

Present: Councillors Councillor Gary Hewson (*in the Chair*), Martin Christopher, David Clarkson, Thomas Dyer, Rachel Storer, Pat Vaughan, Joshua Wells and Loraine Woolley

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Lucinda Preston

Also in Attendance: Councillor Sue Burke, Portfolio Holder for Reducing Inequality

38. Confirmation of Minutes - 28 September 2023

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2023 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

39. Matters Arising

Councillor Clarkson referred to question 7 in the Member Request Monitoring Table and commented that the figures provided in the comparable footfall data for the city centre during the weekend of Lincoln Live 2023 showed a drop in footfall compared to the same time last year. However, the response provided stated that there had been an uplift in footfall.

Simon Walters, Director of Communities and Environment clarified that the data was from various sources and that the percentage showed an uplift in visitor numbers to the City in 2023 when compared to 2022.

Simon Colburn, Assistant Director (Health and Environmental Services) added that there may have been a formatting error in the report. It was a hyphen rather than a minus and did show an uplift in footfall. This would be confirmed following the meeting.

40. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Pat Vaughan declared a Personal Interest with regard to the agenda item titled 'Portfolio Holder under Scrutiny - Reducing Inequality'. His daughter worked in Revenues and Benefits at the City of Lincoln Council.

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

Councillor Pat Vaughan declared a Personal Interest with regard to the agenda item titled 'Treasury Management and Prudential Code Update Mid-Year Report - 30 September 2023'. His granddaughter worked in the Finance Department at City of Lincoln Council.

41. 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 main areas:
- Welfare and Benefits Advice
 - Welfare Reform and Cost of Living Support
 - Housing Benefit/Council Tax Support
 - Discretionary Rate Relief Policy
 - Financial Inclusion
 - Safeguarding
 - Skills and Training
 - Allocations, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping
 - Asylum Seekers and Refugees
 - Neighbourhood Working
 - Equality and Diversity
 - Public Protection and Anti-Social Behaviour Team (PPASB)
 - CCTV Service
 - Lincoln Community Lottery
 - Lincoln Social Responsibility Charter
- b. invited members comments and questions.

The committee discussed the report in detail and asked the following questions, it was agreed that answers would be provided from the relevant officers following the meeting:

- How much did it cost to operate the Sincil Bank Community Hub in total?
- How much did it cost to operate the Sincil Bank Community Hub per visitor?
- How many of the visitors to the Sincil Bank Community Hub were unique? e.g. was it the same few people visiting regularly or a range of different people.
- Did the visitor numbers reported include people who visited partners at the Sincil Bank Community Hub or just Council staff?
- Was there data available to compare the footfall in the City over the weekend of the 9 and 10 December 2023 compared to the Christmas Market weekend in 2022?
- What area of Hartsholme Park was covered by CCTV cameras and did the cameras operate via WIFI?
- The number of evidence disks provided by CCTV to the Police had increased. Had this resulted in an increase in successful police prosecutions?
- Why had dog fouling been removed from the enforcement list?

Members of the committee asked the following questions and received relevant responses:

Question: According to the data why was the amount of formal enforcement action taken low?

Response: This figure was not an indication of low quality or low rates of enforcement. The Corporate Enforcement Policy was to apply a tiered approach to enforcement and the majority of people engaged at an early stage. Formal enforcement action was taken in a small proportion of cases once all other action had failed.

Question: Why did the Council not enforce fly tipping?

Response: Officers investigated every report of fly tipping, however, it was difficult to find enough evidence to prosecute.

Comment: In future could more background information and context be provided within the report on fly tipping to explain the reasons for the low enforcement rate.

Question: How would the new law regarding XL Bull dogs be enforced?

Response: The Police were the primary enforcers of the Dangerous Dog Act. Data was currently being gathered so that we were aware of where the dogs were being kept. The Council could only take action if an offence occurred in a public space.

Question: Was Lincoln Embracing All Nations (LEAN) only available for residents of Sincil Bank?

Response: LEAN was a city-wide service and supported groups outside of the Sincil Bank area.

Question: Could Councillors be briefed on the National Asylum Dispersal Scheme and the proposed site at RAF Scampton? Could this include the impact that the site would have on the City and the mitigation measures that would be put in place?

Response: This was a Home Office initiative and they had published some information fact sheets on their website. The City of Lincoln Council was engaging in conversations with the Home Office.

Question: Why had there been an increase in PPASB service requests from 3,205 in 2017/18 to 4,049 in 2022/23?

Response: An exact cause could not be pin pointed, however, officers felt that it was due to a number of reasons such as reduced tolerance of neighbours post covid and people being less respectful of their communities.

Question: Had the work at Hermit Street commenced?

Response: Yes, the work had started and was due to be completed by September 2024.

Question: Was the feasibility study to develop the area of land under Pelham Bridge on track to be submitted by November 2023?

Response: Yes, it was still on track.

Question: During a Member Development training session it was advised that noxious fumes would be added to PPASB enforcement, had this been implemented yet? If so, had any complaints been received?

Response: This had not been implemented yet however the team had been taking complaints for a number of years. It would be added to the system shortly so that data could be gathered and reported.

Question: Previously the PPASB Officers had specific roles and expertise within the team. Were these Officers being trained so that they could respond to any of the team's functions?

Response: Yes, a management of change process had facilitated all Technical Officers to work to the same job description. Training had been ongoing for some time and this would be continued in order to upskill the team.

Question: The data provided in the PPASB satisfaction surveys showed a 100% satisfaction rate. However, there was a low response rate to the surveys. In future could some context be provided in the report?

Response: We would work with the policy team to include some context to this measure in future.

Question: Why had there not been an increase in incidents recorded even though the CCTV service coverage had been extended?

Response: The majority of incidents recorded continued to relate to the city centre. In other areas of the City the cameras acted as more of a deterrent.

Question: What were your views on the withdrawal of the PCSO's in the City?

Response: PCSOs fulfil an important role in the city and their numbers had not been reduced by as many as feared. However, the loss of the Police ASB officer has had more of a significant impact. It was an important role within the City and we did not want to lose the officer from the PPASB team. Both the Council and the Police had put procedures in place to plug the gap but this would not be as effective as having an ASB police officer embedded within the team.

RESOLVED that the annual report be noted.

42. Strategic Risk Register - Quarterly Review

Jaclyn Gibson Chief Finance Officer:

- a. presented Performance Scrutiny Committee with a status report of the Strategic Risk Register as at the end of the second quarter 2023/24.
- b. reported that the strategic risk registers currently contained fourteen risks as follows:
 - 1) Failure to engage & influence effectively with 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 supported 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 existing and new statutory duties/functions.
 - 5) Failure to protect the local authority's long term vision 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 2025 and the transformational journey to one Council approach and service delivery.
 - 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 protect the vulnerable in relation to the Council's PREVENT and compliance with safeguarding and domestic abuse duties.
- 12) Failure to mitigate against the risk of a successful cyber-attack against the Council.
- 13) Impacts of uncertainty of Government's migration policy on the Council's service delivery, capacity and MTFS as well as the impacts for the City as a whole.
- 14) Failure to deliver critical services in an emergency situation.

RESOLVED that the Strategic Risk Register as at the end of the second quarter 2023/24 be noted.

43. Financial Performance - Quarterly Monitoring

Laura Shipley Financial Services Manager:

- a. presented a report to Performance Scrutiny Committee with a summary of the first quarter's performance (up to 30 September 2023), on the Council's
 - General Fund
 - Housing Revenue Account
 - Housing Repairs Service
 - Capital Programmes
- b. requested that Performance Scrutiny Committee note the changes to the capital programmes
- c. provided information on the following:
 - **General Fund Revenue Account** – for 2023/24 the Council's net General Fund Revenue Budget was set at £14,402,660, including a planned contribution from balances of £191,110 resulting in an estimated level of general balances at the year-end of £2,228,739 (Appendix A provided a forecast General Fund Summary). 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 B
 - **Housing Revenue Account** — for 2023/24 the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) net revenue budget was set with a planned contribution from balances of £58,930, resulting in estimated general balances at year-end of £1,125,517, after

allowing for the 2022/23 outturn position (Appendix C provided a forecast Housing Revenue Account Summary) Although the forecast position was an underspend there was a number of significant variations in income and expenditure. Full details of the main variances were provided at Appendix D

- **Housing Repairs Service** – For 2023/24 the Council's Housing Repairs Service (HRS) net budget was set at zero, which reflected its full cost recovery nature. At quarter 1 the HRS was forecasting a deficit of £761,406 in 2023/24. Full details of the main variances were provided at Appendix F
- **General Investment Programme** – the revised General Investment Programme for 2023/24 amounted to £24.688m following the quarter 1 report. At quarter 2 the programme had been increased by £0.096m to £24.784m as shown at paragraph 7.2. The overall spending on the General Investment Programme for the second quarter of 23/24 was £4.4m, which was 22.6% of the 2023/24 budget as detailed in Appendix I
- **Housing Investment Programme** – the revised programme for 2023/24 amounted to £17.969m following the quarter 1 position. At quarter 2 the programme had been decreased by £1.107m to £16.862m as shown at paragraph 7.9 of the report. The overall expenditure on the Housing Investment Programme at the end of quarter 2 was £4.205m, which was 24.94% of the 2023/24 revised programme as detailed at Appendix J of the report. A further £0.649m had been spent as at the end of October 2023

d. invited members' comments and questions.

Members of the committee asked the following questions and received relevant responses from Officers:

Question: Who paid the £50,000 to support utility inflation pressures at Yarborough Leisure Centre?

Response: This was a provision made by the Council which could be drawn on if needed. The Council did not pay a management fee to Active Nation but were liable for a small percentage of any losses over the year.

Question: There was an £11,000 cost to deep clean the Central Car Park. Was this an additional cost to the regular deep clean?

Response: This referred to the regular deep clean and was not an additional cost. A deep clean was carried out as and when needed.

Question: Why had there been a reduced income at the Crematorium?

Response: There had been a lower death rate.

Question: Could more detail be provided on the £150k that would be spent on the Central Car Park lifts?

Response: There had been issues with the reliability of the lifts, particularly the 2 busiest lifts on the north side of the car park. Part of the controls in the lift would be replaced.

Question: What specifically was wrong with the lifts? Was it that they were not suitable for the car parks?

Response: A report was completed by specialist consultants who had identified that there was an issue with part of the lift controls and this mechanism needed replacing. Overall the lifts are of a high quality and perfectly safe to use, its just some small items of equipment that were proving problematic.

Comment: The lifts had been unreliable for some time, this was a standard piece of equipment that should be capable of serving customers.

Response: The Central Car Park had been exceptionally popular and had been more successful than it was envisaged in the business case. The £150k had been set aside as a provision of what would need to be spent, once procurement had taken place it could cost less.

Question: Referred to paragraph 7.12 of the report in relation to the financial changes approved by the Chief Finance Officer. What was the £41k in relation to Thurlby Crescent approved for?

Response: An answer would be provided following the meeting.

Question: Please clarify why there had been zero spend this year on the new build programme for the Western Growth Corridor, yet work was ongoing?

Response: This part of the report referred to the Housing Investment Programme (HIP), the actual expenditure to date was included in the General Investment Programme with the appropriate proportion recharged to the HIP at the end of the financial year.

RESOLVED that:

1. Relevant responses to questions raised by members be provided by officers following the meeting as requested.
2. The financial performance for the period 1 April to 30 September 2023 be noted.
3. The underlying impact of the pressures and underspends identified in paragraphs 3.3 (and Appendix B), 4.3 (and Appendix D), and 5.2 (and Appendix F) be noted.
4. The changes to the General Investment Programme and Housing Investment Programme as approved by the Chief Finance Officer as detailed in paragraphs 7.5 and 7.12 be noted.
5. The changes to the General Investment Programme and Housing Investment Programme as detailed in paragraphs 7.4, 7.10 and 7.11 be noted and be forwarded to Executive for approval.

44. Treasury Management and Prudential Code Update Mid Year Report - 30 September 2023

Laura Shipley Financial Services Manager:

- a. presented a report to Performance Scrutiny Committee on the Council's treasury management activity and the prudential indicators for the period 1 April 2023 to 30 September 2023
- b. advised that the Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24 approved by Council on 28 February 2023 outlined the Council's capital investment

priorities as follows:

- Liquidity of investments
 - Security of capital/investments
 - Yield earned on investments
- c. gave an overview of the investment portfolio as detailed at paragraph 2 of the report and explained that the Council held £41.145m of investments as at 30 September 2023 and the investment profile was detailed at Appendix A of the report.
- d. advised that as at 30 September 2023 the Council held £114.35 million of external borrowing, of which 100% were fixed rate loans as detailed at paragraph 4 of the report
- e. explained that as at 30 September 2023, the average rate of interest paid during the first half of the year on external borrowing was 3.14%
- f. invited members' questions and comments.

Question: Did the re-profiling of expenditure and budget increases relate to grants for the Western Growth Corridor?

Response: The grant element related to the Better Care fund rather than grant funding for the Western Growth Corridor scheme.

RESOLVED that the Prudential and Local Indicators and the actual performance against Treasury Management Strategy 2023/24 for the half year ended 30 September 2023 be noted.

45. Quarter 2 2023/24 Operational Performance Report

Michelle Hoyles, Business Manager – Corporate Policy and Transformation:

- a. presented a report to Performance Scrutiny Committee with an outturn summary of the council's performance in Quarter 2 of 2023/24
- b. explained that the full report was attached as Appendix A of the report, with the full list of performance measure outturns and supporting performance commentary provided at Appendix B of the report
- c. invited members' comments and questions.

Comment: The performance of the Housing Department was concerning.

Response: The Portfolio Holder for Housing would be attending the Performance Scrutiny Committee in January 2024.

Question: The satisfaction rate for grounds maintenance and street cleansing showed as good, however there had been a low response rate from the Citizens Panel surveys. How was the recruitment to the Citizens Panel going and had there been more reliable responses received from the surveys?

Response: The number of people recruited to the citizens panel had increased to nearly 700, an exact figure would be circulated following the meeting. The first survey with the updated panel would be sent out shortly. The wording in the survey had been amended to reduce the amount of free text which would improve the responses and data returned.

Question: What enforcement action could be taken against tenants who left their property in a state that required significant cleansing which delayed the turnaround of void properties?

Response: A response would be provided following the meeting.

Question: Was the time frame for providing responses to stage 1 and stage 2 complaints measured in working days or calendar days? If these target days were not going to be met was a holding email sent to the complainant to make them aware that their complaint was still being processed?

Response: Each department did endeavour to respond to complaints within the target date. A further response would be provided from the Customer Services Manager following the meeting.

Question: Could an update be provided on measure SP3b in relation to Yarborough Leisure Centre?

Response: New management was in place at Yarborough and Birchwood Leisure Centres. A dip in the usage of the facilities was expected during the run up to Christmas, however there would be an increase in the number of new customers in January. The promoter scores were improving.

RESOLVED that:

1. Relevant responses to questions raised by members be provided by officers following the meeting as requested.
2. The report be noted and forwarded to Executive for approval.
3. The format of the performance report continued to meet the committee's requirements.

46. Budget Review Process 2024/25

Jaclyn Gibson, Chief Finance Officer:

- a. presented members with the process for scrutiny of the proposed budget and Council Tax for the 2024/25 financial year and the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-2029
- 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 5:3:1 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.

Councillors Clarkson, Dyer and R Storer wished it to be recorded that they did not support recommendation number 3 where it stated that the Vice Chair be recommended by the larger political group.

RESOLVED that:

1. The objectives and governance arrangements of the Budget Review Group for 2024/25 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, including the Vice Chair to be recommended by the larger political group.

47. Work Programme for 2023/24

The Chair:

- a. presented the draft work programme for 2023/24 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
- d. requested any relevant comments or changes to the proposed work programme for 2023/24.

RESOLVED that the work programme 2023/24 be agreed.

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 2023/24 be noted.