

Present: Councillor Ric Metcalfe (*in the Chair*),
Councillor Donald Nannestad, Councillor Chris Burke,
Councillor Sue Burke, Councillor Bob Bushell and
Councillor Neil Murray

1. Confirmation of Minutes - 11 April 2022

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 11 April 2022 be confirmed.

2. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

3. Revised Tenant Involvement Strategy 2022-2025

Purpose of Report

To seek approval for the revised Tenant Involvement Strategy 2022 to 2025 which would replace the 2018 to 2021 strategy.

Decision

That the revised Tenant Involvement Strategy 2022 to 2025 be approved.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

As detailed within the report.

Reasons for the Decision

The existing Tenant Involvement Strategy was now out of date and a revised Tenant Involvement Strategy for 2022 to 2025, as set out at Appendix A to the report, had been developed.

The regulatory Framework for social housing and the social housing white paper required social housing landlords to have a transparent Tenant Involvement Strategy in place.

There were five objectives contained within the proposed Tenant Involvement Strategy, which included:

- Co-design services with residents;
- Facilitate community engagement;
- Communicate key messages to residents;
- Co-regulate with Lincoln Tenants' Panel; and
- Expand the ways residents can get involved.

As part of the launch of the strategy, the Lincoln Tenants Panel would carry out an initial assessment to provide a starting position against which the outcomes could be monitored.

The revised strategy would ensure that tenants continue to have a range of opportunities to get involved to shape housing services.

4. Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy

Purpose of Report

To obtain approval of the revised Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy 2022-2027.

Decision

That the revised Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy 2022-2027, as detailed at Appendix A to the report, be approved.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not have, or do not refresh, the existing Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy. However the Council was required to have such a strategy or similar document.

Reasons for the Decision

The proposed revised strategy had been written to reflect the latest Statutory Guidance and other changes to the regime.

The Council had a statutory duty under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to deal with land contamination and to have an inspection strategy setting out the Council's approach.

The revised strategy reflected the Council's current operational approach to focus on managing contaminated land through the planning and building control regimes and encouraging voluntary remediation by landowners rather than proactive part 2A inspections.

5. Financial Performance - Outturn 2021/22

Purpose of Report

To present the provisional 2021/22 financial outturn position on the Council's revenue and capital budgets, including: the Council's general fund; housing revenue account (HRA); housing repairs service; and capital programmes.

To seek approval for the proposed transfer to General Fund and HRA earmarked reserves; and to consider new general fund carry forward requests.

To note the financial changes to both the General investment Programme and the Housing Investment Programme that were above the 10% budget variance limit, as delegated to the Chief Finance Officer.

Decision

- (1) That the provisional 2021/22 financial outturn for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account, Housing Repairs Service and Capital Programmes, as set out in sections 3 – 7 of the report, and in particular the reasons for any variances, be noted.
- (2) That the proposed transfer to General Fund and HRA earmarked reserves, as detailed in paragraph 3.6, 3.7 and 4.6 of the report, be approved.

- (3) That the new General Fund carry forward requests, not requested at quarter 3, as detailed in paragraph 3.8 of the report, be approved.
- (4) That the financial changes to both the General Investment Programme and the Housing Investment Programme, as detailed at paragraphs 7.4 and 7.11 in the report, that are above the 10% budget variance limit delegated to the Chief Finance Officer, be noted.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

As detailed in the report.

Reasons for the Decision

The report covered the General Fund Revenue, Housing Revenue Account budgets and Investment Programmes for the current financial year and set out the provisional financial outturn position. Following the unprecedented impact of Covid-19 on the Council's finances in 2020/21, budgets for 2021/22 were revised as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2021-26 based on a number of assumptions around the speed and extent of the national and local recoveries particularly in relation to income budgets. Whilst in many cases these assumptions had reflected the actual position to date and had in fact exceeded assumptions, there were still some areas where the rate of recovery was impacting adversely on the Council's finances.

In addition, the impact of Covid-19 was still being felt throughout the authority in relation to service delivery both in terms of backlogs of outstanding work but also due to the current economic operating conditions in terms of supply chain issues, escalating costs and availability of labour etc, whilst these issues were being addressed, they were likely to continue in the medium term and impact on the Council's finances. Coupled with the current economic conditions of spiralling inflation, the Council would continue to face a number of significant financial challenges in 2022/23 and must ensure that its general balances and reserves were sufficient to respond to such pressures.

Although the report had set out the financial outturn, which for the general fund and HRA had resulted in a positive position, the did not mean that the financial issues faced by the Council had been resolved. Beyond 2021/22, the Council was set to face ongoing pressures from the escalating inflation impacts, service demands arising from the cost of living crisis and the legacy of impacts of Covid-19. The Council would continue to face financial challenges in 2022/23 as it responded to these issues, as well as ensuring it delivered the ongoing reductions in the net cost base that were already assumed in the MTFS for 2022/27.

6. Strategic Risk Register - Quarterly Review

Purpose of Report

To provide a status report on the revised Strategic Risk Register as at the end of the fourth quarter 2021/22.

Decision

That the Council's strategic risks, as at the end of quarter 4 2021/22, be noted.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

As detailed in the report.

Reasons for the Decision

The previous update of the Strategic Risk Register had previously been reported in February 2022. Since the last update, the Strategic Risk Register had been refreshed and updated by the Corporate Management Team. The Strategic Risk Register reflected the significant change in circumstances in which the Council had been operating since Covid-19 and the different challenges and opportunities it now faced.

Risk Number 11 – Failure to put in place safe working practices and social distancing measures to protect officers and service users, had now been removed from the register as it had been at Green status for over six months. There remained twelve risks within the register, which were detailed within the report.

7. Treasury Management Stewardship and Actual Prudential Indicators Report 2021/22 (Outturn)

Purpose of Report

To consider the annual Treasury Management stewardship report, which was a requirement of the Council's reporting procedures under regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003. The report covered the treasury management activities and the actual prudential and treasury indicators for 2021/22.

The report met the requirements of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.

Decision

- (1) That the actual prudential indicators, as contained within Appendices A and B to the report, be approved.
- (2) That the annual treasury management report for 2021/22 be approved.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

As detailed within the report.

Reasons for the Decision

The Chief Finance Officer had confirmed that borrowing had only been undertaken for a capital purpose and the statutory borrowing limit, the Authorised Limit, had not been breached.

At 31 March 2022, the principal value of the Council's external debt was £135.177m (£123.448m at 31 March 2021) and that of its investments was £49.85m (£33.9m at 31 March 2021).

The increase in general fund financing costs as a % of net revenue stream in 2021/22, when compared with 2020/21, was due additional MRP charges and lower rates of return and investments. The slight increase in housing revenue account financing costs had resulted from borrowing arrangements being at rates lower than those for borrowing taken previously but also higher levels of depreciation.

The financial year 2021/22 had continued the challenging environment of previous years; the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic, low investment returns and continuing counterparty risk were the main features.

8. Operational Performance Report Quarter Four 2021/22

Purpose of Report

To present an outturn summary of the Council's operational performance in quarter four of 2021/22.

Decision

That the achievements described and the issues identified in the quarter four Operational Performance Report for 2021/22 be noted.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

As detailed in the report.

Reasons for the Decision

The outturn summary report detailed performance against a total of 65 measures, of which 16 were below target; 17 were within target boundaries; and 14 had exceeded a higher target. A further 18 measures were volumetric, and provided context to overall service delivery. Commentaries on each measure were detailed in the report.

It was advised that some Council services could take up to 18 months to recover from the impacts of Covid-19. The Executive reflected on the Customer Services call waiting times, which was currently averaging at 321 seconds, rather than achieving the target of 300 seconds. This could be attributed to the reduction of call handlers by five, as part of the Council's cost saving measures.

9. Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (2000) (RIPA) Update

Purpose of Report

To report the number of authorisations under Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) 2000.

To consider the approval of the revised Policy.

Decision

That the updated Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 Policy be approved.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

It was a requirement to review the policy and update it accordingly.

Reasons for the Decision

The Council had a RIPA Policy which covered implications for all staff who investigate suspected criminal offences and other breaches of regulations for which the Council was responsible. The Policy included the procedures for obtaining authorisations together these explain:

- the purpose of the Act in relation to the Council's functions;
- the circumstances which it applies to;
- how to make sure that it was complied with;
- functions of the Central Register;
- process for authorisations;
- details for authorisations;
- and provides guidance of the use of Social Media in investigations as well as guidance on the use of Covert Human Intelligence Source (CHIS) and how to obtain a CHIS authorisation.

The report set out the amendments to the policy.

10. Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business because it was 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.

This item was considered in private as it was likely to disclose exempt information, as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. No representations had been received in relation to the proposal to consider this item in private.

11. Strategic Risk Register Quarterly Review

Purpose of Report

As detailed in the exempt report to the Executive.

Decision

That the recommendations to the Executive, as set out in the exempt report, be approved.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

As detailed in the exempt report to the Executive.

Reasons for the Decision

As detailed in the exempt report to the Executive.