highlighting the importance of working with people early on their lives, particularly those transitioning from Children's to Adult's services, the Director confirmed that the Council itself actively employed people with Learning Disabilities (LD). In terms of the recent re-procurement of Community Life Choices (CLC) Services, Members noted that more service providers who were interested in assisting service users to find employment had been commissioned and a number of other providers had been exploring the potential to provide training for small to medium enterprises (SMEs) to help increase the job options available for people with LD.
- (ii) Members were pleased to see that employment rates for adults with an LD in Leicestershire were amongst the highest in the Country. It was questioned what action was being taken to capitalise on the positive work that was being undertaken and to help increase the rates across the Country. The Director stated that the Department had been asked to share its experiences through the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) network and the service providers interested in training people that own SMEs commissioned as part of the CLC Services Framework had been given the opportunity to showcase their ideas. Members noted that whilst positive results were being achieved, the Department strived to do better and was keen to learn from more independent providers to

broaden the opportunities available. Receiving feedback from people using the services available was another important aspect where learning was concerned.

- (iii) Members felt the national position of employment rates for people with LD in Leicestershire, which was exemplary, should be reflected in the regular reports on the Department's performance. Whilst it was positive to hear the Department was striving to do better, Members highlighted the importance of realising the successes being achieved and the great job that the staff in the Department were doing to support people with LD to find employment.
- (iv) In response to comments raised by a Member, officers undertook to look into the reasons for people with LD not actively seeking work to ensure enough support was being given to the proportion of people who were able to actively seek work.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Learning Disability Employment Performance Update be welcomed.
- (b) That the Director be requested to look into the reasons for people with Learning Disabilities not actively seeking work to ensure enough support was being given to the proportion of people who are able to actively seek work.

15. Provisional Performance Report 2021/22.

The Committee considered a joint report of the Chief Executive and the Director of Adults and Communities which presented an update of the Adults and Communities Department's (provisional) performance for the year 2021/22. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 15', is filed with these minutes.

[Mrs. C. M. Radford CC left the meeting at this point and did not return to the meeting.]

Arising from discussion the following points were raised:

- (i) It was suggested that knowing the reasons people made 'library website visits' was important as a person may have only logged in to check basic information (such as opening times) which perhaps should not be classed as a visit. In response to the comments raised, the Director undertook to consider including in future performance reports to the Committee a breakdown of the figures for library visits to show how many were website visits and whether information to clarify the reasons for people visiting the website could also be included.
- (ii) There were a number of measures where the Department was either performing close to the target or performing above the national average but were rated as 'red'. For example, the percentages of people with LD in employment and people with LD in settled accommodation. In response to comments raised, Members were reminded that the targets were set in line with comments previously raised by the Committee and the current targets had been set 12 months ago at a time when there were still uncertainties around the Covid-19 pandemic situation. Members felt that whilst an element of setting the targets should be based on the Department's aspirations, it was also important that these were realistically achievable. It was agreed that factoring in the Department's position against the national or regional context to future performance dashboards would be useful to provide a fuller picture.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the update of the Adults and Communities Department's (provisional) performance for the year 2021/22 be noted.
- (b) That the Director be requested to consider including in future performance reports to the Committee a breakdown of the figures for library visits to show how many were website visits and whether information to clarify the reasons for people visiting the website could also be included.
- (c) That the Director be requested to consider including further information in future performance dashboards presented to the Committee as part of regular performance reporting to show how the Department's performance compares against national or regional benchmarking.

16. Date of next meeting.

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 5 September 2022 at 2.00pm.

2.00 – 4.33pm
6 June 2022

CHAIRMAN