

**Present:** Councillor Gary Hewson (*in the Chair*),  
Councillor Pat Vaughan, Councillor David Clarkson,  
Councillor Thomas Dyer, Councillor  
Rebecca Longbottom, Councillor Laura McWilliams,  
Councillor Christopher Reid and Councillor  
Lorraine Woolley

**Apologies for Absence:** Councillor Lucinda Preston

**17. Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were received.

**18. Portfolio Holder under Scrutiny - Our People and Resources**

Councillor Richard Metcalfe, Portfolio Holder for Our People and Resources and Leader of the Council, presented a report to Performance Scrutiny Committee outlining the steps to recovery coping within the pandemic were in the following areas:

- a) **Our People** – many changes had been made in the way we worked:
- Many staff still worked a significant proportion of their time from home with limited working from our sites and controlled and safe working on the front line. All this change had been accommodated whilst maintaining service delivery in very challenging circumstances
  - HR had developed lots of additional support to help both our physical and mental health support open to both members and officers
  - The roll out of new IT kit was halfway through along with the technology under the 'One Council' technology pillar to allow all staff who need it to work on Office 365 from September 2021
  - Decision making governance was maintained throughout 2020/21 by using Teams and Zoom meetings
  - The Member Bulletin had proved to be a popular way of sharing important information and keeping everyone up to date
  - Staff pulled out all the stops to manage a well-planned and executed election service with not one but three different elections on a single day
- b) key services continued with minimal negative effect on residents and businesses. Some key points to note include:
- All defined critical services remained functional throughout lockdowns
  - Excellent communication delivered on our website and social media, helped the community understand what they could and couldn't do and where to get help. Alongside social media messaging we had expanded our use of video messaging to keep the messages fresh and interesting
  - Significant level of support for the most vulnerable – including those rough sleeping and those suffering from social isolation

- Customer Services had introduced a safe way of working with those in most need of face-to-face help – whilst managing even more telephone calls than usual
- Revenues and Benefits had supported more customers as people had dealt with the changes caused by fluctuating work and changing Universal Credit amounts
- We were now able to open up a wider (though still restricted) service level at our crematorium, and had started work on the new facility there
- Despite facing issues with more cars parked in narrow spaces than in the past, our waste collection teams had fulfilled all collections including green waste
- We had introduced footfall counters into the city centre as part of the recovery plans, these monitored how many and where we were seeing increased visitors and sat alongside our CCTV service which monitored for any ASB
- Our FH&S team had been working under DEFRA guidance to ensure they still covered ‘at risk’ businesses whilst also helping all businesses deal with the rules for covid safety
- Housing had continued to work through the year, collecting rent, repairing void properties and dealing with maintenance issues
- Housing maintenance had commenced a pilot of a new scheduled repairs service
- All public parks and commons, including Hartsholme Country Park, remained open for use throughout the lock down period, providing vital opportunities for health and recreation and were extremely busy as a result.
- Street cleaning teams remained working and modified their work to take advantage of reduced footfall, tackling other troublesome issues such as graffiti.
- The allotments service never stopped, and we had 98% take up of usable plots
- The bus station, and its public toilets, had remained open and parking was available across the city, although as expected, at a lower level than before the pandemic started
- Since the second lockdown at the beginning of October the DMD team had been leading a corporate team in the administration of the Government’s Covid Business support grant schemes. Over 750 local businesses had been supported to date with grants valuing a total of £18.6 m.
- We had developed strong relationships with partners to enable a swift High Street Recovery and were accessing up to £170k worth of funding to make this easier for businesses and customers alike
- We had appointed a Climate Change Manager to take forward projects identified within the new Let’s address the challenge of Climate Change priority

c) outlined the key achievements in 2020/21 in the following areas:

- Financial Sustainability
- Revenues Shared Service
- Procurement
- Property Services
- Emergency Planning
- Business Continuity

- Risk Management
  - Brexit
  - Corporate Health and Safety
  - Human Resources
  - Work Based Learning – Apprenticeships
  - Craft apprenticeship scheme
  - Corporate Communications and media relations
  - Civic and International Partnerships
  - Legal Services
- d) highlighted that following the completion of the recovery stage, work on Vision 2025 would commence with focused attention on the following key projects:
- Western Growth Corridor site to unlock 3,200 homes and 20ha of commercial employment land
  - Completion of the De Wint Court Extra Care Facility
  - Building on the success of the first phase of the Sincil Bank Regeneration Scheme, to achieve a long-term, physical transformation in this part of the City of Lincoln Council
  - Progress would be made on the Boultham Lake Restoration
  - Work to enhance the Crematorium would be completed
  - Work would commence on developing business cases for projects under the Towns Deal umbrella
- e) invited members' comments and questions.

Question: Members asked whether fraud was a problem for the Council.

Response: There was a well-established regime that had to be followed to meet expectations regarding fraud. We were rigorous as a council to protect ourselves against fraud.

Question: Members asked for information on how footfall had increased in the city since the renovations had taken place.

Response: Footfall data had been collected periodically for a while. Information regarding footfall would be reported to the committee via a presentation later in the year, when a full year's figures had been collected.

Question: Members asked what could be done to help residents within the city as life expectancy was poor.

Response: This was closely correlated to social and economic disadvantage and a lot of residents within the city were on low incomes with 1 in 4 households below the poverty line. This was a long-term challenge which we had been committed to try and help with for a long time.

Question: Members asked for more information on the low-cost supermarket that would be located centrally.

Response: Officers would forward more information on the low-cost supermarket to the committee.

Suggestion: Members suggested promoting the Lincoln Guildhall more as it was an underexploited asset.

Question: Members asked if there was scope to rationalise assets at City Hall.

Response: This had been discussed at CMT for some time. The new normal ways of working would certainly include more remote working. This indirectly helped with congestion within the city and people taking unnecessary journeys. There was a lot more work to be done on this but there was a potential to raise income.

Question: Members asked if the H&S of employees had been thought about for staff working from home.

Response: The physical and emotional aspect of this had been looked into and continued to be monitored.

Question: Members asked whether having a mix of employees working from home and from the office would help us to recruit to difficult posts as people may apply from further afield.

Response: This was an incentive and hopefully would work to our advantage.

Question: Members asked for an update on the zero-carbon emissions motion which was passed in 2019.

Response: The report was scheduled for the September 2021 meeting of Performance Scrutiny Committee. The roadmap and progress that had been made would be sent to this meeting.

Question: Members asked when the revised Vision 2025 would be shown to members.

Response: Members would have the opportunity to view this when it was presented to Full Council.

Question: Members asked how the Social Responsibility Charter benefitted businesses and Lincoln and whether there were any further developments that were foreseen.

Response: Officers were always open to suggestions for further development. Businesses benefitted from the charter in recognition for being ethical and having a responsible attitude to their existence. Network conferences were hoped to be re-introduced from next year. The businesses also had the advantage of advertisement streams via social media.

Question: Members asked if there had been a delay in furloughing staff at the beginning of the pandemic.

Response: Furloughing staff had taken longer as there had been doubt as to whether local government would be included in the furlough scheme. As soon as it was clear that we were included then this option was taken.

Question: Members asked when information would be available on further cost cutting measures.

Response: This would be available in the next few months as it was a slow process. All members would have the opportunity to input into the business cases that would come forward.

Question: Members asked what the way forward would be for residents/businesses who were struggling to pay their council tax/business rates.

Response: As a collection authority this was always an area that required a reasonable balance as we didn't want residents to struggle but we also needed the income. If we could help a little over time, then we would, as we needed to be realistic.

Comment: Members commented that they didn't know the process for making a bid towards funding for community projects.

Response: The process would be outlined for members.

Question: Members asked how much money had been spent on negotiations with Nottingham City Council over the storage of artifacts from the Usher Art Gallery.

Response: No contract had been signed and we decided to not proceed with the transaction.

Question: Members asked whether there was any data available for staff wellbeing from HR.

Response: Regular staff surveys took place to highlight areas that were of concern. Officers would review whether numerical and written updates could be included in well-being activity within quarterly reports.

Question: Members asked how we compared to other authorities for sickness levels and whether we expected these to rise when we returned to more normal ways of working.

Response: We had looked at what the national comparisons were within Lincolnshire. The overall picture was good, but it could change and we needed to bear in mind that our workforce was aging.

Question: Members asked whether there were any future plans to modernise the way the council communicated.

Response: New ways of communication were always being looked for. Our Communications Team was very small, but it did a good job with social media. Any suggestions for improvement were welcome.

Question: Members asked whether they could be consulted upon if virtual meetings were extended beyond 6 September 2021.

Response: The need to revert back to virtual meetings up until 6 September 2021 had been a disappointing setback and we did want to return to face-to-face meetings as soon as possible. Members would be consulted upon as reasonably possible.

Comment: Members commented that virtual meetings were easier for Councillors with young children as they were more accessible.

Question: Members had received concerns from residents regarding greening of the city and asked if there were plans to see more green areas within the city.

Response: The work the Climate Commission was doing was very important and would incorporate green spaces.

RESOLVED that the content of the report and discussions held be noted with thanks.

## **19. Updated Performance Targets Report for 2021/22**

Pat Jukes, Business Manager – Corporate Policy:

- a) presented and update to Performance Scrutiny Committee on agreed performance targets for 2021/22 for initial reporting in Q1 2021/22 and to provided additional supporting information on the rationale for the changes
- b) highlighted that Appendix A detailed the measures chosen for target monitoring. The targets were developed by the Assistant Directors in consultation with their Service Managers and then confirmed by Directors and Portfolio Holders, before presented to Performance Scrutiny Committee and Executive.

An additional column had been included for those measures with confirmed changes which summarised the rationale for the change and any planned next steps

- c) explained that there was a total of 19 proposed changes as follows:
  - Four measures had been removed altogether for 2021/22, all of which were targeted measures:
    - CS 4 – Average Customer Feedback Score (face to face enquiries – score out of 10). Not currently able to be collected
    - CS 5 – Customer Satisfaction with their Phone Call to Customer Services. Not currently able to be collected.
    - PRS 1 – Return on New Commercial Investments. Commercial property purchases no longer being pursued.
    - HM 3 – Percentage of Tenants Satisfied with Repairs and Maintenance. Not currently able to be collected
  - A further two currently targeted measures had been changed to volumetric measures due to ongoing uncertainty. The measures proposed were:
    - WBL 2 – Number of New Starters on the Apprenticeship Scheme
    - WBL 3 – Percentage of Apprentices Moving into Education, Employment or Training
  - Of the remaining targeted measures there were now 13 confirmed changes reflective of the current situation:

- ACC 1 – Average Return on Investment Portfolio
- REV 1 – Council Tax – In Year Collection Rate for Lincoln
- REV 2 – Business Rates – In Year Collection Rate for Lincoln
- REV 3 - Number of Outstanding Customer Changes in the Revenues Team
- BE 1 – Average (YTD) Days to Process New Housing Benefit Claims from Date Received
- BE 3 – Number of Housing Benefits/ Council Tax Support Customers Awaiting Assessment
- BE 4 – Percentage of Risk-Based Quality Checks made where Benefit Entitlement was Correct
- PH 3 – Number of Empty Homes Brought Back into Use
- WM 1 – Percentage of Waste Recycled or Composted
- RC 1 – Rent Collected as a Proportion of Rent Owed
- RC 2 – Current Tenant Arrears as a Percentage of the Annual Rent Debit
- HV 2 – Average Re-Let Time Calendar Days for all Dwellings – Standard Re-Lets
- HV 3 – Average Re-Let Time Calendar Days for all Dwellings (Including Major Works)

d) highlighted that following the call-in of the original report seen by Performance Scrutiny on 22 June 2021 and then by Executive on 24 June 2021, a Select Scrutiny Committee sat on Wednesday 26 July 2021 to decide on the way forward. It was agreed that:

- The performance targets for 2021/22 as agreed at Executive on 24 June 2021 would not be revisited – so stand as approved
- In future years the target setting process would be more robust, with fuller explanations and attendance by relevant senior officers at Performance Scrutiny Committee to explain the changes proposed and answer member questions
- The performance target report would go back to Performance Scrutiny Committee on 10 August 2021 in its entirety, accompanied with further explanations in order that members had the opportunity to understand fully why the targets had been changed

e) explained that as requested by CMT during the initial stages of developing the 2021/22 targets, there would be a review of the changed targets commencing in September 2021, in advance of the normal annual target setting process. This would focus on:

- Understanding whether we could be in a position before the year-end to revert the two temporary volumetric measures back to targeted measures
- Reviewing whether any progress had been made on identifying a different way of monitoring satisfaction
- A review of the 13 target changes to determine whether the targets should remain for the rest of the year as set
- Setting timescales for the formal review of all targets for 2022/23

f) invited members' comments and questions.

Question: Members asked for clarification on the timescale for both the short and long terms targets being reviewed at the end of Quarter 2 in September 2021.

Response: Both sets of targets would be looked at, with the short-term targets (those with proposed changes in 2021/22) being looked at first at the same timing as Q2 data, followed by the long-term targets as part of the normal annual review of targets.

Question: Members asked whether the targets that had changed due to Covid-19 would be changed once reviewed.

Response: If the targets needed to be changed then they would be.

Question: Members had concerns over the 'white paper' publication date being delayed and asked if it was a wise decision for the Council to stop advertising/educating residents about what recycling belonged in which bin.

Response: There was a lot going on at the moment regarding government consultations. Some aspects of the 'white paper' would move more quickly than others. Waste and recycling would be changing significantly over the next few years. More recycling initiatives were being rolled out locally and the education would be delivered alongside this.

Question: Members asked if it was common practice for garden waste to be placed into general waste bins.

Response: Garden waste should not be placed in domestic bins. If residents were found to be doing this then staff would be sent to try and educate the residents and explain how the process worked before enforcement action was taken.

RESOLVED that the rationale given for changes to targets for Q1 2021/22 be noted.