



Rutland County Council

Catmose Oakham Rutland LE15 6HP
Telephone 01572 722577
Email democraticservices@rutland.gov.uk

Minutes of the **MEETING of the STRATEGIC OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Catmose, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6HP on Thursday, 8th February, 2024 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT Councillor R Ross (Chair)
Councillor L Stephenson (Vice Chair)
Councillor M Chatfield
Councillor K Corby
Councillor H Edwards
Councillor S Lambert
Councillor K Payne

APOLOGIES Councillor T Carr
Councillor R Powell
Councillor S Harvey
Peter French Diocesan Deputy Director of Education,
Dioceses of Peterborough

STATUTORY CO-OPTED MEMBERS – EDUCATION REPRESENTATIVES

PRESENT Andreas Menzies Roman Catholic Diocese

PORTFOLIO HOLDER PRESENT Councillor D Ellison Portfolio Holder for Adults and Health

OFFICERS PRESENT Kim Sorsky Strategic Director of Adults and Health
Kelly McAleese Adult Social Care Principal Social Worker and Quality Lead
Alison Morgan Head of Prevention and Assurance
Andrea Grinney Revenues and Benefits Manager
Jane Narey (Clerk) Scrutiny Officer

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES RECEIVED

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

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Councillor Lambert joined the meeting at 7.01 p.m.
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Apologies were received from Councillor Carr, Councillor Powell and Councillor Harvey, who was due to attend as Councillor Powell's representative. Apologies were also received from Peter French, the Education Representative.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Stephenson declared a non-pecuniary interest in that a relative had recently received the support of Adult Social Services and the MiCare team. There were no other declarations of interest.

3 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

No petitions, deputations or questions were received.

4 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS

No questions with notice with notice were received from Members.

5 NOTICES OF MOTION FROM MEMBERS

No notices of motion were received from Members.

6 CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE IN RELATION TO THE CALL-IN OF A DECISION

No call-ins were received.

7 CARE QUALITY COMMISSION (CQC) INSPECTION FRAMEWORK: PROGRESS UPDATE

A presentation was received from Kelly McAleese, Adult Social Care Principal Social Worker and Quality Lead and Alison Morgan, Head of Prevention and Assurance to give an update on the work being done to ensure CQC inspection readiness. During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- Two meetings had been held of the CQC Inspection Participation Group, which consisted of 11 members and was aimed at supporting the growth of Rutland's adult social care services.
- The inspection process was a challenge due to the amount of work involved but it was a useful experience as it gave staff an opportunity to showcase the good work being done within the service.
- Rutland was actively seeking to learn from the inspections of other local authorities and any comparable issues would be included in its work plan.
- Prices within the care home market increased by 48% last year and people paying for their own care needs i.e. self-funders were paying more for services than those people whose care was being paid for by the local authority i.e. state-funders.
- The service was reviewing other options e.g. Shared Lives Scheme, respite care, day care etc. to provide alternative services than that of a residential care home and this included keeping people at home but only when this would be the best option for the person concerned.
- Members were informed that the CQC wanted local authorities to be open and honest regarding their service provision and to identify and explain any gaps.

RESOLVED

That the Committee:

- a) **NOTED** the contents of the of the Quality Assurance: CQC Readiness presentation and the work being done.

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Andrea Grinney joined the meeting at 7.32 p.m.

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8 CHARGING FOR CARE AND SUPPORT POLICY

Report No. 21/2024 was received from Kim Sorsky, Strategic Director for Adults and Health. During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- A public consultation had been undertaken to inform the content of the final policy. The results of the public consultation were detailed in Appendix B of Report No. 20/2024.
- The 6 proposals identified would be presented to Council on the 25th March.
- The policy had been updated to make the process quicker and easier and would treat people as individuals rather than a 'one size fits all' process.
- Support would continue to be provided to people who were unable to complete the self-assessment process themselves.
- From April 2024, people would be invited to undertake an online financial assessment. This would be introduced slowly to enable officers to resolve any issues with the new IT system but a key performance indicator (KPI) would be set at 80% of financial assessments to be completed online. It is not envisaged that this target would be reached in 2024/25 but rather aimed for moving forward.
- Benchmarking had been undertaken for the proposed allowances including comparison with other local authorities. Some were set by the Department of Health or by the NAFAO (National Association of Financial Assessment Officer whilst others were calculated based on actual expenditure.
- Disability Related Expenditure (DRE) and allowances related to care and support provided in a home setting only. Some services would be free of charge e.g. reablement for up to 6 weeks but services would only be free if they were detailed as 'free of charge' in the Care Act.
- Top-ups were detailed in the Care Act which the Council must follow and applied to care home settings only. The Council was obliged to offer at least one placement that was affordable e.g. at our bed rates. If the person or their family wanted to choose a different care home and the charges were higher than our bed rate, then the family would need to meet the additional cost via a top-up. However, care homes accept the Council's bed rates for the majority of Council commission placements (approx. 85%).
- DRE rates, along with all other allowances/charges etc. were reviewed annually prior to the start of each new financial year. New rates would be considered in light of any changes to state benefits and the level of inflation and individuals would receive an annual review of their charges.
- The Committee Members stated that:
 - i. the take-up by applicants of the online forms process should be closely monitored as from April 2024
 - ii. the arrangements for people unable to use the online facility, as outlined in Proposal 1, should be more fully detailed in the narrative

- iii. the term 'exceptional circumstances', as outlined in Proposal 6, should be more fully detailed in the narrative.

RESOLVED

That the Committee:

- a) **NOTED** the contents of the Review of the Charging for Care and Support Policy, as set out in Report No. 20/2024.
- b) **PROVIDED** comments and views for Council to consider in the finalisation of the policy on the 25th March 2024.

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Councillor Ellison, Kim Sorsky, Kelly McAleese, Alison Morgan and Andrea Grinney left the meeting at 8.06 p.m.

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9 GROUP AND PANEL UPDATES

A. FLOODING

- Councillor Ross informed attendees that he and the Vice Chair had completed the 'PICK' Assessment form and this had identified the use of an Evidence Panel as the best method of scrutiny.
- Councillor Stephenson informed attendees that she and the Chair had met with the Chief Executive, the Strategic Director of Places and the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Environment and Communities on the 6th February 2024 to identify Scrutiny Committee's role in the flooding review.
- The briefing paper, published as supplementary agenda item 9a, had resulted from this meeting and outlined the next steps for the Scrutiny Committee.
- The broad scope of the Evidence Panel was detailed in paragraph 3 of the briefing.
- The Evidence Panel's focus would be on Rutland's residents and the community so would need to work with efficiency and pace.

RESOLVED

That the Committee:

- a) **APPROVED** the formation of a Flooding Evidence Panel with Councillor Lucy Stephenson as its Chair.
- b) **AGREED** the broad scope of the work as detailed in paragraph 3 of the briefing.
- c) **APPROVED** that the Chair of the panel would:
 - i. Email all non-executive members inviting volunteers to be part of the panel, clearly outlining the amount of work and the commitment that would be required by members.
 - ii. Arrange a meeting with the Portfolio Holder and relevant officers to produce a detailed scoping document for the panel.
 - iii. Arrange the first meeting of the panel to be held before the end of February 2024.

10 REVIEW OF THE WORK PLAN

The work plan and the list of proposed items were reviewed. During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- Councillor Ross proposed that 'Levelling Up Fund' should be added to the pending list so that the committee received an update in April/May 2024 and that 'Leisure' and 'Waste' should both be removed from the pending list as the committee had previously commented on both items.
- Councillor Ross also proposed that 'Safety on our Highways' should be removed from the pending list as the Portfolio Holder had confirmed that no new work would be undertaken regarding the issue of speeding.
- It was proposed that the Chair and Vice Chair raise the issue of 'Safety on our Highways' at their next meeting with the Leader and Cabinet members on the 20th February 2024 and discuss possible future involvement by the Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED

That the Committee:

- a) **AGREED** to add 'Levelling Up Fund' to the pending list for a detailed update to be provided in April/May 2024.
- b) **AGREED** that 'Leisure' and 'Waste' should both be removed from the pending list as the committee had previously commented on both items.
- c) **AGREED** that 'Safety on our Highways' should remain on the pending list as it covered more than just the issue of speeding.

11 ANY URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday, 21st March 2024 at 7.00 p.m. in the Council Chamber.

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The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.40 p.m.

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