



PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Thursday, 20 January
2022**

6.00 pm

**Committee Rooms 1-2,
City Hall**

Membership:	Councillors Pat Vaughan (Chair), Loraine Woolley (Vice-Chair), David Clarkson, Thomas Dyer, Rebecca Longbottom, Laura McWilliams, Lucinda Preston, Christopher Reid and Helena Mair
Substitute members:	Councillors Adrianna McNulty
Officers attending:	Democratic Services, Simon Walters (Strategic Director of Communities and Environment), Matthew Hillman (Assistant Director, Investment) and Andrew McNeil (Assistant Director, Housing Investment and Strategy)

AGENDA

SECTION A	Pages
1. Confirmation of Minutes - 18 November 2021	3 - 10
2. Declarations of Interest	
Please note that, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, when declaring interests members must disclose the existence and nature of the interest, and whether it is a disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI) or personal and/or pecuniary.	
3. Fire Safety Update	11 - 16
4. One Council - Creating Value Processes	17 - 22

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Present: None. (*in the Chair*),
Councillor Pat Vaughan, 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.

SUBJECT: FIRE SAFETY UPDATE

DIRECTORATE: HOUSING AND INVESTMENT

REPORT AUTHOR: ANDREW MCNEIL ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
MATT HILMAN ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

1. Purpose of Report:

1.1 To update committee on CoLC's actions / progress on fire safety in light of the Hackitt review following the tragic events at Grenfell Tower.

1.2 The report will update committee on:

The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG now Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, DLUHC) report along with the "Building a Safer Future" consultation

Recommendations taken from the Hackitt report accepted by the MHCLG now DLUHC

The progress made in respect of these recommendations in advance of their proposed implementation through legislation

2. Executive Summary

2.1 This report covers the background following the Grenfell Tower fire (June 2017), it covers the key recommendations and CoLC's current position relating to fire safety.

2.2 Which includes:

- Fire strategies and considerations for building the risk profile
- Resident engagement
- Investment in infrastructure strategy
- Overall, in-house competence to be able to react to the new legislation
- Collaboration with Fire and Rescue and Lincolnshire Emergency Planning

2.3 To conclude, we have no combustible cladding on any of our in-scope buildings. We have extended the knowledge and skills of our workforce which has built upon our previous experience, to enhance our awareness of the risks posed by fire. We continue to develop our oversight and apply a risk-based approach to our improvement and investment programmes.

Changes to current legislation, the Fire Safety Bill was made law on 29 Apr 21 however is not yet in force, this is expected early 2022. The Building Safety Bill is at report stage and is expected to receive Royal Assent and become law Apr – Jul

22, this will be introduced in stages over a period of time. We continue to anticipate the changes and are working on being in a position to satisfy and surpass the new legislative requirements.

The completion of fire infrastructure strategies, development of meaningful resident engagement and the collaboration with stakeholders, are all key in delivering fire safety assurance. This will result in delivering safe properties for the city's residents and ensuring a 'safer future' for the buildings.

3. Background

- 3.1 CoLC has benefited from professional fire safety advice over the last year and continues engagement to reassure a strong grasp of the risk is maintained and how best to manage it. Lincs Fire & Rescue Service have continued their inspection programme with St Botolph's Court carried out in Dec 21. All Towers were inspected previously.
- 3.2 The Grenfell Tower fire in West London on 14 June 2017 claimed 72 lives. The tragedy exposed serious failings across the whole system of building and managing high-rise homes. The proposed legislative changes are in reaction to this and the government have produced these Bills to address the issues raised in the Hackett Inquiry. Residents and leaseholders will have access to vital safety information about their building and new complaints handling requirements will be introduced to make sure effective action is taken where concerns are raised.
- 3.3 Together, measures in the draft Building Safety Bill (BSB), Fire Safety Bill (FSB), and Fire Safety Order (FSO) consultation will improve safety standards for residents of all blocks of flats of all heights, with even more stringent approaches and oversight for buildings in scope. When residents move into a building that falls under the new set of rules, it will need to be registered with the Building Safety Regulator and apply for a Building Assurance Certificate. The Accountable Person (AP) will need to conduct and maintain a safety case risk assessment for the building and appoint a Building Safety Manager to oversee it day to day.
- 3.4 The HSE will introduce a self-funding Building Safety Regulator, that will be empowered to test landlord's competence to manage the in-scope buildings, have veto rights on the appointment of the Building Safety Manager (BSM) and have far greater powers to sanction those who do not follow the legislation.

4. Legislative changes and effect

- 4.1 The detail for the above-mentioned changes is vast and to summarise this we need to delineate between the BSB and FSB. The legislation is considering a mutual approach, although terminology reflects the CDM regulations in one and the Regulatory Reform (fire safety) Order in the other. The main thing here is the Responsible Person/ AP is the same thing in terms of duty holder responsibility.
- 4.2 This BSB is introducing a whole suite of changes that do align to CDM regulations, so there is familiarity in that. What is different is the introduction of a regulator, described above, that will supply a Building Assurance Certificate, which is specific to that building, on completion and production of a host of documents and other requirements in an application process. Without this the AP will be in breach and

liable to prosecution.

- 4.3 The application will require the name of the AP, the BSM (competence not yet agreed and is required so the regulator can veto the appointment if not competent). A copy of the Building Safety Case report – new provision and a document that holds the Fire Risk Assessments, Fire strategy, test certificates, Alarm types, et al in one place – the so-called golden thread. A resident engagement strategy. Any information on the prescribed mandatory occurrence reporting – breaches in fire safety compliance/ structural concerns. Provisions for information routes to the residents and regulator alike.
- 4.4 So, the BSB is looking for all the information relating to the in-scope building type of high risk residential (18m or taller – may widen in future to encompass more building types inclusive of office types) relating to building safety. Then having a means to engage with the AP and BSM and understanding of how information is shared with residents. It wants to see active engagement and focus on fire safety. How the authority responds to safety issues and how it manages the overall safety of the in-scope buildings. This will be applicable to all buildings of this type, at any stage of construction and of course current buildings in use.

5 Fire Safety Bill

- 5.1 The FSB will essentially do three things:
- Amend the FSO so that the building owner is required to manage and reduce the risk of fire, related to structure and external walls of the building, including cladding, balconies and windows as well as entrance doors to flats and within communal areas.
 - Provide a platform for the introduction of secondary legislation to enable recommendations from the Grenfell Inquiry phase 1 to be introduced, which stated building owners and those that manage them should be responsible for a number of actions including lift inspections, evacuation plans and easily understandable fire safety instructions for residents.
 - Allow DLUHC to include other types of buildings in the FSO as is required by industry events as well as design and construction considerations.
- 5.2 Moving forward this will mean that the extent in which current FRA's are compiled will need to be extended to include more areas, especially the external balconies and façade of the buildings. This could also mean increased costs in upgrading the external windows to fire rating standards and will take the responsibility beyond the front door and into the flat itself.

6 Current and future position on fire safety

Current

- 6.1 The Housing Repair Service (HRS) have 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 allows for an accredited maintenance and installation process of fire doors. This has improved the replacement and repair of fire doors identified during FRA, reducing the timeframe between raising an issue and repair. Continuing the relationship between Safety Advisory Team and HRS, these are prioritised on a risk-based approach.

- 6.2 Remedial works identified from the previous Type 1 FRA's were completed. Type 4 FRAs (destructive assessment of both the common parts of the building, and portion of flats) were conducted in Oct 21 on all 3 tower blocks. This will provide a holistic assessment of fire risk for each tower block. The reports will be issued in the near future, early indication is that no major issues were identified. The reports will identify any remedial works required, on a risk based approach. Investment and HRS will action as required.
- 6.3 St Botolph's Court received a Fire Inspection by Lincs Fire & Rescue Service in Dec 21. Only minor areas identified which were rectified at the time of inspection. Feedback from the inspection is due soon.
- 6.4 The Resident Engagement Strategy is currently being developed to comply with the Building Safety Bill (BSB).

Future

- 6.5 In anticipation of the BSB, a meeting was held with Tenancy regarding personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs). Tenancy will to the best of their ability, identify vulnerable persons within each tower block in order to produce a PEEP as required. This is very much subject to agreement and participation of the tenant. Once these have been produced the information will be passed to the Fire Service. The information will require management and a periodic review to ensure validity.
- 6.6 The sheltered schemes, and Hamilton House, require FRAs during 2022. Work is ongoing to procure these during 2022 along with emergency light testing.
- 6.7 From 1 Feb 21, 29% of low-rise purpose-built blocks of flats have FRAs, work continues to capture all the housing stock requiring an assessment. Other common areas have been identified which were not previously. Currently the list has increased from 622 to 644 and it is anticipated this will continue to grow, as all common areas (any shared area such as open walkways, balconies, stairwells, lobbies, corridors) require an assessment. No major noncompliance have been found, where tenants actions have raised concern or increased risk, these have been managed effectively between SAT and Tenancy Services.
- 6.8 It was identified prior the inspection of St Botolph's that there is no place to issue certification to the tower blocks and sheltered schemes when work has been conducted, such as gas and electrical testing. This will be discussed, and a solution sought during 2022.
- 6.9 Static & Mobile caretakers continue to conduct periodic inspections of high- and low-rise purpose-built blocks of flats in line with the FSO. The high rise continue to

experience dumping of items along the means of escape however due to a proactive approach, items are removed within a short timeframe. Recruitment for caretaking positions is ongoing.

- 6.10 A reporting system to capture fire safety issues raised through the Responsible Officer Support Staff has been developed, this allows for the correct priority allocation to be issued. This will be monitored over the next year with adjustments as required.
- 6.11 The Safety Assurance Team will lead on the production of a comprehensive compliance report across all areas of housing safety assurance inc fire safety. This will have oversight by senior managers in the department throughout.5.

7 Strategic Priorities

7.1 Let's deliver quality housing

The measures we are taking aim to ensure that our tenants and leaseholders in Higher Risk Buildings have fire safety at the core of our management.

8. Organisational Impacts

8.1 Finance (including whole life costs where applicable)

All costs related to fire safety works are currently funded from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Future works required to comply with legislative changes will be assessed and incorporated into a refreshed HRA Business Plan.

8.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

As outlined in the report

8.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

8.4 Human Resources

The Safety Assurance Team, within Housing and Investment currently advises and oversees fire assurance. The Manager role and the new Fire Safety Advisor role increases the overall fire safety knowledge, and expertise within the department.

8.5 Land, Property and Accommodation

The report covers how the council is ensuring fire safety in its presidential property

8.6 Corporate Health and Safety implications

At present the proposed role of Building Safety Manager will have duties related to High risk residential buildings. However there may be future wider implications for corporate Health and Safety.

9. Risk Implications

9.1 (i) Options Explored

Whilst the residential building we manage do not contain any combustible cladding the proposals explored in the DLUHC consultation shape the option we have proposed.

9.2 (ii) Key risks associated with the preferred approach

The preferred approach will enable the council to adopt the DLUHC proposals at an early stage. Whilst there will be a transition period of up to 5 years, not looking to encompass these proposals could create a reputational issue.

10. Recommendation

The committee notes the progress that the council has made in addressing the issues and proposals from the Hackitt review.

Is this a key decision?	No
Do the exempt information categories apply?	Yes/No
Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply?	Yes/No
How many appendices does the report contain?	None
List of Background Papers:	None
Lead Officer:	Andrew McNeil, Assistant Director Telephone (01522) 873214

SUBJECT:	ONE COUNCIL – CREATING VALUE PROCESSES
DIRECTORATE:	CORPORATE REPORT
REPORT AUTHOR:	SIMON WALTERS, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Further to the request in a previous meeting of this committee, this report seeks to provide an overview of the above programme of work and cover the early successes achieved.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Creating Value Processes theme (CVP) sits within a wider programme of activity designed to drive forward the council's 'One Council' programme. The programme consists of four themes covering:

- Use of technology,
- Our physical assets,
- Organisational development and
- CVP, which itself focuses on streamlining processes and procedures to make the organisation as efficient as possible.

Each Strategic Director leads a theme and is supported by a cross authority working group.

- 2.2 The programme has been operating since late 2019 and despite Covid impacting heavily on the agreed programme of work over the last 18 months (the focus was quickly moved to rolling out new technology to staff to enable remote working), the pace is once more picking up again.
- 2.3 The CVP theme has achieved a number of notable successes to date, as covered in the main body of this report, with many new initiatives planned over the months ahead.
- 2.4 However, Members are encouraged to note that the four themes work seamlessly together – all supporting each other, so the success of any one theme is entirely dependent on the success of the entire 'One Council' programme.

3. Background

- 3.1 Our One Council initiative covers four themes of activity designed over time to modernise every aspect of the council's operation and function. Whilst the concept was developed during 2019, the technology theme within the programme was "super charged" at the onset of the covid 19 pandemic. As staff were sent home in compliance with government advice and direction, work was quickly rolled out to

give staff the technology they needed to stay in touch and continue working from home. This was a herculean achievement in such a short space of time and resulted in the technology theme moving forward at great speed with the full capacity of the organisation behind it. It has revolutionised the way staff work and now all staff have access to their own email account/Teams and the intranet. This has been positively received by staff at all levels and locations within the council, including for example remote (from City Hall) working toilet attendants and car parks team.

3.2 Now the authority is emerging from the worst of the pandemic (but noting the ongoing operational impact from new variants) , organisational capacity is once more being applied across the four themes, including the CVP theme.

3.3 The concept of One Council can be summarised as:

“Understanding and meeting the needs of our many customers, including residents, visitors, businesses, public and voluntary organisations. It involves:

- Instilling a website first culture and embracing digital technologies to improve service delivery across the organisation
- Delivering excellent and consistent customer service with customers choosing a cost-effective method of contacting us that meets their needs
- Redesigning services to maximise efficiencies and improve the customer experience”

This puts the customer, whoever they are, at heart of everything we do. It articulates how our customers will be interacting with us in 5 to 10 years’ time – their needs, wants and preferences

In summary, its about providing the right services to our customers, in a way that meets their needs, and at a time that’s convenient to them.

3.4 The terms of reference established for CVP essentially distil down to:

Using sound evidence to develop a programme of activity with two distinct areas of focus :

- a. Outward looking: Redesigning services that enable customer interaction 24/7, starting with a review of the high-volume services
- b. Inward looking: Redesigning processes that enable the organisation to flex very quickly to meet emerging challenges and opportunities.

3.5 The CVP steering group consists of a number of key staff brought together to oversee delivery of the projects. These staff come from a mix of corporate services and staff managing key high-volume front-line services.

4. Progress to Date

4.1 CVP has delivered a number of projects since its inception. These include:

- Designed and launched a new Intranet accessible to all staff, with a strong focus on our corporate values. This has also been the platform enabling the new 'in-brief' comm's videos.
- Created multiple e-forms for internal admin processes that are automated, removing manual processing where possible
- Launched a new online e-learning package for basic digital skills available to all staff
- Partnered with Microsoft to create a bespoke training programme for low code development (ie 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 cause 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 produce is 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 has 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 are easily transferred between the various functions and ensure they have access to the funds they are entitled to

4.2 Current activity is focussed on:

- Developing an innovative national 'on line' Housing repairs reporting tool, which will 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 -eg 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

5. Future Activity

5.1 Activity yet to be programmed in includes:

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

5.2 As the other pillars progress, we anticipate that CVP will be passed projects to support these other work streams.

We anticipate more of these cross- pillar projects in the future. Soon to start are a review of our recruitment process, maximising our investment of 365 by continued development of automated processes and monitoring the effectiveness of any asset trials.

5.3 It should be noted that this programme is dynamic and hence subject to change on a regular basis as new and more pressing demands emerge either corporately or within service areas.

6. Strategic Priorities

6.1 Let's reduce all kinds of inequality

A particular focus of the programme is centred on how our customers access the services they need - be it on- line, via the contact centre or face to face.

7. Organisational Impacts

7.1 Finance (including whole life costs where applicable)

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Any resources are allocated via specific reports on the individual projects summarised here.

7.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

No specific implications

7.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

CVP is core to ensuring this is designed into everything we do.

8. Recommendation

8.1 Members are recommended to:

- i) Note the progress made
- ii) Offer any comments on the programme delivery so far
- iii) Indicate when a further report would prove desirable

Is this a key decision?

No

Do the exempt information categories apply?

No

Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply?

No

How many appendices does the report contain?

None

List of Background Papers:

None

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