

Present: Councillor Pat Vaughan (*in the Chair*),
Councillor Loraine Woolley, Councillor David Clarkson,
Councillor Thomas Dyer, Councillor
Rebecca Longbottom, Councillor Laura McWilliams,
Councillor Lucinda Preston, Councillor Christopher Reid
and Councillor Helena Mair

Apologies for Absence: None.

50. Confirmation of Minutes - 18 November 2021

During consideration of the minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2021 it was agreed that Councillor Pat Vaughan should have been listed as *In the Chair*, as although he had not been formally appointed as the Chair by Council, he had acted as temporary chair for this meeting.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2021 be confirmed and signed as a correct record, subject to the above amendment being made.

51. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

52. Fire Safety Update

Andrew McNeil, Assistant Director, Housing and Matt Hillman, Assistant Director, Housing:

- a) presented a report to Performance Scrutiny Committee with an update of actions/progress on fire safety in light of the Hackitt review following the tragic events at Grenfell Tower;
- b) explained the current position on fire safety in paragraph 6.1 of the report and the future position in paragraph 6.5 of the report; and
- c) invited members comments and questions.

During the discussion on the report, the following points were noted:

- It was confirmed that none of the buildings owned by the City of Lincoln Council or any privately owned buildings had the combustible cladding on.
- Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service had continued its inspection programme with an inspection of St Botolph's Court carried out in December 2021, in which minor issues had been highlighted. These included remedial work on some letter boxes and the moving of furniture. All towers had previously been inspected.
- The draft Building Safety Bill; Fire Safety Bill; and the Fire Safety Order consultation would improve safety standards for residents of all blocks of flats of all heights, with even more stringent approaches and oversight for buildings in scope. It was confirmed that there would be no further

- buildings in scope as a result of the proposed changes to encompass buildings of 11 metres or higher to ensure building safety.
- It was confirmed that the *Accountable Person*, as referred to on page 12 of the agenda pack, was the Chief Executive / lead officer of an organisation. Whereas the *Responsible Person* was the building safety manager who provided assurance over compliance.
 - It was also confirmed that in anticipation of the *Building Safety Bill*, a meeting was held with Tenancy regarding the development of Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs). In response to a question, it was noted that the frequency of which the plans would be reviewed was yet to be determined. However, a process for reviewing these plans would be reviewed, as it was important these remained as up-to-date as possible. It was commented that it was easier to manage those plans within sheltered accommodation schemes, as support staff / wardens were better able to maintain the plans. It was also advised that the way in which PEEPs could be accessed by the relevant agencies, such as Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue services was currently being explored. The Committee expressed a wish for this information to be accessible electronically, perhaps via Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue's Mobile Data Terminals. It was advised that none of the other district councils were effected by the requirement of PEEPs, as they did not have any high-rise buildings which met the threshold.
 - The Housing Repair Service had achieved BM Trada accreditation for fire door installation. Combined with the recruitment of a window and door compliance team leader and an increase in the number of joiners, this had allowed for an accredited maintenance and installation process of fire doors. This had improved the replacement and repair of fire doors identified during the fire risk assessment, reducing the timeframe between issue and repair. Furthermore, it was advised there was a rolling training programme for the issue and repair of fire doors. It was advised that it was important for as many staff to be trained in this area to ensure succession planning and business continuity. Those staff who had received training had commented that they were pleased to gain a new skill set. At present, four staff had received accreditation. It was also noted that the roll-out and replacement of fire doors was completed over a 15 – 20 year period and as the average age of the workforce was 49, it was essential that as many staff were trained. The Committee welcomed the rotation of staff for the replacement of fire doors to ensure the health and wellbeing of individuals.
 - It was advised that it had been identified prior to the inspection of St Botolph's that there was no place to issue certification of the tower blocks and sheltered schemes when work had been conducted, such as gas and electrical testing, which should be stored in an outdoor location to enable Fire and Rescue services to access the documentation. The Committee was assured that a solution was currently being explored and that Fire and Rescue would be consulted.
 - It was confirmed that any reports of hoarding were fed back to Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue, as they had a team dedicated to respond to such reports. Hoarding cases were typically picked up via routine electrical or gas annual safety checks. It was advised that there were a small number of hoarding cases within Lincoln, which both Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue and the City Council worked collaboratively to address.

RESOLVED

That the progress made by the Council in addressing issues and proposals from the Hackitt Review, be noted.

53. One Council - Creating Value Processes

Simon Walters, Director for Communities and Environment:

- a) presented a report to Performance Scrutiny Committee with an overview of the 'One Council' programme of work and the early successes achieved;
- b) highlighted that 'Creating Value Processes' had delivered a number of projects since its inception, which included:
 - The design and launch of a new intranet accessible to all staff, with a strong focus on our corporate values. This had been the platform enabling the new 'in-brief' comm's videos.
 - Created multiple e-forms for internal admin processes that were automated, removing annual processing where possible.
 - Launched a new online e-learning package for basic digital skills which was available to all staff.
 - Partnered with Microsoft to create a bespoke training programme for low code development (i.e., equipping our own staff with the skills to develop automated processes rather than 'buy in')
 - Moved to online first culture for meetings, including implementation of devices in committee rooms to enable people to 'dial in' to meetings, helping to contribute to reduced Co2 emissions and support home working.
 - Transferred the City Council to a new website offering increased functionality.
 - Evaluated the telephone calls into the contact centre to identify those services that caused the highest volume of calls and developing work streams to reduce that number.
 - Delivered accessibility guidance and training to make sure all the material we produced was easily understood and readable by a wide range of audiences. This resulted in our website becoming one of the most accessible local authority sites as evaluated by the Society for Innovation, Technology and Modernisation (within top 30 of websites in mid-2021).
 - Created a new website (microsite) for the visitor information service with its own look and feel.
 - Developed a suite of new user friendly and accessible housing correspondence, which had reduced the number of people calling the contact centre with queries.
 - Made tweaks to council tax bills to aid clarity for the customer and reduce queries into the contact centre.
 - Housing tenancy services – created a new tenant sign up process to make it smoother and easier for new tenants and staff.
 - Streamlined the customer journey between UC team, Tenancy Services and Welfare Advice so claimants were easily transferred between the various functions and ensured they had access to the funds they were entitled to.
- c) explained that current activity was focussed on:

- Developing an innovative national 'on line' Housing repairs reporting tool, which would ultimately enable tenants to identify and book faults/appointments via our website.
- Developing a range of 'on line' forms for Community services - 'on line' forms for Missed bins, New bins, Clinical waste, Bulky goods. All designed to enable residents to report issues 24/7 and take pressure off the contact centre.
- Extensive work to replace key aging IT systems.
- Continuing redesign of a whole range of corporate forms and automated processes ranging from annual leave to order requisitions.
- Automated customer satisfaction - assessing a new way to capture customer satisfaction in an automated way and so avoiding additional pressure on staff in the contact centre.
- Overhaul of the council's processes and supporting software for recording and acting upon Risk Management.
- Exploring other IT applications designed to reduce the pressure on the contact centre for example, Fix My Street.
- Development of a range of options for benefits claimants to reduce the level of multiple changes to ongoing claims and hence provide greater clarity to them.
- Overseeing the further development of the council's intranet site, providing key information to staff.

d) highlighted that future activity yet to be planned included:

- Maximising the benefit of moving to a unified telephony system.
- New individual websites (micro sites) for key service areas such as crematorium, car parks and building control.

The Committee was provided with an opportunity to ask questions, where the following points were noted:

- It was queried why there was a need for a separate microsite for visitor information, as this could be seen as duplication as the Visit Lincoln website was already well established. It was therefore suggested that the Visit Lincoln website was utilised. It was also commented that a lot of content on the website linked to the City of Lincoln Council's website, rather than relying on its own content. In response to this it was advised that the website was not aiming to compete with Visit Lincoln but to develop a transactional website to sell products;
- The Committee was pleased to see a move to more online reporting forms and suggested further areas where this could be introduced. It was also suggested that for delayed bin collections that a text messaging alert was sent to affected customers, as it would save the customer from having to report the missed collection via the online form.
- It was advised that a key focus of moving to digital reporting was to reduce the level of contact with customer services. However, whilst the head count within customer services had reduced, there had been a general increase in contacts across all platforms, including telephone calls.
- The Council had implemented hybrid working practises with a mixture of home and office based working, depending on the role. As less office space was required as a result of these new hybrid working arrangements, the space at City Hall could be rationalised and this was currently being explored.

- It was suggested that a member development session on the development of HRS online reporting was provided to all councillors.
- It was requested that the Committee received an item on the wider One Council programme, encompassing all four themes.
- It was confirmed that the branding for the proposed microsite for the crematorium would be different from that of the City Council.
- A member of the Committee encouraged officers to implement a Change Control Board for the One Council programme to ensure that from an IT perspective, one aspect of the programme did not negatively impact on another.
- A councillor highlighted an issue with the electronic Vision 2025 survey, which had recently been launched. It was confirmed this issue would be explored and corrected. It was highlighted that there had been a good response rate to date.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the progress made to date be noted.
- (2) That the Committee be presented with information on the wider One Council programme, including all four themes in three months.

54. Work Programme for 2021/22

Cheryl Evans, Democratic Services and Elections Manager:

- a) presented the draft work programme for the remainder of the municipal year 2021/22, as detailed at Appendix A of the 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; and
- d) requested any relevant comments or changes to the proposed work programme for 2022.

RESOLVED that the work programme 2020/21 be noted, subject to the inclusion of a report on the One Council Programme in three months.