



Rutland County Council

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Minutes of the **JOINT MEETING of the ADULTS AND HEALTH AND CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEES** held virtually via Zoom on Wednesday, 28th April, 2021 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT:

Mrs S Harvey (Chair)	Mr I Razzell
Mr P Ainsley	Miss G Waller
Mr N Begy	
Mr K Bool	
Mrs J Fox	

OFFICERS PRESENT:

Mr S Della Rocca	Strategic Director for Finance
Mr A Merry	Finance Manager
Mrs D Godfrey	Director of Children's Services
Mr J Morley	Director of Adult Social Care and Health
Mrs J Morley	Governance Officer

IN

ATTENDANCE:

Mr A Walters	Portfolio Holder for Safeguarding – Adults, Public Health, Health Commissioning & Community Safety
Mr D Wilby	Portfolio Holder for Children's Services and Education.
Mr O Hemsley	Leader and Portfolio Holder for Rutland One Public Estate & Growth, Tourism & Economic Development, Communications, Resources (other than finance) and Property
Mr G Brown	Councillor

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllrs Burrows, Cross and Webb.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair declared an interest in respect of item 5, Appendix B, CHI-015 as she was the Treasurer for the Rutland Conquerors basketball team. Councillor Harvey confirmed that when it came to that item she would facilitate the debate but not take part in any discussion on it.

3 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

No petitions, deputations or questions had been received.

4 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS

No questions with notice had been received from Members.

5 BUDGET SAVINGS 21/22

Report No.61/2021 was received from the Strategic Director for Resources.

Mr Della Rocca, the Strategic Director for Resources introduced the report the purpose of which was to present some short term savings options for Members to consider and the direction of travel on some long term options for Members to endorse.

During the discussion the following points were noted:

- A budget had been approved at February Council which had a £2.4m gap. This gap would be propped up by use of general funds and earmarked reserves but this was not good practice and could not be done indefinitely. Officers had therefore started a process and had identified potential savings that could initially reduce the gap by £1m, and in the longer term by £2.4m.
- The gap would continue to grow with likely further pressures on the budget and Mr Della Rocca stated that he wanted every bit of spare capacity that officers had to be used to look at ways of further reducing costs.
- Cabinet and Council would be asked for extra resource to bring in external support but only if there was enough officer capacity to lead and manage that extra support. The Senior Management Team (SMT) would continue to consider how projects could be accelerated.
- Short-term cost saving proposals identified by Officers were detailed in Appendix B
- CHI-007 Children's Social Care Professional Fees: Mrs Godfrey, Director for Children's Services, confirmed that by getting better at demand forecasting, savings could be made in this area as when services were bought in bulk there was a risk that they wouldn't be used.
- CHI-010 Early Intervention Services: The costs and savings outlined here related to the fact that Jules House remained closed. There would still be a budget for the offer.
- Cllr Waller suggested, and Cllr Ainsley was in agreement, that in light of the potential savings and the current arrangements that were in place to support young people that a full closure of Jules House be expedited. Mrs Godfrey stated that there were no current plans to re-open Jules House and that work on a review, which would look at delivery of youth services in a different way and the way that had been embraced during the pandemic, had already started.
- CHI-015 Early Intervention Aiming High Positive Activities Programme: The Council had a statutory obligation to provide short breaks for children and carers but there was no prescribed offer. The savings did not relate to overnight respite breaks but instead to the residential stays included as part of positive experiences

and activities. These were very expensive and so would be reduced from 3 a year to 1 a year.

- ADU-010: HSC Protocol Training. The costs in this category gave immediate savings as this was now defunct and had been transformed into different training.
- Mr Morley, Director for Adult Services, spoke of the new model of Integrated Care Services (ICS). RCC, in conjunction with health partners, had already been working preventatively and had become one of the most cost effective services in the Country. As such, there was potential for Rutland's Adult Social Care Services (ASC) to become a provider and increase revenue. However Mr Morley cautioned that this should be considered against the increasing pressures on the service and the likelihood that it was going to have to put together a 7 day a week service.
- The wait for the new Adult Social Care Bill had been so long and it had been delayed so often that it was difficult to speculate what would be in it and whether the legislation would add new financial burdens. Optimistically, Mr Morley hoped that there would be some radical new ideas and the funding to go with it.
- Mrs Godfrey felt that service users had embraced technology and new ways of working offering a valuable learning which could be translated into a different offer.
- More would be expected of the Council's partners in order to negate the need to escalate into Council services.
- Mrs Godfrey was confident of a 20k reduction in the universal offer which, although it may be delivered in a different way, would not impact on the service offered.
- There was no additional officer capacity to look at the saving proposals again but Mr Della Rocca emphasised that every proposal put forward was a decision for Members to make and that had he been able to make a decision on the proposals without reference to Members he would have already made them.
- Members had asked about comparisons of service levels with neighbouring Councils in order to judge whether the Rutland offer was, for example, a more than generous service that could offer further savings or whether relatively it offered less than other Councils. However there was little opportunity for officers to do the amount of comparison work required before the Cabinet and Council meetings on the budget proposals.
- PLA-023: Transport – Oakham Town Bus Scheme. There was a request that this was considered in conjunction with the Leicester Hospitals reconfiguration plan so that it joined up with transport for the hospital.
- The hardship fund paid for additional council tax support and an element of it was also given to CAB to support those experiencing wider hardships. The fund had not been used in the past three years so the monies had been retained in an earmarked reserve and these would be run down to meet any hardship needs that did arise.
- There were initial fears that the new Armed Forces Covenant would result in a substantial burden for the Council however the latest version suggested that there would be a nil effect but this would not be known until it was published which was likely to be in August.
- Members felt it was essential that the right staff were in the right place to undertake the strategic reviews which might mean spending upfront in order to make longer term savings.
- The Council contracted with the Rutland Care Village for an older people's day centre which, because of Covid, had been closed. The contract was coming up for review and officers were looking at it in a different way so that it could still meet needs of service users but also offer cost savings.

- Cllr Razzell asked that it be put on record that he trusted the officers and the recommendations that they had made and that they had his full support.
- Cllr Payne, Portfolio Holder for Finance, stated that the Council would be looking at how the list of strategic projects outlined in Appendix D would be resourced and that was why Mr Della Rocca had asked for the ability to spend up to £500k on bringing in external support if required.
- Cllr Fox thanked Mr Della Rocca and his team for the work done on the line by line exercise that Councillors had requested.

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The Chair closed the meeting at 8.34pm

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