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**Minutes of the meeting of the People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee, held at 9.30am on Thursday, 08 June 2023 in Committee Room 1, County Hall, Chelmsford.**

**Present:**

*County Councillors:*

Cllr Ray Gooding (Chairman)  
Cllr Marie Goldman  
Cllr Ian Grundy  
Cllr Carlo Guglielmi (Vice Chairman)  
Cllr Jeff Henry (substitute)  
Cllr Eddie Johnson  
Cllr Daniel Land  
Cllr Peter May (Vice Chairman)  
Cllr Ross Playle  
Cllr Pat Reid (substitute)  
Cllr Wendy Stamp  
Cllr Michael Skeels  
Cllr Mike Steel

**In virtual attendance via Zoom:**

Cllr June Lumley

*Members of the Health Overview Policy and Scrutiny Committee:*

Cllr Anthony McQuiggan  
Cllr Mike Steptoe (via Zoom)

Graham Hughes, Senior Democratic Services Officer, Gemma Bint, Democratic Services Officer and Sharon Westfield de Cortez were also present.

**1 Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest**

The report on Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations was received and noted.

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Aidan McGurran for whom Cllr Pat Reid was substituting and Cllr June Lumley for whom Cllr Jeff Henry was substituting.

**2 Election of Vice-Chairmen for 2023/24 Municipal Year**

At the invite of the Chairman, nominations for the two Vice-Chairman posts were received. Cllr Carlo Guglielmi was nominated by Cllr Ray Gooding and seconded by Cllr Michael Skeels and Cllr Peter May was nominated by Cllr Carlo Guglielmi and seconded by Cllr Wendy Stamp.

There being no further nominations and by general consent, it was agreed that Cllrs Carlo Guglielmi and Peter May were each elected as a Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

### 3 Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 9 March and 6 April 2023 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

### 4 Questions from the public

There were none.

### 5 Preparing for Care Quality Commission Assurance

The Committee considered report PAF/11/23. The following attended the meeting to introduce the item and respond to questions:

- Cllr John Spence, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health
- Nick Presmeg, Executive Director, Adult Social Care
- Clare Hardy, Head of Strategy and Innovation
- Amber Stevens, Service Manager Adult Social Care
- Alison Ansell, Director of Adult Social Care

Contributors delivered a presentation to the Committee providing an overview of how the council had been preparing for the new Care Quality Commission (CQC) Assurance Framework. The presentation included:

- Examples of what the council had done as part of the preparation including development of a LGA quality assurance framework aligned to the CQC assurance framework.
- The Council's learning approach including its own self-assessment, an LGA-led peer challenge and regional sector led improvement.
- Learnings of strengths and considerations from the preparatory work had been grouped under one of the following four themes within the assurance framework: Working with People, Providing Support, Ensuring Safety and Leadership.
- Five subsequent priority areas of focus had been identified by ECC as a result (Carers, Lived Experience and Coproduction, People Waiting and operational Service Efficiency, Safeguarding and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
- Expected CQC areas of focus including quality of practice and safeguarding systems and process.
- Key metrics.
- Timeline for the Adult Social Care CQC assurance framework.

During the subsequent discussion, the following was highlighted, raised and/or noted:

- (i) It was acknowledged that there was still some uncertainty on a finalised CQC assurance framework and a finalised clear plan from the CQC on how future inspections were to be conducted.

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- (ii) The preparatory process had been a good learning opportunity and enabled greater impetus in areas where the council was already working hard to improve services and further respond to increasing demand.
  - (iii) Concerns were raised regarding the amount and quality of resources available to the CQC to conduct all the inspections nationwide within the proposed window closing in Autumn 2025. It was highlighted that it was also important for ECC that there was a robust CQC inspection. ECC would be honest about the challenges it faced and the plans to mitigate them. The Committee had a responsibility to also scrutinise the service, and the challenges identified in particular, to ensure ECC was on the right trajectory.
  - (iv) The LGA-led peer review team had found ECC and the local system complex. Members questioned whether the CQC would fully understand the complexity of Essex and suggested that the County Council should have the opportunity to also challenge the efficacy of CQC questioning and their challenges as part of ensuring a robust and effective inspection.
  - (v) It was expected that the CQC would get feedback and lived experience from service users ahead of an inspection. Focus groups and surveys would also be used to gather information from people who had used Adult Social Care and it was likely the CQC would also look at some individual case files.
  - (vi) The ambition was to deliver and improve against five identified priority areas of focus but, in particular, safeguarding and People Waiting and operational service efficiency were areas that had heightened focus.
  - (vii) The CQC single assessment framework was going to be across all providers such as local authorities, GPs, hospitals and residential homes. The issue of the framework had been delayed and was not now due to be rolled out until October. CQC hosted monthly provider forums to provide updates to providers and the Council also engaged with these. The CQC were also holding various focus groups and engagement events around different component parts of the framework as it was being further developed.
  - (viii) ECC would be keen that the CQC also looked at the effectiveness of wider system working with partners as part of a inspection, particularly including the NHS.
  - (ix) Language in reports needed to be easily understandable and accessible to the public, rather than using CQC and other terminology and greater use of plain English.

Conclusion:

- (i) The anticipated metrics behind the five identified priority areas of focus would be further unpacked for the Committee, clarifying if they have been already tracked and monitored and, if so, providing historical context and trend for them.
- (ii) There was discussion about supplementing quantitative measures with qualitative measures and also distinguishing between them. It was indicated that there were other metrics in addition to those listed in the update and that they would also be incorporated in the future metrics updates.
- (iii) The above updates would include reference to relevant ASCOF (Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework) measures.

Contributors were thanked for their attendance and left the meeting.

**6 Work Programme**

The Committee considered and discussed report PAF/12/23 comprising the work programme for the committee.

**7 Date of Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled to be held on Thursday 13 July 2023.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 11.05am.

**Chairman**