

Present: Councillor Gary Hewson (*in the Chair*),
Councillor Helena Mair, Councillor Thomas Dyer,
Councillor Ronald Hills, Councillor Rebecca Longbottom,
Councillor Laura McWilliams, Councillor Lucinda Preston,
Councillor Pat Vaughan and Councillor Loraine Woolley

Apologies for Absence: None.

70. Confirmation of Minutes - 23 January 2020

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2020 be confirmed.

71. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Pat Vaughan declared a Personal Interest with regard to the agenda item titled 'Financial Performance - Quarterly Monitoring - Q3'. Reason: His granddaughter worked in the Finance Section of the City of Lincoln Council.

Councillor Pat Vaughan declared a Personal Interest with regard to the agenda item titled 'Strategic Risk Register - Quarterly Review'. Reason: His granddaughter worked in the Finance Section of the City of Lincoln Council.

72. Member Statement

In the interest of transparency Cllr Helena Mair requested it be noted that her husband's employer was involved in several local projects which involved the City of Lincoln Council including the Rookery Lane and Central Market refurbishment. In the event that any reference was made to these projects she would leave the room at that point and not take part in discussions thereon.

73. Portfolio Holder under Scrutiny - Customer Experience and Review

Cllr Chris Burke, Portfolio for Customer Experience and Review, presented a report to Performance Scrutiny Committee:

a) highlighted the progress made within the following areas:

- High Performing Services
- Customer Services
- Customer Experience Strategy and Creating Value Processes
- Business Development & Information Technology
- Audit Arrangements
- Electoral Activity

b) gave a performance overview of the following:

- General Performance
- Local Performance Management Framework (LPMF)
- New Performance and Information Management System (PIMS)
- Quarterly Performance Reporting
- Lincoln City Profile (LCP)

- Lincoln Project Management Model (LPMM)
- Complaints against the Council

c) he invited members' comments and questions.

Question: Members asked what assurance was given from the Councils External Auditor, Mazars, that the Audit reporting would not be delayed again?

Response: The Chief Executive had met with managers at Mazars regarding the late reporting schedule and she had been assured that this would not happen again.

Question: Members asked for further information on which services would be accessed online and if there was anything to promote e-forms, how many emails had been received in Customer Services and what steps were being taken to save on postage for the authority?

Response: Officers were trying to make more services digital. Calls received from customers were mainly due to Housing Repairs as this service was not available online currently. Emails were not a practical form of communication as they didn't necessarily contain all the information needed to process the request/query but a phone call would. Officers wanted to move customers to an e-forms system which would ask the customer all the information that was required for that service/query. This system would email the customer once this had been processed. Postage for the authority had been looked at for years. Everything was being done to cut down on information being mailed out wherever possible.

Question: Members commented that complaints had decreased and asked what the main subject for complaints was and what the nature was of the upheld complaint?

Response: The ombudsman complaint related to wheelie bins being left out on the street which was not upheld. Complaints were reported into Departmental DMT's on a quarterly basis. Most complaints made were regarding Council Tax, Housing Repairs and wheelie bins not being emptied.

Comment. Members commented that wheelie bins being left out once emptied would be a trip hazard due to the street lights being turned off at night.

Question: Members asked if the project funded by MHCLG's Local Digital Collaboration Fund and other authorities, to enable Council Tenants to book repairs online, had been trialled?

Response: A scoping exercise had been conducted to establish what this would look like if the service was to go digital. Tenders were being looked at. The scheme would be funded by Central Government.

Question: Members asked how value for money was measured so that it could be scrutinised at Performance Scrutiny Committee?

Response: This was being measured in three ways:

- online transactions
- streamlining internal processes
- supporting the 'One Council' programme

One Council would be part of the Vision 2025 in the future and focused towards the customer.

Question: Members asked what areas the mobile working pilots were in?

Response: The first pilot involved Housing Officers to see what work they would complete when out visiting residents. The second pilot involved office based staff to establish how technology would help them.

Question: Members asked whether Portfolio Holder responsibilities were being looked at as part of Vision 2025?

Response: Portfolio Holder responsibilities would be reviewed.

Question: Members asked whether officers wanted to comment on the time taken to answer calls?

Response: An electronic questionnaire had been sent out along with the Citizens Panel questionnaire, asking for views on the appropriate time to wait for a call to be answered. The information from this was being evaluated and would be circulated once it was available. The online forms system needed to be promoted more, rather than email as a form of communication, as forms were processed straight away.

RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted.

74. Financial Performance - Quarterly Monitoring - Q3

Laura Shipley, Principle Finance Business Partner (Revenue) and Sarah Hardy, Principal Finance Business Partner, on behalf of Colleen Warren, Financial Services Manager, presented Performance Scrutiny with the third quarter's financial performance (up to 31 December) on the Council's:

- a) **General Fund Revenue Account** – was currently projecting a forecast overspend of £222,080 (Appendix A provided a forecast General Fund Summary). Full details of the main variances were provided in Appendix B while the key variances were summarised below:
 - Homeless B&B – increased expenditure: £107,800
 - Savings Target – shortfall in delivery: £201,750
 - Housing Benefit Overpayment – reduced income: £318,000
 - HIMO – reduced income: £74,260
 - City Bus Station – reduced expenditure (£104,800)
 - External Interest payable – reduced expenditure (£225,945)
 - City Hall, Industrial Estates & Lincoln Prop. – increased income: (£159,360)
 - Car Parking – increased income: (£162,000)
 - Car Parking – increased expenditure: £135,000
 - Bereavement Services – increased income: (£124, 150)
 - Bereavement Services – increased expenditure: £88, 020
- b) **Housing Revenue Account** – was currently projecting an in-year forecast underspend of £79,582 (Appendix C provided a forecast HRA

summary). Full details of the main variances were provided in Appendix D while the key variances were summarised below:

- Staff Vacancies – reduced expenditure: (£177,000)
- Repairs Costs – increased expenditure (offset from HRS surplus): £62,400
- Council Tax – increased expenditure: £67,000
- Depreciation: increased expenditure: £375,000
- Interest Payable – increased expenditure: £129,000
- DRF Contribution – reduced expenditure: (£429,000)
- HRS Surplus – increased income: (£117,000)

- c) **Housing Repairs Service** – were forecasting a surplus of £117,075 in 2019/20 (Appendix E provided a forecast HRS summary), with full details of the main variances provided.
- d) **Earmarked Reserves** – the details of all the earmarked reserves and their forecast balance as at 31st March 2020 were attached in Appendix F.
- e) **Capital Programmes** – movements in the programme during the third quarter had decreased overall planned expenditure in 2019/20 to £12,509,748.

New projects that were agreed at Capital Programme Group and were subject to Executive approval for the third quarter were:

- Stamp End Depot demolition works: £134,440 funded from the unallocated capital contingency budget, relating to 50% recharge of capital works undertaken in agreement with a third party.

The following projects had previously been approved by Executive and added to the General Investment Programme in quarter 3:

- Crematorium Remodelling - £4.7m towards crematorium enhancements at Washingborough Road commencing in 20/21 approved by Executive on 25th November 2019.
- Swift Gardens Play Area - £74,200 for a new play area scheme approved by Executive on 30th August 2017. £14,000 from grant funding in relation to the MUGA refurbishment, and £60,200 funded by S106.

The overall spend on the General Fund Investment Programme for the third quarter was £8.847m, which was 70.7% of the 2019/20 programme and 75.4% of the active programme. This was detailed further at Appendix I.

- f) **Housing Investment Programme** – expenditure against the Housing Investment Programme budget during the first three quarters was £8.025m, which was 53.84% of the programme. The expenditure was detailed further at Appendix K.

- g) invited members' comments and questions.

Question: Members asked whether the reduction in the level of housing benefit overpayments being raised was a positive or a negative response?

Response: The reduced overspend was a positive effect but this had a negative effect as it created a budgetary pressure. The issue had been corrected in the MTFS.

Question: Members asked whether maintenance was being carried out on the Transport Hub as the maintenance underspend had been moved to a sinking fund?

Response: Maintenance was being carried out as there was a budget for the maintenance of assets. The money moved into the sinking fund would fund any special work in the future as and when required.

Question: Members asked for clarification on why there were two entries for the profiling expenditure for the Birchwood Leisure Centre Roof?

Response: Some expenditure for the roof wouldn't come out of 2019/20 budgets but some work needed to be completed this year which created the two entries.

Question: Members asked whether the money for the WGC that had been re-profiled into 2020/21 was part of the money already re-profiled.

Response: Anticipated spend for the WGC was lower so the money was re-profiled. This was in addition to the money that had previously been re-profiled.

Question: Members asked what the £43k overspend on equipment for car parking was?

Response: The overspend related to extra costs for specialist services including Maintenance, Security and Cleaning. Additionally specialist equipment and increased connectivity to all car parks within the city to facilitate electronic payments had increased charges related to banking/card payments.

RESOLVED that the progress on the financial performance for the period 1st April to 31st December 2019 and the projected outturns for 2019/20 be noted.

75. Q3 2019-2020 Operational Performance Report

Heather Grover, Principal Policy Officer, presented Performance Scrutiny Committee with a summary of the operational performance position for quarter three of the financial year 2019/20 (from September 2019 to January 2020) in the following areas:

- a) **Chief Executive's Directorate** – Quarter three showed a long list of really positive results, with 11 measures above their target. Five measures were below target and whilst some measures' negatively changed in direction, the majority of measures still remained above or within target.
- b) **Communities and Environment** – Quarter three showed a long list of really positive results, with 12 measures above their target. Two measures were below target, and whilst 13 measures negatively changed in direction, most of these measures still remained above or with target.
- c) **Housing and Investment** - Quarter three showed a long list of really positive results, with 7 measures above their target and 3 measures below

target in DHI. Whilst 6 targeted measures negatively changed in direction, 8 saw a move in a positive direction.

- d) **Sickness Performance** - The cumulative sickness data at the end of quarter three was 7.75 days per FTE (excl. apprentices), which was only slightly higher than the 7.28 days per FTE quarter three 2018/19. During quarter three, the long term sickness (sickness over 14 days) per FTE stood at 4.29 days, which was slightly higher than the 4.14 days in quarter three last year. Short term sickness stood at 3.45 days.
- e) **Complaints Performance** – In quarter three there were 104 complaints. The cumulative average time, year to date, across all Directorates to respond to formal complaints was 6.9 days (6.8 in quarter three alone). In quarter three, there was one LGO complaint decided, which wasn't upheld.
- f) invited members' comments and questions.

Question: Members commented that they were not happy with the waiting times for occupational therapy and asked if the wait time figure was calculated from the beginning of the whole process?

Response: The wait time figure was from when the order was put through by the Occupational Therapist.

Question: Members commented that buy backs were not showing in performance indicators and asked how members would be assured that resources were not being used for buy backs?

Response: There was a cross-organisational team that visited potential buy back properties to ensure that value for money was sought and the properties would be beneficial if bought back. There were 11 properties that were in the process of being bought back but more properties were being lost by Right to Buy applications.

Question: Members asked if there was a reason why there was a sharp drop in vacancies on the establishment?

Response: The vacant positions were being filled which created a drop in vacant positions available on the establishment.

RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted

76. Budget Review Group Minutes - 5 February 2020

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Budget Review Group meeting held on 5 February 2020 be noted.

77. Strategic Risk Register - Quarterly Review

Angela Andrews, Chief Executive and Town Clerk, on behalf of Jaclyn Gibson, Chief Finance Officer, presented Performance Scrutiny Committee:

- a) with a status report of the revised Strategic Risk Register as at the end of the third quarter 2019/20.

b) highlighted the 10 risks contained in the register as follows:

- Failure to engage & influence effectively the Council's strategic partners, council staff and all stakeholders to deliver against e.g. Councils Vision 2020/25.
- Failure to deliver a sustainable Medium Term Financial Strategy (that supported delivery of Vision 2020).
- Failure to deliver the Towards Financial Sustainability Programme whilst ensuring the resilience of the Council.
- Failure to ensure compliance with statutory duties/functions and appropriate governance arrangements were in place.
- Failure to protect the local authority's vision 2020/25 due to changing structures and relationships in local government and impact on size, scale and scope of the Council.
- Unable to meet the emerging changes required in the Council's culture, behaviour and skills to support the delivery of the Council's Vision 2020/25 and the transformational journey to one Council approach.
- Insufficient levels of resilience and capacity exist in order to deliver key strategic projects & services within the Council.
- Decline in the economic prosperity within the City Centre.
- Failure to mitigate against the implications for the Council following the outcome of Brexit.

c) explained that a number of control actions had now been progressed or completed and the key movements were outlined as follows:

- Risk 1 - Failure to engage & influence effectively the Council's strategic partners, council staff and all stakeholders to deliver against e.g. Council's Vision 2020/2025. The Council's draft Vision 2025 had been developed, with a new 5th strategic priority, and had been subject to both internal and external consultation. The final document would be presented to Council for approval on 3rd March 2020.
- Risk 2 - Failure to deliver a sustainable Medium Term Financial Strategy (that supported delivery of Vision 2020 (Council plan). The draft MTFS had been prepared, based on revised financial planning assumptions (and with a new savings target) and was subject to public consultation and Member scrutiny during February. The MTFS was to be approved in March 2020.
- Risk 6 - Unable to meet the emerging changes required in the Council's culture, behavior and skills to support the delivery of the council's future Vision and the transformational journey to one Council approach. A Staff Charter, "The Lincoln Way", had been developed with staff consultation being started in February 2020.
- Risk 7 – Insufficient levels of resilience and capacity exist in order to deliver key strategic projects and services. As part of the development of Vision 2025, timelines for existing legacy projects had been undertaken along with the scheduling of new projects to allow capacity to be delivered.

d) highlighted that there was one risk where the assessed likelihood and impact had increased as follows:

- Risk 5 – had been increased from Amber: Probable/Major to Red: Almost Certain/Major.

e) invited members' comments and questions.

Question: Members asked whether the Reshaping Local Government Group that had been set up was internal?

Response: Yes, conversations took place at Chief Executive level and would be filtered down to Officer level in March. Discussions were at an early stage.

RESOLVED that the strategic risks and control actions as at the end of the third quarter 2019/20 be noted.

78. 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.

79. Strategic Risk Register - Quarterly Review

Angela Andrews, Chief Executive and Town Clerk, on behalf of Jaclyn Gibson, Chief Finance Officer, provided members with the detailed Strategic Risk Register as attached at Appendix A.

RESOLVED that the key strategic risks and control actions, as at the end of the third quarter 19/20 be noted.