

Present: Councillor Gary Hewson (*in the Chair*),
Councillor Tony Speakman, Councillor Thomas Dyer,
Councillor Paul Gowen, Councillor Ronald Hills,
Councillor Pat Vaughan, Councillor Loraine Woolley,
Councillor Naomi Tweddle and Councillor
Kathleen Brothwell

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Helena Mair, Councillor Liz Maxwell,
Bob Ledger, Claire Moses and Simon Walters

42. Confirmation of Minutes - 5 October 2017

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2017 be confirmed.

43. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Pat Vaughan declared a Personal Interest with regard to the agenda item titled 'Housing Benefit Overpayment'.

Reason: His daughter worked in the Benefits Advice Section at the City of Lincoln Council.

Councillor Pat Vaughan declared a Personal Interest with regard to the agenda item titled 'Financial Performance Quarterly Monitoring 2017/18: Quarter 2'.

Reason: His grand-daughter worked in the Finance Section at the City of Lincoln Council.

44. Portfolio Holder under Scrutiny

(a) Portfolio Performance Overview: Social Inclusion and Community Cohesion

Pat Jukes, Corporate Policy Business Manager:

a) presented a portfolio performance overview of Social Inclusion and Community Cohesion covering the following main areas:

- Lincoln population data
- Ethnicity in Lincoln
- Educational attainment data
- National Insurance Number registration figures
- Languages requested
- Dashboard measures

b) advised that the estimated population of Lincoln had increased from 97,065 in 2015 to 97,795 in 2016, with 50.6% females and 49.4% males.

c) invited members' questions and comments

Question: What was the percentage of residents with no qualifications, was it foreign students or English students?

Response: It was mainly English students.

RESOLVED that the content of the portfolio performance overview for Social Inclusion and Community Cohesion be noted.

45. Report by Councillor R Kirk Portfolio Holder for Social Inclusion and Community Cohesion

The Portfolio Holder for Social Inclusion and Community Cohesion, Rosie Kirk:

a) presented her report regarding activity and achievements within her portfolio and covered the following main areas:-

- Neighbourhood Working
- Community Cohesion
- Social Inclusion
- Adult Learning
- Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk
- Domestic Abuse
- Older People
- Community Centres
- Young People
- Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Members made comments to the Portfolio Holder for Social Inclusion and Community Cohesion on various aspects of her report in relation to:

Young People

Question: What was the Council doing to help young people between 16 and 24 years?

Response: There was a Child Friendly City event at Lincoln University which would help promote the rights of young people and make Lincoln a more child friendly city. Officers were also working with the Network to help enhance the skills of young people.

Question: Who looked after young people under the age of 13?

Response: Social Services would take responsibility if an incident occurred, it wouldn't be the Portfolio Holder's responsibility.

Poverty Conference

Question: What was the cost of the Poverty Conference and who funded it?

Response: The Poverty Conference cost around £2,000 and the Corporate Policy Team funded it.

Question: How had the situation improved in regards to Poverty?

Portfolio Holder response: Following the demise of LCAS (Lincoln Community Assistance Scheme), a number of organisations are discussing a longer term sustainable plan for food vouchers.

Neighbourhood Working

Question: In regards to Sincil Bank, how would its performance be defined as a success?

Portfolio Holder response: The improvement of the area and wellbeing of the people in the community.

Officer response: The new Assistant Director for Housing would be taking over that particular area of work and would devise some indicators for Neighbourhood Working.

Question: The key message from Neighbourhood Working was to organise then pull out and a withdrawal strategy hadn't been put together. How would it be built into the service?

Portfolio Holder response: Improvement of the area and wellbeing of the community.

Lincoln Money

Question: How many applications were received?

Portfolio Holder response: 170 applications were received however there was some uncertainty about how many were accepted.

Question: How was it different to the Credit Union?

Officer response: Lincoln money tended to be in relation to clients who struggled to obtain a loan elsewhere and/or required such a payment quickly (e.g. same day decision).

Community Centres

Question: The usage of Community Centres had gone down by 1,000 in this quarter. Which community centres were the least used?

Portfolio Holder response: Over the summer period there was a reduction in activities which led to the drop in figures.

Question: Had the Council priced itself out of the market? The small community centres seemed to be more successful. Was there any possibility of improving Sudbrooke Drive Community Centre?

Officer response: The Council charges were more expensive due to having set fees. There were some Community Centres, Sudbrooke Drive in particular that were in need of refurbishment however there wasn't any funding to carry out that work at the moment. If there was an opportunity and funding was received, other priorities may take precedent, it would depend on demand at the time.

Question: The over 50's group at Sudbrooke Drive community centre had complained about the temperature due to the heating not being switched on until the centre had been opened. Could anything be done about this?

Response: There were ways around it however it wouldn't be feasible to heat the community centre prior to people arriving. If Members wanted to discuss the matter further another meeting could be arranged.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

46. Q2 2017-2018 Operational Performance Report

Pat Jukes, Corporate Policy Business Manager:

- a) presented the report summarising the operational performance position for Quarter 2 of the financial year 2017/18 (July to September 2017)
- b) advised that regular monitoring of the Council's operational performance was a key component of the Local Performance Management Framework, this report covered key service performance measures identified by Members and CMT as of strategic importance.
- c) detailed the key headlines from the four corporate measures:
 - Sickness – split by long and short term
 - Corporate complaints including Ombudsman rulings
 - Employee FTE headcount, vacancies and turnover
 - Staff appraisals completed
- d) referred to Appendix A which detailed all measures by individual directorate grouping with annual and quarterly measures split separately
- e) invited members' questions and comments

Question – After appraisals had taken place, what was done regarding training needs, goals and targets?

Answer – Managers sent a copy of the appraisal to HR for assessment. There was a section on the appraisal form which specified areas for development, 1:1's or online training courses that could be undertaken.

Question – What were the reasons for long term sickness?

Answer – Mainly stress/depression. It was broken down between personal, work and other (not stipulated) as referred to on page 51 of the report.

Question – Why was there a reduction in time by 12% for the revenues team to process changes?

Answer – There had been an increase in outstanding changes for Revenues (i.e. mainly in respect of Council Tax and Business Rates) due to a temporary reduction in resources on that team and time spent developing e-forms which should result in future improvements. Housing Benefit changes had been

processed quicker than at the end of Quarter 2 2016/17. Resources were allocated within the service as to fluctuations in demands, wherever possible. There had been more Council Tax Support claims coming through, and resources required for Universal Credit was having an impact.

Question – Why was there a drop of 3,000 in the electoral role?

Answer – The canvas started in July which had an impact on the number of people on the electoral register. It was a lot quicker to remove somebody from the register than to add somebody on. The Q2 figures were put together at the beginning of the canvas so they would differ in Q3.

Question: Would the Council have too many car parking spaces available now the new multi-storey car park has recently opened?

Response: There were no concerns at the moment. Overall parking use is expected to grow as the city grows

Question: Was the Rogue Landlord scheme created to seek out illegal immigrants or to check properties for standard of living?

Response: The Rogue Landlord Scheme was funded by the Migration Impact Fund. The strand of fund that the Council have bid to was specifically around tackling rogue landlords and therefore checking properties for safety and standards and taking action to improve those where necessary. The project does not seek to identify or refer illegal immigrants.

RESOLVED that:

1. The content of the report and comments made by members be noted.
2. The report be referred to Executive to ensure relevant portfolio holders placed a local focus on those highlighted areas showing deteriorating performance.

47. Financial Performance - Quarterly Monitoring: Quarter 2

Rob Baxter, Interim Chief Finance Officer:

- a) presented the Financial Performance Quarterly Monitoring report for the second quarter (up to 30th September) which covered the following main areas:
 - General Fund
 - Housing Revenue Account
 - Housing Repairs Service
 - Capital Programmes
- b) highlighted a forecast underspend for the financial position of the Council at the end of the second quarter for 2017/18 with an underspend of £141,404 as highlighted in section 3.2 of the report
- c) reported that the HRA (Housing Revenue Account) had projected an in-year underspend of £50,051 which would increase the General Balances

to £1,073,150 at the end of 2017/18 as identified in section 4.2 of the report

- d) detailed the earmarked reserves and their forecast balance as at 31st March 2018 as detailed in 6.1 of the report
- e) advised on the General Fund Investment Programme for 2017/18 of £23,675,983 as detailed in 7.2 of the report
- f) referred to the last Housing Investment Programme report for 2017/18 approved by Executive as detailed in paragraph 7.9-7.13 of the report
- g) invited members' questions and comments

Question: In regards to Ermine School, why was it bought and sold for less than it was bought for?

Response: The Council sold the land for less than the market value, which enabled Waterloo Housing Group to receive Homes and Communities (HCA) affordable housing grant per dwelling, which the Council received the benefit of when we bought back the completed units. Overall the grant receivable was £2.4m which contribute directly towards the provision of Council houses, this approach was agreed by the Executive on 19 December 2016.

RESOLVED that:

1. The progress on the financial performance for the period 1st April to 30th September 2017 and the projected outturns for 2017/18 be noted.
2. The underlying impact of the pressures and underspends identified in paragraphs 3.2, 4.3 and 5.2 of the report be noted.
3. The carry forward request detailed at paragraph 3.5 of the report be noted.
4. The changes to the General Investment Programme as detailed in paragraph 7.5 be noted.

48. Strategic Plan Progress - Quarter 2 2017/18

Rob Baxter, Interim Chief Finance Officer:

- a) presented a report updating members on strategic projects against their milestones for the second quarter of 2017/18
- b) advised that of the 19 strategic projects monitored by SPIT (Strategic Plan Implementation Team), 10 projects were on track in terms of their physical and financial milestones and risk profiles, of these a further 6 projects had been completed and were awaiting a Post Implementation Review to be submitted and signed off by SPIT, there were also no projects off track in terms of all three of the areas of monitoring
- c) stated that there were 2 projects currently off track in one or two of the areas of monitoring as detailed in paragraph 2.4 of the report

- d) reported that 3 new projects were reviewed and recommended to the Executive for approval by SPIT in the second quarter
- e) updated members on the following two mega projects:
 - Western Growth Corridor
 - Transport Hub
- f) highlighted the work of the Section 106 Group and annual ongoing projects at paragraphs 6 and 7 of the report
- g) invited members' questions and comments

Question: In regards to the major projects, it wasn't mentioned in the report that the decision had gone through Executive to increase the expenditure as it was subject to call-in.

Response: Until the call-in had concluded the decision is not final it was therefore not included in the report.

Question: How could members find out where Section 106 money was spent?

Response: A report would be submitted to the next Performance Scrutiny Committee for Q3 explaining that.

Question: How much money was used for play areas? Would certain play areas lose out?

Response: The intention was to not give the money back to the developers and use it for various Section 106 projects including play areas.

Question: How will the income be measured for the Birchwood Leisure Centre?

Response: It would be measured by the people coming through the door and the finances would be managed by the overall contract profit share.

RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted.

49. Treasury Management and Prudential Code Update Report - Half Yearly Report

Sarah Hardy, Group Accountant:

- a) presented a report covering the treasury management activity and the actual prudential indicators for the period April 1 to September 30th 2017
- b) advised that the Treasury Management position and performance results for the 6 months ended on 30th September 2017
- c) stated that of this investment portfolio 95% was held in low risk specified investments, the requirement for the year being a minimum of 25% of the portfolio to be specified investments

- d) reported that on 30th September the Council held £75.354 million of external borrowing, of which 100% were fixed rate loans as outlined in Appendix A of the report
- e) Highlighted the position in relation to prudential indicators which covered the following main areas:-
 - Capital Expenditure
 - Financing of the Capital Programme
 - The Capital Financing and External Debt
 - Limits to Borrowing Activity
- f) referred to the Investment Strategy and its objectives as well as risk benchmarking as outlined in 5.3 and 5.4 of the report
- g) invited members' questions and comments

Question: Why was there a drop from 19.9 to 18.4 in regards to borrowing?

Response: The Council's anticipated level of borrowing had been revised and is less than expected at the point when the strategy was developed.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Prudential and Local indicators and the actual performance against the Treasury Management Strategy 2017/18 for the half-year extended 30th September 2017 be noted.
- 2) That the change to the MRP policy at Appendix C be noted.

50. Strategic Risk Register - Quarterly Report Quarter 2

Rob Baxter, Interim Chief Finance Officer:

- a) presented the report 'Strategic Risk Register – Quarterly Review' and provided members with the revised Strategic Risk Register as at the end of the second quarter 2017-18
- b) advised that the Strategic Risk Register was developed under the risk management approach of 'risk appetite', which was last presented to Members in August 2017 and contained seven strategic risks
- c) highlighted that since it was last reported in August 2017, the Strategic Risks Register had been reviewed and updated
- d) Further highlighted that the updated Register contained seven strategic risks as outlined in Appendix A of the report
- e) updated members on the key movements which were outlined as follows:-
 - Engaging with Strategic Partners, staff and stakeholders to deliver the Vision 2020
 - Deliver a sustainable Medium term Financial Strategy
 - To ensure compliance with statutory duties and appropriate governance arrangements were in place

- Deliver the Towards Financial Sustainability programme savings targets
- Develop an appropriate response to changing Local Government Structures
- Meet the Emerging changes required in the Council's culture
- Ensure sufficient levels of resilience and capacity to deliver key priorities

f) invited members' questions and comments

RESOLVED that the Strategic Risk Register report be noted.

51. Housing Benefits Overpayment

Martin Walmsley, Head of Shared Revenues and Benefits:

- a) presented the report 'Housing Benefit Overpayments'
- b) advised that this report was to provide an update on the recovery of Housing Benefit Overpayments.
- c) highlighted the reasons why Housing Benefit overpayments could occur which were:-
 - Customers not promptly notifying of a change of circumstances affecting their entitlement to HB
 - Delays in re-assessment of HB once a change had been reported to the Benefits Officer
 - Fraudulently claimed HB
 - Error made in assessment of HB by the local authority
 - Error made by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Her Majesty Revenues & Customs (HMRC) in one of the benefit or incomes used in the assessment of Housing Benefit entitlement
- d) outlined the value of overpayments raised so far in 2017/18 and how it equated, in percentage, to the total value of HB paid out as detailed in 4.2 of the report
- e) stated that during 2016/17 the Housing Benefit Section actioned 23,927 change in circumstances for City of Lincoln customers
- f) referred to the action plan for 2017/18 and 2018/19 as outlined in section 7.1 and 8.1 of the report
- g) invited members' questions and comments

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

52. Budget Review Process 2018/19

Rob Baxter, Interim Chief Finance Officer:

- a) presented the report 'Budget Review Process 2018/19'

- b) advised Members of the process for the scrutiny of the proposed budget and Council Tax for the 2018/19 financial year and the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018-2023
- c) explained that the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) set out the overall framework on which the Council planned and managed its financial resources to ensure that they fitted with, and supported, the direction of the Council's Strategic Priorities
- d) outlined the proposed process for the MTFS 2017/18 as detailed in 3.6 of the report
- e) Invited members' questions and comments.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the governance arrangements of the Budget Review Group for 2018/19 as set out in paragraphs 3.3 – 3.4 be noted.
- 2) The timetable for the Group as set out in paragraph 3.6 be noted.
- 3) The nominations for membership of the Group, as set out in paragraph 3.5, including the Chair and Vice Chair be confirmed.

53. Performance Report-Housing Repairs Services

RESOLVED that this item be deferred to the next meeting to allow Members sufficient time to read the report.

54. Work Programme for 2017-18 - Update

RESOLVED that the work programme 2017/18 as detailed at Appendix A to the report be noted.

55. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item(s) of business because it is likely that if members of the public were present there would be a disclosure to them of 'exempt information' as defined by Section 100I and Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

56. Christmas Market Outturn Report 2017

Simon Colburn, Assistant Director for Communities and Environment:

- a) presented the Lincoln Christmas Market Outturn report on the financial performance of the 2017 Lincoln Christmas Market as of October 2017
- b) outlined the background and operating hours for the Lincoln Christmas Market and the estimated costs for the event.
- c) invited questions and comments from members of Performance Scrutiny Committee

Members discussed the content of the report in further detail.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.