

Present: ~~None.~~ Councillor Pat Vaughan (*in the Chair*),
Councillor David Clarkson, Councillor Thomas Dyer,
Councillor Rebecca Longbottom, Councillor
Laura McWilliams, Councillor Christopher Reid and
Councillor Loraine Woolley

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Lucinda Preston

39. Confirmation of Minutes - 30 September 2021

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2021 be confirmed.

40. Declarations of Interest

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

41. Budget Review Process 2021/22

Jaclyn Gibson, Chief Finance Officer:

- a. presented members with the process for the scrutiny of the proposed budget and Council Tax for the 2022/23 financial year and the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022-2027
- b. highlighted that it was proposed that the following governance arrangements should be in place for the Group;
 - The group would be made up of 9 non-Executive Members with a 6:3 proportionality share
 - The Group would be a sub group of the Performance Scrutiny Committee, although Members did not have to be Members of this Committee.
 - The Chair of the group would be the Chair of the Performance Scrutiny Committee
 - The Group would be the main mechanism by which the Executive would formally consult scrutiny on the consideration of their budget proposals.
 - The meetings would be held in public and would be administered by Democratic Services.
 - Specific Portfolio Holders and Directors (or Assistant Directors) would be invited to attend the meetings of the group or be requested to provide written responses if so required.

- Advice would be provided to the Group members by officers from the Council's Financial Services Team.
- The Chair of the Group shall be required to provide a report to the next full Performance Scrutiny Committee summarising the Groups findings and making recommendations to the Executive.

Members were asked to respond to Democratic Services to confirm member's attendance for this group.

RESOLVED that:

1. The objectives and governance arrangements of the Budget Review Group for 2022/23 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. Nominations for membership of the Group from leaders of the respective political groups be notified to Democratic Services.

42. Portfolio Holder under Scrutiny - Reducing Inequality

Councillor Sue Burke, Portfolio Holder for Reducing Inequality:

a) presented a report to Performance Scrutiny Committee covering the following areas:

- Welfare and Benefits Advice
- Welfare Reform
- Housing Benefit/Council Tax Support
- Discretionary Rate Relief Policy
- Test and Trace Payment Scheme and Winter Grants Scheme
- Food Vouchers for Vulnerable families in the Easter Holidays
- Financial Inclusion
- Skills and Training (including Adult Learning and The Network)
- Homelessness and Rough Sleeping
- Asylum Seekers and Refugees
- Neighbourhood Working
- Equality and Diversity
- Public Protection and Anti-Social Behaviour
- Lincoln Community Lottery
- Lincoln Social Responsibility Charter
- Holocaust Memorial Day

b) invited members comments and questions.

Question: Members asked when the refugees we had agreed to house were coming over from Afghanistan and how many we were taking in.

Response: We had pledged 3 properties, and these had been filled with 3 families.

Question: Members asked how equality and diversity was being measured and whether the figures provided were accurate.

Response: The figures were an aspiration.

Question: Members asked why there had been no fixed penalty notices issued.

Response: Most of the data provided was from the lockdown period. Issues were mainly resolved by informal reconciliation rather than enforcement. Updated figures were to be forwarded to the committee.

Question: Members asked for more explanation as to what was regarded as a student issue.

Response: Student issues could refer to various reasons, for example, students living away from home for the first time and learning how to be respectful to their neighbours etc. The University did work with students to help with these issues.

Question: Members asked how up to date staff training, with respect to safeguarding, was and whether it was kept up to date.

Response: Staff were up to date with training. There was a rolling programme for training on a wide range of subjects alongside a staff ranking system to identify what areas staff needed help and when.

Question: Members asked whether the app to make people safer walking home was national.

Response: It was hoped that the app would be developed locally, and a company had been asked to write this. If this app was successful it would be the first in the country. There were some liability issues which were being worked through. The app should hopefully be live in March 2022.

Question: Members asked whether the ending of furlough would create more work within the Revenues and Benefits Team and whether large businesses were monitored to see how viable they were.

Response: Furlough was an issue for many residents in the city. There was no published furlough data as there was a lag time with the data being produced. There was an increase in homelessness applications which may be down to furlough. Additional funding had been provided for 'vulnerable renters'

Question: Members asked how many customers having been signposted to the kickstart scheme had been successful.

Response: There was no published data for the Kickstart scheme, but anecdotally we were the second highest performing district nationally.

Question: Members asked what was being done to combat fly-tipping in the City.

Response: Fly-tipping was problematic in Sincil Bank, Monks Road and Minster Ward. Fly-tippers had to be caught in the act or proof of ownership needed to be found amongst the waste in order to prosecute.

Question: Drink spiking was an issue in the city. Members asked what venues were doing to protect customers.

Response: Lincoln Big were working with the Police and venues on drink spiking. The Police were engaging with establishments and the City Council had a licensing responsibility and would be as proactive as possible. Evening Ambassadors were being recruited for the Friday and Saturday nights in the city to help people get home safely.

Question: Members asked whether enforcement action was recorded so that repeat offenders could be identified.

Response: All interactions were logged via a case management system.

RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted.

43. Operational Performance Report Q2 2021/22

Pat Jukes, Business Manager Corporate Policy:

- a) presented a report to Performance Scrutiny Committee with an outturn summary of the council's performance in Quarter 2 of 2021/22
- b) explained that the full report was attached as Appendix A of the report, with the strategic Measures Dashboard attached as Appendix B and the Annual Measures as Appendix C
- c) invited members' comments and questions.

Question: Members asked if the calls that were coming into Customer Services were still increasing and whether these may go down.

Response: Call volumes were increasing and there was no sign of them reducing. Some of the calls did involve an element of customers ringing back and the call times were also longer as some of the calls were complex.

Question: Members commented that the call statistics for Refuse and Environment used to be good and it was disappointing to see that these had got worse and asked if there was a reason for this.

Response: A lot of the calls were due to street access issues (with more people working from home) and recruitment of driver issues, meaning that some bins were not being emptied at the 'normal' time. In addition, the growth of the city has meant that some rounds have grown disproportionately, so work was ongoing with BIFFA to distribute the bin collection rounds amongst drivers so that collections could all be on the same day.

Question: Members asked if important information could be displayed on the website to help answer questions customers may have before they picked up the phone and called us. This information was currently only available on social media which some customers were not familiar with.

Response: Officers would look into the matter of putting important information on our website as well as social media.

RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted.

44. Treasury Management and Prudential Code Update Report - Half Year Ended

30th September 2021

Sarah Hardy, Principal Financial Business Partner (Treasury), on behalf of Colleen Warren, Financial Services Manager:

- a) presented a report to Performance Scrutiny Committee on the Council's treasury management activity and the actual prudential indicators for the period April 1st to September 30th, 2021
- b) explained that the Council held £46million of investments on 30th September 2021; the investment profile was shown in Appendix A
- c) highlighted that on 30th September 2021 the Council held £120,946 million of external borrowing, of which 100% were fixed rate loans, as further detailed at Appendix A.
- d) invited members' questions and comments.

RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted.

45. Financial Performance - Quarterly Monitoring

Colleen Warren, Financial Services Manager:

- a) presented a report to Performance Scrutiny Committee on the second quarter's performance 2021/2022 (up to 30th September 2021)
- b) provided information on the Council's:
 - **General Fund Revenue Account** - the General Fund Summary was currently projecting a forecast overspend of £46,366 (Appendix A provided a forecast General Fund Summary), resulting in general balance at the year-end of £2,146,993. There were a significant number of forecast year-end variations in income and expenditure against the approved budget. Full details of the main variances were provided in Appendix B.
 - **Housing Revenue Account** – the HRA was projecting an in-year variance of a £156,480 overspend, which would decrease the general balances to £918,173 at the end of 2021/22. There were a number of forecast year-end variations in income and expenditure against the approved budget. Full details of the main variances were provided in Appendix D.
 - **Housing Repairs Service** – the HRS was forecasting a deficit of £811,418 in 2021/22. Appendix E provided a forecast summary, with full details of the main variances provided in Appendix F.
- c) provided information in the following areas:
 - **General Investment Programme** – the revised General Investment Programme for 2021/22 amounted to £17.451m following the quarter 1 report. At quarter 2 the programme had been increased by £2.947m to £20.398m as shown at paragraph 7.2.

The overall spending on the General Investment Programme for the second quarter of 2021/22 was £3.111m, which was 15% of the 2021/22 programme and 15% of the active programme. This was detailed further at Appendix J.

- **Housing Investment Programme** – the Housing Investment Programme for 2021/22 following the quarter 1 report amounted to £29.047m. this had been further adjusted to £30.248m during the second quarter of 2021/22. A summary of the changes was shown in paragraph 7.8.

d) invited members' comments and questions.

Question: Members asked what the Money allocated to Wigford Way was spent on.

Response: The money was spent on feasibility studies.

Question: Members asked how many buy back properties had been purchased.

Response: There had been 18 properties that had been bought this financial year which varied in size in specific areas where there was a higher demand for properties.

Question: Members commented that there was an issue with properties being left in a poor state of repair and asked whether tenants were being asked to leave them in a better condition so that the turnaround for the house was quicker.

Response: Pre-termination inspections weren't able to take place during COVID, but these were now being carried out. Tenants were charged for damages, but this money was difficult to collect. Gas inspections and electrical inspections needed to take place before a property was re-let which could delay the property being let.

Question: Members asked how much the recharges equated to.

Response: This information was to be forwarded onto the committee.

Question: Members asked what the increased cost to PPASB was and if the income for car parking had increased.

Response: The extra money for PPASB was for a temporary member of staff to help the team over the COVID period. Car parking income started the year low but has picked up and was on the way to reach the income target.

RESOLVED that:

1. Information on costs for void recharges be forwarded to the Committee.
2. The content of the report be noted.

46. Work Programme for 2021/22 Update

Clare Stait, Democratic Services Officer:

- a) presented the draft work programme for 2020/21 as detailed at Appendix A of her report
- b) advised that the work programme for the Performance Scrutiny Committee was put forward annually for approval by Council; the work programme was then regularly updated throughout the year in consultation with the Performance Scrutiny Committee and its Chair
- c) reported that items had been scheduled in accordance with the existing work programme and officers' guidance regarding the meetings at which the most up-to-date information could be reported to the committee; the work programme also included the list of portfolio holders under scrutiny
- d) requested any relevant comments or changes to the proposed work programme for 2020/21.

RESOLVED that:

- 1. The meeting scheduled for 9 December 2021 be cancelled and the items for discussion on that date be moved to the following meeting scheduled to be held in January 2022.
- 2. The work programme 2020/21 be noted.

47. Strategic Risk Register - Quarterly Review

Jaclyn Gibson, Chief Finance Officer:

- a) presented Performance Scrutiny Committee with a status report of the revised Strategic Risk Register as at the end of the second quarter 2021/22
- b) reported that the strategic risk registers currently contained thirteen risks as follows:
 - 1) Failure to engage & influence effectively the Council's strategic partners, council staff and all stakeholders to deliver against e.g., Council's Vision 2025
 - 2) Failure to deliver a sustainable Medium-Term Financial Strategy (that supports delivery of Vision 2025).
 - 3) Failure to deliver the Towards Financial Sustainability Programme whilst ensuring the resilience of the Council.
 - 4) Failure to ensure compliance with statutory duties/functions and appropriate governance arrangements were in place.
 - 5) Failure to protect the local authority's vision 2025 due to changing structures and relationships in local government and impact on size, scale and scope of the Council.
 - 6) Unable to meet the emerging changes required in the Council's culture, behaviour and skills to support the delivery of the council's

Vision 2020/2025 and the transformational journey to one Council approach.

- 7) Insufficient levels of resilience and capacity exist in order to deliver key strategic projects & services within the Council.
- 8) Decline in the economic prosperity within the City Centre.
- 9) Failure to deliver key strategic projects.
- 10) Failure of the Council's key contractors and partners to remain sustainable and continue to deliver value for money
- 11) Failure to put in place safe working practices and social distancing measures to protect officers and service users.
- 12) Failure to protect the vulnerable in relation to the Council's PREVENT and safeguarding duties.
- 13) Failure to mitigate against the risk of a successful cyber-attack against the council.

RESOLVED that the Strategic Risk Register as at the end of the second quarter 2021/22 be noted.

48. 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.

49. Strategic Risk Register - Quarterly Review

Jaclyn Gibson, Chief Finance Officer:

- a) provided members with the revised Strategic Risk Register as attached at Appendix A.
- b) invited members' questions and comments.

RESOLVED that the Strategic Risk Register as at the end of the second quarter 2021/22 be noted.