

Public Document Pack



Please note that the following document was published separately from the main agenda for this meeting of the Performance Scrutiny Committee to be held on Thursday, 15th August 2024 at 6.00 pm in Committee Rooms 1-2, City Hall.

1. Confirmation of Minutes - 25 July 2024 (Pages 3 - 6)

This page is intentionally blank.

Present: Councillor Gary Hewson (*in the Chair*),
Councillor Pat Vaughan, Councillor Natasha Chapman,
Councillor Thomas Dyer, Councillor Adrianna McNulty,
Councillor Neil Murray, Councillor Anita Pritchard and
Councillor Emily Wood

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Lucinda Preston

12. Confirmation of Minutes - 23 May 2024

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2024 be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a true record.

13. Confirmation of Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee Minutes - 1 February 2024 & 11 March 2024

Cllr Vaughan asked a question in relation to the following item:

Item 38 – Allocations Breakdown April – December 2023:

Had the consultation paper on changes to the Allocation Policy been released yet?

The Chair of Performance Scrutiny Committee advised that members would be updated at the next Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee.

RESOLVED that the Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee Minutes of 1 February 2024 and 11 March 2024 be confirmed.

14. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Pat Vaughan declared a Personal Interest with regard to the agenda item titled 'Central Lincolnshire Local Plan Annual Report 2023/24 including Financial Update'. His grand-daughter worked in Financial Services

Councillor Thomas Dyer declared a Personal Interest with regard to the agenda item titled 'Central Lincolnshire Local Plan Annual Report 2023/24 including Financial Update'. He was an elected member at Lincolnshire County Council

Councillor Anita Pritchard declared a Personal Interest with regard to the agenda item titled 'Income/Arrears Monitoring Report'. She represented the City of the Lincoln Council as a Trustee on the Lincoln BIG Board

15. Portfolio Holder under Scrutiny - Reducing Inequality

RESOLVED that this item be deferred to a future meeting of Performance Scrutiny Committee due to the Portfolio Holder being unwell.

16. Central Lincolnshire Local Plan Annual Report 2023/24 including Financial Update

Toby Forbes-Turner, Planning Policy Manager:

- a) provided Performance Scrutiny Committee with an annual report detailing the work undertaken by the Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee (CLJSPC) over the period April 1st 2023 through to 31st March 2024
- b) advised that The Local Plan (adopted in April 2023) set out the planning policies for Central Lincolnshire (including the City) and this involved allocating parcels of land for development as well as identifying land which should be protected from development. The Plan included a set of 84 policies which guided decision makers i.e. Planning Committee on future planning applications for the City.
- c) stated that the Joint Planning Committee reached its fourteenth year over the course of 2023/24. This year had followed the adoption of the second Central Lincolnshire Local Plan in April 2023.
- d) highlighted that the AGM meeting took place on 26 June 2023 with Councillor Richard Wright (North Kesteven District Council) being voted in as Chair for the year. The Local Plans Team Annual Report, Central Lincolnshire Budget Update, and Draft Planning Obligations SPD for consultation were some of the items considered.
- e) further highlighted that Committee approved the annual report as a fair reflection of the activity of the Committee over the year. The Committee also approved the budget for the Local Plans Team for 2023/24 and agreed with the recommendation to undertake a review of the contribution levels from the Central Lincolnshire authorities. It also approved the draft Planning Obligations SPD to go out to consultation. The committee meeting, however, was postponed until 16 October 2023 to allow for the responses to the Planning Obligations Consultation to be collated and reviewed by officers. At this meeting the Committee considered items on Planning Obligations SPD Proposed for Adoption and Update on Government Consultation on changes to Plan-making.
- f) advised that the final meeting took place on 18 March to consider items on Local Plans Update, Authority-wide Design Code and Local Development Scheme, Biodiversity Net Gain update and 2024-29 Central Lincolnshire Housing Delivery Plan, all of which the Committee approved
- g) informed the committee that the team had been successful in securing government funding to deliver an integrated mapping and engagement system further to enhance the service
- h) referred to Appendix 1 of his report which set out the expenditure for the last financial year which showed that there was a substantial underspend of £56,286 (£284,414 spent against an anticipated £340,700). This underspend was a result of factors including staffing costs being lower than expected, partly due to recruitment not completing until part way through the year and consultancy costs being lower than expected.
- i) welcomed members comments and questions.

Question: A recent planning application was rejected by Members as they felt it was unreasonable that the developer was unable to fund appropriate S106 contributions, had other district Councils experienced the same problem?

Response: There were more complexities in Lincoln due to the historic nature of its sites and issues with viability and it was more costly for developers as a result of this.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

17. Income/Arrears Monitoring Report

Martin Walmsley, Assistant Director for Shared Revenues and Benefits:

- a) provided the committee with an update on the position with regard to amounts of monies owed to the City Council as at 1st April 2024, (and Business Improvement District (BID) levy to the end of June 2024)
- b) advised that the report summarised the in-year collection of Council Tax, Business Rates, the Business Improvement District (BID) levy, Housing Rents, Former Tenant Rent Arrears, Sundry Debtors and Housing Benefit Overpayments to the 31st March 2024, and set out the arrears brought forward position at 1st April 2024, (BID to the end of June 2024)
- c) highlighted that the Council Tax net collectable debit for 2023/24 after Council Tax Support, discounts and exemptions had been granted was £53,541,919. This was an increase of £2,795,216 from 2022/23.
- d) stated that the total payments received in respect of 2023/24 were £50,352,612. This was an increase of £2,575,779 from 2022/23.
- e) referred to item 4.4 of his report which set out the Council Tax arrears brought forward on 1st April 2023 and 1 April 2024. The balance of debits brought forward into 2023/24 was £10,518,929 and this increased to £12,244,293 by 31st March 2024, an increase of 1,725,363.
- f) explained that The Business Rates net collectable debit for 2023/24 after empty voids, charity entitlements and other reliefs had been granted was £37,813,724. This was a decrease of £4,231,533 from 2022/23. Recent years weren't wholly comparable due to changes in eligible reductions in respect of Expanded Retail Discount / Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Relief, in addition to reassessments of properties by the Valuation Office.
- g) referred to the table at 5.4 of his report which showed comparisons between 2022/23 and 2023/24 in respect of in-year collection rate, arrears brought forward and number of arrears cases and despite a reduction in collection, it still remained high which was positive, particularly in light of the economic climate and significant challenges for businesses in recent years, also due to the Retail Hospitality and Leisure Relief of 75% in 2023/24, 50% in 2022/23 (Expanded Retail Discount was 100% from 1st April 2021 to 30th June 2021, then 66% from 1st July 2021 to 31st March 2022)
- h) welcomed members questions and comments.

Question: Were the additional Council Tax fees on empty properties being paid or were people refusing to pay them?

Response: There had been some complaints received around this area. As was usually the case, where a resident was struggling to pay Council Tax, officers would try and work with them to agree a payment arrangement and aim to avoid undue exceptional hardship.

Martin Walmsley confirmed he would report back with some further information in regards to Council Tax premium charges and arrears.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.