

Present: Councillor Gary Hewson (*in the Chair*),
Councillor Pat Vaughan, Councillor Natasha Chapman,
Councillor Thomas Dyer, Councillor Neil Murray,
Councillor Lucinda Preston and Councillor Anita Pritchard

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Adrianna McNulty and Councillor Emily Wood

38. Confirmation of Minutes - 26 September 2024

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2024 be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a true record.

39. Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee Minutes - 5 September 2024

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee held on 26 September 2024 be received.

40. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Pat Vaughan declared a Personal Interest with regard to the agenda item titled 'Portfolio Holder under Scrutiny - Customer Experience, Review and Resources'.

Reason: His daughter worked in Revenues and Benefits at the City of Lincoln Council.

Councillor Anita Pritchard declared a Personal Interest with regard to the agenda item titled 'Strategic Risk Register - Quarterly Review'.

Reason She sat on the Lincoln Business Improvement Group Board as a representative of City of Lincoln Council.

Councillor Thomas Dyer declared a Personal Interest with regard to the agenda item titled 'Strategic Risk Register - Quarterly Review'.

Reason: He sat on the Lincoln Business Improvement Group Board in his capacity as a County Councillor.

41. Portfolio Holder under Scrutiny - Customer Experience, Review and Resources

Councillor Rebecca Longbottom, Portfolio Holder for Customer Experience, Review and Resources:

- a) advised that during the summer a full review of Portfolio Holder responsibilities was undertaken to ensure the responsibilities continued to successfully align with the objectives of each portfolio
- b) highlighted that the review had seen her portfolio having gained some additional responsibilities, previously under the Portfolio Holder for Our People and Resources as detailed within her report, additionally Equality

and Diversity (Service User Prospective) had also joined her portfolio formerly under the Portfolio Holder for Reducing Inequalities

- c) reported that whilst a number of the services under her portfolio were back-office services, each played a vital role in supporting our front-line services and ensuring these functioned effectively
- d) presented her report to Performance Scrutiny Committee providing an insight into key activities and achievements during the past twelve months, covering the following main areas:
 - Audit
 - Channel Shift
 - The Council's Website
 - Complaints Handling
 - Customer Engagement
 - Corporate Health and Safety
 - Democratic and Electoral Services
 - Equality and Diversity-Service User Perspective
 - ICT
 - Performance (Including Systems and Process)
 - Procurement (Excluding Social Value)
 - Project Management
 - Strategic Information
 - Revenues Service
- e) extended her thanks to the team of officers that supported her Portfolio for their hard work, dedication and commitment to supporting the residents of Lincoln
- f) invited members' comments and questions.

Members congratulated the Portfolio Holder on the content of her report, which was one of the best ones ever seen.

Comments and questions were raised and responded to by the Portfolio Holder for Customer Experience, Review and Resources and/or officers as follows:

Comment: It was disappointing that the Chair and Vice-Chair of Audit Committee had failed to attend both a recent Audit Committee meeting and the Fraud Awareness training offered to all members.

Response: Audit Committee meetings and fraud awareness training were extremely important to the efficient and safe operation of the Council. The Portfolio Holder would ask the Chair and Vice Chair of Audit Committee why they failed to attend. Online module training or training via Teams meetings would be helpful to keep members up to speed.

Question: How many people had been caught creating nuisance on motorised scooters?

Response: This area of work was something only Lincolnshire Police could deal with. Officers would speak to the Public Protection and Anti-Social Behaviour Team to see if they could obtain the details. However, it was urged that members continued to report any incidents.

Question: Why was it so difficult for the Member concerned to successfully log on to Citrix remotely?

Response: Officers would speak to the IT help desk to seek address to this problem. There were currently modifications being trialled to make improvements to the system.

Question: Why was the Lincoln Project Management Model chosen as the preferred tool for use by the Council?

Response: Although the Lincoln Project Management Model was not always suited to every project, it had been reviewed to ensure it remained effective at supporting the delivery of Council projects and to ensure it was as easy to use as possible. Additional tool kits could be added for relevant projects, and a refreshed model would be launched to project managers in the near future.

Question: Some residents experienced difficulty in accessing digital online systems to report issues. Were there any plans to introduce more user-friendly systems like 'Fix my Street' used at the County Council?

Response: Yes, indeed. There were several more user-friendly improvements/software implications being explored through GR space.

Comment: All member training should be provided on-line to make it easier for members to access.

Question: In terms of corporate health and safety, there were issues in relation to lifts failing in multi-story car parks and a particular instance of lack of maintenance on a Council property close to a lake. What measures were being taken to assess the risks?

Response: The Portfolio Holder would make further investigations regarding these matters and respond to the member concerned under separate cover.

Comment by Chair: Most of the questions asked of officers at the recent Performance Scrutiny pre-meet had been answered and circulated to members of the Committee this evening for information. Thank you.

Question: How was feedback received from the Citizens Panel shared with members?

Response: Officers would respond to this question under separate cover.

Comment: The failure to get the Guildhall clock repaired did not reflect well on the Civic Service area.

Response: The Guildhall clock was very old with many moving parts which had to be specially manufactured to get it mended. Many of the movements had failed now and would take time to be replaced. We must be patient.

Question: Staffing resource issues were impacting performance. How was the Council moving forward with filling staff vacancies, further retention of staff and feedback as to why members of staff were leaving?

Response: This area of responsibility came under the remit of the Portfolio Holder for Climate and Corporate Strategy. However, the Portfolio Holder was aware that career grades were being offered to staff members now to encourage staff progression.

RESOLVED that:

1. Additional further information be circulated to members as requested.

2. The content of the report be noted with thanks.

42. **Quarter 2 2024/25 Operational Performance Report**

The Business Intelligence Officer:

- a. presented an outturn performance summary report to Performance Scrutiny Committee of the Council's performance in Quarter 2 of 2024/25
- b. reported that out of the 89 performance measures monitored during the quarter, 65 had targets allocated to them., of these targeted measures 50 (76.9%) were within or exceeding the targets set
- c. explained that a review of the quarterly performance process was undertaken at the end of 2023/24, which led to the following changes:
 - Appendix A now contained a wider range of performance information, including qualitative data in the form of case studies and service highlights. These were grouped into seven themes, namely the five Vision Priorities and the two inward looking portfolios 'Our People and Resources' and 'Customer Experience, Review and Resources'.
 - The more detailed performance data tables were now grouped together in Appendix B, including the suite of corporate measures that were previously in Appendix A. Performance data remained grouped by directorate, and a colour coding system had been introduced to make it simpler to identify which portfolio each measure related to. Appendix B also included a quarterly Communications update.
- d. reported that when read together, Appendices A and B aimed to enhance the range of performance information presented via the quarterly reporting process and make it easier to assess and scrutinise the performance of each priority/portfolio
- e. invited members' comments and questions.

Question: In light of the pressures on the Council in addressing the challenge of climate change, when would performance measures be implemented?

Response: Measures would be recorded from December 2024 onwards prior to referral to Directors in January 2025 for inclusion in the first quarter's performance monitoring report in 2025

Question: The performance tables recorded the average time taken in weeks from Occupational Therapy notifications being received to completion of the work on site. Were there measures in place for ongoing communication or additional support for those impacted while they waited?

Response: This information would be further investigated and a response provided by officers under separate cover.

Question: Was it possible to obtain an overview of performance measures broken down into Directorates and Portfolio Holder responsibility areas?

Response: Information on performance measure outturns was provided by Vision Priority within colour coded categories.

Question: Was there any more accurate data available to measure the return on investment from the Events Programme other than CCTV footfall?

Response: A response would be provided by the relevant officer under separate cover.

Question: How did the Council publicise the availability of newsletters on specific topics of choice to our customers, residents and visitors?

Response: We could include this within our regular press releases for people who were interested in obtaining further information. We were actively exploring different channels to encourage public engagement.

Comment: It was questionable as to whether the amount of content within the performance report in respect of the Communications Service added any extra value and could be presented in a more concise format.

Response: This information would be shortened within future quarterly performance reports.

Question: Was the availability of vacant allotment sites widely advertised?

Response: Yes. This was well advertised on the Council's website. Take up of sites was simply down due to personal preference.

Question: Could a charge be made for providing CCTV footage to enable public order offences to be investigated?

Response: Yes, it was reasonable to charge for information provided for private insurance claims, however, information must always be available free of charge and openly to Lincolnshire Police.

Comment: Some performance measures appeared to be deteriorating. We were making assumptions where we stood based on vacancies, retention/and recruitment of staff. We needed to be honest moving forward and realistic of the achievements we could actually challenge.

Response: Some performance measures may have deteriorated, however, they were still above target.

RESOLVED that:

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

43. Financial Performance (Detailed) - Quarterly Monitoring: Quarter 2

Laura Shipley, Financial Services Manager:

- a) presented a report to Performance Scrutiny Committee with a summary of the second quarter's performance (up to 30 September 2024), 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 2024/25 the Council's net General Fund Revenue Budget was set at £15,427,670, including a planned contribution from balances of £146,820 resulting in an estimated level of general balances at the year-end of £2,391,979 (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 2024/25 the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) net revenue budget was set with a planned contribution from balances of £101,220, resulting in an estimated general balances at year-end of £1,030,024 after allowing for the 2023/24 outturn position (Appendix C provided a forecast Housing Revenue Account Summary) Although the forecast position was an underspend there were a number of significant variations in income and expenditure. Full details of the main variances were provided at Appendix D
- **Housing Repairs Service** – For 2024/25 the Council's Housing Repairs Service (HRS) net budget was set at zero, which reflected its full cost recovery nature. At quarter 2 the HRS was forecasting a deficit of £17,146 in 2024/25. Full details of the main variances were provided at Appendix F
- **General Investment Programme(GIP)** – the revised General Investment Programme for 2024/25 amounted to £23.5m following quarter 1. At quarter 2 the programme had been increased by £4.4m to £27.9m, as detailed at paragraph 7.2
- The overall spending on the General Investment Programme active schemes (excluding externally delivered schemes) at the end of quarter 2 was £3.2m, which was 14.5% of the budget as detailed in Appendix I
- **Housing Investment Programme** – the revised programme for 2024/25 amounted to £17.650m following the Quarter 1 position. At quarter 2 the programme had been decreased by £0.219m to £17.432m, as show in paragraph 7.10 of the report. The overall expenditure on the Housing Investment Programme at the end of Quarter 2 was £5,730m, which was 32.87% of the 2024/25 revised programme (excluding expenditure relating to Western Growth Corridor which was currently shown on the GIP to be apportioned at year end)) as detailed at Appendix J of the report. A further £1.091m had been spent as at the end of October 2024.

- d) invited members' comments and questions.

Members of the committee commented and received relevant responses from Officers as follows:

Comment: It was disappointing to see we were losing revenue from the Crematorium Service due to increased competition; together with car parking charges these two services accrued the main income for the Council. It was noted that a report on the Cornhill Market was to be presented to Executive in the New Year.

Response: Further opportunities to increase income from the Crematorium service in the future would be explored via the offer of memorials etc.

RESOLVED that:

1. The financial performance for the period 1 April to 30 September 2024 be noted.
2. 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.
3. 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 7.13 of the report be noted.
4. The changes to the General Investment programme and the Housing Investment programme approved, or to be approved, by the Executive as detailed in paragraphs 7.3, 7.10 and 7.11 of the report be noted.

44. Treasury Management and Prudential Code Update Report - Half Yearly Report

Laura Shipley 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 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024
- b. advised that the Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25 approved by Council on 27 February 2024 outlined the Council's capital investment priorities as follows:
 - Security of capital/investments
 - Yield earned on investments
 - Liquidity of investments
- c. reported that the strategy included indicators that helped ensure that the Council's capital investment plans were affordable, prudent and sustainable; setting an integrated Capital and Treasury Management Strategy was a requirement of the CIPFA Code of Practice
- d. gave an overview of the investment portfolio as detailed at paragraph 4 of the report and explained that the Council held £29.355m of investments as at 30 September 2024 as detailed at Appendix A of the report

- e. advised that as at 30 September 2024 the Council held £107.406 million of external borrowing, of which 100% were fixed rate loans as detailed at paragraph 5.5 of the report
- f. explained that as at 30 September 2024, the average rate of interest paid during the first half of the year on external borrowing was 3.26%
- g. invited members' questions and comments.

RESOLVED that the Prudential and Treasury Indicators and the actual performance against Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25 for the half year ended 30 September 2024 be noted prior to referral to Executive for consideration.

45. Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2023/24

Emily Holmes, Assistant Director, Transformation and Strategic Development, on behalf of Jo Crookes, Customer Services Manager:

- a. presented an annual complaints report including details from the Annual Review of Local Authority Complaints issued by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and the decisions of the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS)
- b. reported on the overall number of complaints received by the Council on a Directorate basis for the full year 2023-2024, including performance against target response times and the percentage of complaints which were upheld
- c. explained that the Council's complaints procedure included two levels in response to formal complaints, once the complaint had been considered and responded to by two separate officers the complainant was advised if they were not satisfied with the final response, to seek redress from the relevant Ombudsman service
- d. highlighted that complaints relating to the landlord function of the Council, as a provider of social housing, were escalated to the Housing Ombudsman Service, all other complaints, about any other service or aspect of Council business fell under the jurisdiction of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
- e. reported that in April 2024 the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code (The Code), became statutory for all social housing providers, we updated our policy to ensure that we complied with The Code and, as it represented best practice in dealing with customer complaints, we adopted the principles of The Code as a corporate policy
- f. reported on the main changes to our complaint handling in terms of reporting of our performance, learning lessons from complaints, and ensuring that customers found it easy to make a complaint
- g. detailed a small number of areas where we had to undertake work; at date of submission of the initial self-assessment only 5 of the provisions were

self-assessed as non-compliant at the date of submission (30 June 2024) as detailed in paragraph 2.8 of the officer's report

h. provided further detailed information on performance received by the Council on a Directorate basis for the full year 2023-2024 before the Complaint Handling Code came into force covering the following main areas:

- Complaints – Annual Performance (April 2023 – March 2024)
- Breakdown of Complaints
- Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Review Report
- Housing Ombudsman Service Complaints
- Complaint Trends
- Learning from Complaints
- Compliments

i. invited comments and questions from Members on the content of the report

Members discussed the report findings in further detail, commented and asked questions, receiving relevant responses from officers as follows:

Comment: It was encouraging to see that although as a social landlord we would receive more complaints, by asking tenants if they wished to make a complaint, we would be able to learn from any errors and stop so many complaints reoccurring.

Response: Yes. Any patterns of recurring issues could be 'nipped in the bud' sooner and fed into the relevant teams to be rectified.

Comment: This was a valuable way to find out how to do things better and to learn from any mistakes going forward.

Response: The Ombudsman welcomed more complaints as it made us more approachable and open to service improvements.

Comment: It would be difficult for some customers who were not 'internet savvy' to complain in some areas.

RESOLVED that the content of the complaints report for 2023-2024 be noted prior to referral to Executive for consideration.

46. **Budget Review Process 2025/26**

Emily Holmes, Assistant Director, Transformation and Strategic Development, on behalf of Jaclyn Gibson, Chief Finance Officer:

- a. presented members with the process for scrutiny of the proposed budget and Council Tax for the 2025/26 financial year and the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025-2030
- 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 10 non-Executive Members with a 6:2:2 proportionality share. (ordinarily the group would consist of 9

members, but in order to achieve balanced proportions it was necessary to be increased to 10 for this year).

- 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.

RESOLVED that:

1. The objectives and governance arrangements of the Budget Review Group for 2025/25 as set out in paragraphs 3.3-3.4 of the report be noted.
2. The timetable for the Group as set out in paragraph 3.6 of the report 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 2024-25

The Chair:

- a) presented the draft work programme for 2024/25 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 2024/25.

RESOLVED that the work programme 2024/25 be noted.

48. Strategic Risk Register - Quarterly Review

Emily Holmes, Assistant Director, Transformation and Strategic Development:

- a) presented Performance Scrutiny Committee with a status report of the Strategic Risk Register as at the end of the second quarter 2024/54
- b) reported that the strategic risk register currently contained fifteen risks as follows:
 - 1) Failure to engage & influence effectively with the Council's strategic partners, council staff and all stakeholders to deliver against the Council's new Vision 2030.
 - 2) Failure to deliver a sustainable Medium-Term Financial Strategy that supported delivery of the Council's Vision (specifically in relation to the General Fund).
 - 3) Failure to deliver the Towards Financial Sustainability Programme.
 - 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, 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 policies on migration policy, asylum dispersal, early prison release etc. on the Council's service

delivery, capacity and MTFS as well as the impacts on housing, communities and the economic vitality of the City Centre.

14) Failure to deliver critical services in an emergency situation.

15) Failure of service delivery leading to reputational impacts on the Council and adverse financial implications.

Members considered the contents of the report.

RESOLVED that the Strategic Risk Register as at the end of the second quarter 2024/25 be noted.

49. 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.

50. Strategic Risk Register - Quarterly Review

Emily Holmes, Assistant Director, Transformation and Strategic Development:

- 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 2024/25 be noted.