

Present: Councillor Naomi Tweddle (*in the Chair*),
Councillor Donald Nannestad, Councillor Sue Burke and
Councillor Rebecca Longbottom

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Bob Bushell

40. Confirmation of Minutes - 14 October 2024

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2024 be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a true record.

41. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

42. Change to Order of Business

RESOLVED that the order of business be amended to allow Item No 4 entitled 'Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report' be considered as the next agenda item.

43. Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2023-2024

Purpose of Report

1. To present 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).
2. To report 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

Decision

That the content of the annual complaints report for 2023-2024 be received and noted.

Alternative Options Considered

None.

Reason for Decision

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

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.

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

The main changes to our complaint handling were in terms of reporting of our performance, learning lessons from complaints, and ensuring that customers found it easy to make a complaint.

The Code required that we complete an annual self-assessment against all of the provisions set out in The Code. The self-assessment required that we consider each element of The Code and certify ourselves as either “Complied” or “Not Complied” with each of 78 provisions. Our self-assessment was also considered by the Lincoln Tenant’s Panel prior to submission.

Our 2024 Corporate Complaints Policy and Guidance was compliant with many of the provisions but there were a small number of areas where we had to undertake work; at date of submission of the initial self-assessment (30 June 2024) 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. These were now almost complete in demonstrating full compliance with The Code. The self-assessment was available for inspection on the Council’s website and attached to this report as Appendix A.

Further detailed information was provided within the report 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

44. Department of Housing and Investment Remedies Policy

Purpose of Report

To seek approval of the new Department of Housing and Investment(DHI) Remedies Policy as detailed at Appendix 1 of the officer’s report.

Decision

1. That the new DHI Remedies Policy be approved.

2. That authority be delegated to the City Solicitor in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing to consider and approve any suggested amendments recommended by the Policy Scrutiny Committee on 19 November 2024. Any major recommendations would be referred back to Executive for approval.

Alternative Options Considered

None.

Reason for Decision

The Council now had a statutory duty to handle customer complaints in line with the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) Complaint Handling Code, (The Code), as detailed within paragraph 2.1-2.6 of the officer's report.

Whilst there were existing procedures for offering small sums to compensate loss there was not a formal policy document which was in line with the HOS Guidance on Remedies and therefore, a new one was developed and agreed to ensure compliance with The Code.

Lincoln Tenants Panel (LTP) had been consulted about this report and had made the following comments:

1. Recommend the remedies policy be reviewed annually.
Response: This had been noted and reflected in the review date information.
2. LTP requested that they were provided with an annual report on the volume of compensation administered and areas of service related to.
Response: This had been noted and could be provided.
3. Agreed with the proposed compensation amounts and increments system relating to qualifying improvements, gesture of goodwill and payment of compensation to customers,
Response: This had been noted.
4. Recommended rent refund for disturbance allowance amount was reduced.
Response: This had been noted however, the amounts had been suggested were based on the Housing Ombudsman award thresholds.

This policy was reviewed at Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee on 31 October 2024 and it was supported to be referred to Executive for approval. It was also discussed that the report and policy should be presented to Policy Scrutiny Committee on 19 November for further review and consideration.

45. Unacceptable Customer Actions Policy

Purpose of Report

To seek approval of the new Unacceptable Customer Actions Policy as detailed within Appendix 1 to the officer's report.

Decision

1. That the new Unacceptable Customer Actions Policy be approved.

2. That the assistance given by the Lincoln Tenant's Panel in developing this policy be noted.
3. That authority be delegated to the City Solicitor in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Customer Experience, Review and Resources, to consider and approve any suggested amends recommended by the Policy Scrutiny Committee on 19 November 2024. If any of the recommendations were major changes they would be referred back to the Executive for approval.

Alternative Options Considered

None.

Reason for Decision

The Council now had a statutory duty to handle customer complaints in line with the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) Complaint Handling Code. (The Code)

Section 5.14 of the Code self- assessment stated that:

- Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives. Landlords must be able to evidence reasons for putting any restrictions in place and must keep restrictions under regular review.

Whilst we had existing procedures for reporting incidents and handling reports of unacceptable behaviour it was not a formal policy document and therefore, we needed to develop and agree one to ensure that we were compliant with The Code.

The new policy had been developed with the assistance of Lincoln Tenant's Panel who were keen to help ensure that while protecting staff the policy was also proportionate in terms of the action taken.

The policy was reviewed at Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee on 31 October 2024 and it was supported that the policy be referred to Executive for approval. It was also discussed that the report and policy should be presented to Policy Scrutiny Committee on 19 November for further review and consideration.

46. Quarter 2 2024-25 Operational Performance Report

Purpose of the Report

To present an outturn summary of the Council's operational performance in quarter two of 2024/25.

Decision

1. That the achievements and challenges identified in the Quarter 2 2024/25 operational performance report found at Appendices A and B be noted.
2. It be confirmed that the format of the performance report continued to meet requirements.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None were considered.

Reasons for the Decision

Regular monitoring of the Council's performance was a key component of the Local Performance Management Framework. This report covered the key strategic performance measures identified by members and Corporate Management Team (CMT) as of strategic importance.

The outturn summary report at the end of Quarter 2 2024/25 detailed performance against a total of 87 quarterly measures and 2 annual measures across the directorates Chief Executive's, Communities and Environment, Housing and Investment and Major Developments. Of the 89 performance measures monitored against targets, 15 were below target; 17 were within target boundaries; 33 had met or exceeded a higher target; 24 measures were recorded as volumetric and there were no measures recorded as data not available for this quarter.

Out of the 89 performance measures monitored during the quarter with 65 targets allocated to them, 50 (76.9%) were within or exceeding the targets set.

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 and Review.'
- 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.

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.

Members praised officers for the easily read format of the report and its content.

47. Financial Performance Quarterly Monitoring

Purpose of Report

To present the second quarter's performance (up to 30 September 2024) on the Council's General Fund, Housing Revenue Account, Housing Repairs Service and Capital Programmes, and to seek approval for changes to the capital programmes.

Decision

1. That the financial performance for the period 1 April 2024 to 30 September be noted.
2. That 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) of the officer's report be noted.
3. That the changes to the General Investment Programme and Housing Investment Programme as approved by the Chief Finance Officer detailed in paragraphs 7.5 and 7.12 of the officer's report be noted.
4. That the changes to the General Investment Programme and Housing Investment Programme, as detailed in paragraph 7.11 of the officer's report, be approved.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

Reason for Decision

Financial Procedure Rules required members to receive a report prepared jointly by the Chief Finance Officer and Corporate Management Team on a quarterly basis commenting on financial performance to date. This report was designed to meet this requirement.

Whilst there were still a number of variables which were subject to a level of uncertainty, based on the latest set of assumptions as at the end of the second quarter (up to 30 September 2024), the forecast financial position of the Council for 2024/25 was detailed at paragraph 2.2 of the officer's report, together with the detailed financial position shown in sections 3-7 and the accompanying appendices.

Updates were reported as follows:

General Fund Revenue Account

For 2024/25 the Council's net General Fund revenue budget was set at £15,427,670 which included a planned contribution from balances of £146,820 resulting in an estimated level of general balances at the year-end of £2,391,979 (after allowing for the 2023/24 outturn position).

The General Fund Summary was currently projecting a forecast underspend of £37,277 (Appendix A provided a forecast General Fund Summary) resulting in general balances at the year-end of £2,429,206. This position maintained balances above the prudent minimum of c.£1.5-2m.

There were a number of forecast year-end variations in income and expenditure against the approved budget, as detailed at paragraphs 3.3-3.5 of the report, with the main variances provided in Appendix B to the report.

Alongside these variances, a significant variance against the Council's crematorium budget was also forecasted, resulting from a continuation of the reduction in income from cremations seen last financial year, driven by increasing competition from neighbouring Crematoriums. This position was being carefully monitored and an action plan developed. In addition, the service was currently being supported by external industry professionals, increasing the management and administration costs, this was being carefully monitored and would only remain in place for as long as required.

In addition, a significant in-year variance was now forecasted for the Cornhill Market. The refurbished Market opened on 17 May 2024 but the original budget for 2024/25 was set on the basis of a full year of operation and based on the draft business plan approved at Executive in July 2021. Now that the market was operational, a full review of the business plan based on the actual operating costs and income levels was underway, would be reported to Executive in early 2025 and reflected in the next update of the Council's MTFS. The in-year variance being reported at the end of Q2 therefore reflected a number of one-off opening costs in this regard.

Whilst the forecast outturn for the General Fund was a small budget underspend, there still remained uncertainty in terms of service demands and income forecasts. As such the final outturn position for the year was still subject to further change and would continue to be carefully monitored. While mitigating actions were underway as detailed within the officer's report, strong budgetary control should continue to be a focus to ensure expenditure and income remained balanced within the budget, resulting in a positive contribution to reserves at outturn.

Towards Financial Sustainability Programme

The savings target included in the MTFS for 2024/25 was £125,000.

Progress against this target, based on quarter 2 performance, showed secured savings of £88,840, with a further £25,400 identified savings totalling £114,240 for the General Fund, resulting in a forecast under-achievement of £10,760 in year.

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 level of general balances at the year-end of £1,030,024, after allowing for the 2023/24 outturn position.

The HRA was currently projecting a forecast underspend of £519,410 which would result in HRA balances of £1,549,435 at the end of 2024/25. (Appendix C provided a forecast Housing Revenue Account Summary). This position maintained balances above the prudent minimum of circa £1m.

Although the forecast position was an underspend, there were a number of significant variations in income and expenditure against the approved budget as outlined at paragraph 4.3-4.5 of the report, with full details of the main variances provided in Appendix D of the report.

In response to the key cost pressures forecast in 2024/25; the additional staff costs arising as a result of the nationally agreed pay award were unavoidable and would require the resetting of budgets for 2025/26 within the upcoming Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). In relation to housing repairs, the Housing Directorate Management Team continued work on the individual repairs service areas, i.e. Aids & Adaptations, Voids, Responsive Repairs etc, in order to review and manage demand and cost drivers. Work also continued within the Housing Repair Service (HRS) to address the recruitment and retention challenges, (this also formed part of a wider scope of work developing the Council's Workforce Development Strategy), which was already seeing some success with a reduction in levels of vacancies.

As detailed throughout this report, there still remained a number of variables in the forecast assumptions, and as such the final outturn position for the year was still subject to further change. At this stage no additional mitigations, other than those currently being implemented in response to the issues faced by the HRS were recommended. Strong budgetary control should continue to be a focus in this financial year to ensure expenditure and income remained balanced within budget.

Housing Repairs Service

For 2024/25 the Council's Housing Repairs Service net revenue budget was set at zero, reflecting its full cost recovery nature.

At quarter 2 the HRS was forecasting a deficit of £17,146 in 2024/25, an improvement of £338,165 since quarter 1, which had subsequently been repatriated to the HRA as detailed within the forecast HRS summary at Appendix E. Full details of the main variances were provided in Appendix F, together with a summary of the key variances at paragraphs 5.2 – 5.3 of the officer's report.

While the forecast outturn for the HRS was a small budget overspend, there still remained uncertainty in terms of service demands and income forecasts. As such it was essential that the tight controls implemented to monitor premium sub-contractor spend were maintained to minimise the projected deficit and mitigate against the potential for the current net underspend in the HRA, to deteriorate.

The forecast deficit also included the impact of the national pay award announced in November 2023, which was significantly over and above the assumptions included within the MTFS, as outlined in both the General Fund and HRA variances.

Earmarked Reserves

The Council held a number of earmarked revenue reserves over both the General Fund and HRA. These reserves were sums set aside for specific purposes and to mitigate against potential future known or predicted liabilities. Key reserves included income volatility, business rates volatility, IT investment fund, asset sinking funds for future refurbishment etc. A number of these reserves were budgeted for use over the period of the MTFS.

The details of all the earmarked reserves and their forecast balance as at 31 March 2025 were attached at Appendix G, and summarised at paragraph 6.2 of the officer's report, with further details in the MTFS 2024-2029.

General Fund Investment Programme

The revised General Investment Programme (GIP) for 2024/25 amounted to £23.5m following the quarter 1 report. At quarter 2 the programme had increased by £4.4m to £27.9m, as detailed at paragraph 7.2 of the officer's report.

Changes over the approved limit which required approval by the Executive for the second quarter were detailed at paragraph 7.3 of the officer's report.

There were no new projects added to the GIP, which required Executive approval.

The financial changes delegated to the Chief Finance Officer and approved for the second quarter 2024/2025 were detailed at paragraph 7.5, with a summary of the projected outturn position provided at paragraph 7.6 of the officer's report.

The overall spend on the General Investment Programme active schemes for the second quarter of 2024/25 was £3.2m, which was 14.5% of the budget as detailed further at Appendix I of the report.

The low percentage of expenditure at this stage of the financial year was mainly due to the reprofiling of a number of large schemes, only starting on site towards the end of quarter 2/beginning of quarter 3 e.g., Greyfriars, Yarborough Leisure Centre, Western Growth Corridor Phase 1a Homes and the LUF2 Eastern Access Bridge.

Housing Investment Programme

The revised Housing Investment Programme (HIP) 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 detailed within paragraph 7.10 of the officer's report.

All changes over the approved limit which required approval by the Executive for quarter 2 were detailed at paragraph 7.11 of the officer's report.

Two new projects were added to the Housing Investment Programme having been approved at Executive during quarter 2 as detailed at paragraph 7.12 of the officers report.

The financial changes delegated to the Chief Finance Officer for approval as set out under Financial Procedure Rules for the second quarter 2024/2025 were detailed at paragraph 7.13 and a summary of the projected outturn position for the Housing Investment Programme at paragraph 7.15 of the officer's report.

The overall expenditure on the Housing Investment Programme at the end of quarter 2 of 2024/25 was £5.730m, which was 32.87% of the 2024/25 revised programme. This excluded expenditure relating to Western Growth Corridor, which was currently shown on the General Investment Programme, to be apportioned at year-end (current forecast outturn £1.3m) This was detailed further at Appendix J.

A further £1.091m had been spent as at the end of October 2024. Although this was still a low percentage of expenditure at this stage of the financial year, works had been constrained by the availability of contractors and materials, however,

new contracts were in place and spend was expected to increase by the end of the financial year.

Members praised officers for accomplished management of the Council's finances despite there having been significant cuts in resources over recent years, which was testament to their excellent management skills.

48. Treasury Management and Prudential Code Update Mid-Year Report - 30 September 2024

Purpose of Report

To report the Council's treasury management activity and the actual prudential indicators for the period 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024, in accordance with the requirements of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice. The strategy included indicators that helped ensure that the Council's capital investment plans were affordable, prudent and sustainable.

Decision

That the Prudential and Local Indicators and the actual performance against the Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25 for the half-year ended 30 September 2024 be noted and referred to Full Council (in accordance with CIPFA's Code of Practice for Treasury Management).

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

Reason for Decision

The prudential system for capital expenditure was well established. One of the requirements of the Prudential Code was to ensure adequate monitoring of the capital expenditure plans, prudential indicators (PIs) and the treasury management response to these plans. The report fulfilled that requirement and included a review of compliance with Treasury and Prudential Limits and the Prudential Indicators at 30 September 2024. The Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators were previously reported to and approved by Council on 27 February 2024.

It was noted that the Council held £29.355 million of investments at 30 September 2024, with the full investment profile set out at Appendix A of the report. Of this investment portfolio, 100% was held in low risk specified investments, the requirement for the year being a minimum of 25% of the portfolio to be specified investments. During the six months to 30 September on average 93% of the portfolio was held in low risk specified investments and an average of 7% of the portfolio was held in non-specified investments with other local authorities.

It was noted that as at 30 September 2024, the Council held £107.406m of external borrowing, of which 100% were fixed rate loans (Appendix A referred).

As at 30 September 2024, the average rate of interest paid during the first half of the financial year on external borrowing was 3.26%. This was lower than the

budgeted rate set in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2024-29 of 3.65%, due to the repayment of a loan in the prior year, which was not anticipated in the MTFS, and the new borrowing forecast at budget setting had not yet been required.

This Council had adopted the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Sector and operated its treasury management service in compliance with this Code and the above requirements. These required that the prime objective of treasury management activity was the effective management of risk, and that its borrowing activities were undertaken in a prudent, affordable and sustainable basis.

It was anticipated that no additional borrowing would be undertaken during this financial year. A loan of £2m was due to mature in February 2025, the need to replace this would be assessed closer to the time in-line with cashflow forecasts and interest rates at the time.

The capital programme was being kept under regular review due to the effects of inflationary pressures and shortages of materials and labour. The borrowing strategy would therefore also be regularly reviewed and revised, to achieve optimum value and risk exposure in the long-term.

Officers confirmed that the approved limits within the Annual Treasury Management Strategy were not breached during the quarter ended 30 September 2024.

49. Setting the 2025/26 Budget & Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/26-2029/30

Purpose of Report

To update Executive on the latest Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) position for the Council, including the challenges in preparing for the 2025/26 and future years budget, setting out the parameters within which the Council would prepare these budgets and confirmation of the Council's approach to development of the budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The report included an update on the current economic position and developments in national policy, specifically the Government's first Budget and Spending Review, which gave rise to specific impacts for local government funding. This, along with cost and demand pressures, and other emerging issues, would inform the development of the MTFS. Further details in respect of key budget assumptions for 2025-30, together with budget and financial planning preparation timetables for 2025/26 were outlined at Appendices A and B of the report.

Decision

1. That the financial challenges and risks that the Council faced, particularly the uncertainty surrounding future funding levels be noted.
2. That the projected budget parameters for 2025/26 and future years and note the planning assumptions, as set out in Appendix A be noted.

3. That the budget, strategic and service planning preparation programme, as set out in Appendix B be noted.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

There were significant, unprecedented risks to the Council's budget strategy, particularly in the short-term as detailed within the officer's report.

The budget process included the recognition of these risks in determining the 2025/26 budget and MTFS, but it would be imperative that the Council continued to build upon its record of delivering significant savings and maintained a strong financial management discipline in order to ensure a sustainable financial position.

Reason for Decision

The Council's new emerging Vision 2030 and its five strategic priorities would drive the medium-term financial planning process, with changes in resource allocation determined in accordance with policies and priorities. The MTFS provided the framework for the development of annual budgets in line with the aims of the Council's strategy and priorities.

The refreshed MTFS would include financial projections for the five-year financial planning period through to 2029/30. It would set out the financial parameters within which the Council was required to work and the recommended approach to addressing the financial challenges the Council faced to develop a balanced, sustainable budget and set Council Tax and Housing Rents for 2025/26.

The refresh of the MTFS needed to be seen in the context of significant financial uncertainty for the Council in relation to future Government funding levels. Significant changes to future public sector departmental spending through the Spending Review 2025, the allocation of this funding to local government through reforms to the distribution methodologies, and the potential implementation of a Business Rates Reset, were as yet all unknown but all of which had the potential to fundamentally affect the Council's funding trajectory and MTFS

Furthermore, the Council continued to face budget pressures due to changes in the use of, and demand for, services, as well as increased costs and reduced income streams.

As a result of these factors, the Council, and local government as a whole, was yet again having to update their medium-term financial strategies in a very uncertain environment. It was a long time since the Council had any stability and certainty beyond a one-year timeframe, and the development of the latest MTFS looked set to continue this tradition, which made financial planning, and the subsequent impact on service delivery, in this climate extremely challenging.

Against this backdrop of uncertainty, the report sets out the current financial planning assumptions that would form the basis of the MTFS refresh. However, due to the level of uncertainty it was difficult to make a full, definitive and comprehensive assessment of the ongoing financial impact of some of these issues. As such, the figures in this report were based upon best estimates and forecasts and would therefore be subject to change as the budget process developed, and would continue to change into the new financial year. This medium-term financial planning process was though critical to ensuring that the

Council had an understanding of the likely level of available resources and the potential costs of delivering services, identifying budget shortfalls at the earliest opportunity to ensure appropriate action could be taken in advance.

Based on the current financial planning assumptions it was estimated that the Council would not need to make any significant increases in the level of savings targets that underpinned the existing MTFS. The assumption that reductions in the annual net cost base of the General Fund of c£1.75m by 2027/28, if it was to remain sustainable in the medium term, would remain. The Council had a strong track record of managing its finances, having delivered annual revenue reductions of over £10.5m over the last 10+ years. But, £1.75m was a significant amount in comparison to the General Fund budget and with each year the challenge got much harder.

Careful and prudent financial management would continue to be required to ensure that the Council maintained a robust and sustainable financial position and was able to respond to the financial risks that it faced. The MTFS needed to remain flexible, the Council's reserves resilient and the sound track record of delivering savings needed to be sustained, whilst ensuring that resources were directed towards the new Vision 2030.

50. 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 second quarter 2024/25.

Decision

That the Council's strategic risks as at the end of quarter 2 2024/25, be noted.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None were considered. The Strategic Risk Register contained the key strategic risks to the delivery of the Council's medium and longer term priorities. A failure to monitor the action that was being taken to manage those risks would undermine the Council's governance arrangements.

Reasons for the Decision

An update of the Strategic Risk Register developed under the risk management approach of 'risk appetite', was last presented Members in August 2024 and contained fifteen strategic risks as detailed within paragraph 3.1 of the officer's report.

Since reporting to Members in August, the Strategic Risk Register had been refreshed and updated by the Risk Owners and Corporate Management Team. This update had reviewed each risk in terms of the level of assessed risk, control measures in place and mitigating actions required, and had identified there had been some positive movement in the Risk Register. It had also considered whether there were new risks that need to be assessed.

The updated register was contained with Part B of this agenda, it contained fifteen strategic risks along with details of relevant mitigations.

Each risk included a number of control measures in order to avoid, seek, modify, transfer or retain the risks. These included actions already in place and further actions required with the relevant timescales for implementation. These control actions continued to be implemented and the risks managed accordingly.

Each risk was evaluated in terms of the level of assessed risk (likelihood and impact), taking into consideration any changes in control measures and the wider environment in which the Council operated. There had been some positive movements in terms of the implementation of control measures, which had resulted in a change to the assessed levels or likelihood and/or impact of one of the risks:

- Risk 13 has decreased from Red: Almost Certain/Critical to Amber: Probable/Major.

The assessed level of each of the fifteen risks was outlined at paragraph 3.4 of the officer's report.

51. Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items 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.

52. Strategic Risk Register Quarterly Review

Purpose of Report

To receive the revised Strategic Risk Register as at the end of quarter 2 2024/25.

Decision

That the Council's strategic risks, as at the end of quarter 2 2024/25, be noted.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None were considered. The Strategic Risk Register contained the key strategic risks to the delivery of the Council's medium and longer term priorities. A failure to monitor the action that was being taken to manage those risks would undermine the Council's governance arrangements.

Reasons for the Decision

The reasons for the decision were set out at Minute 49 above.

53. Opportunity to Acquire 9 x 3 Bed New Build Homes

Purpose of Report

As detailed in the exempt report to the Executive.

Decision

That the recommendation 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.