

Report by Councillor R Metcalfe, Portfolio Holder for ‘Our People and Resources’

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1. INTRODUCTION – a changing political landscape

This report outlines the Council's continuing progress in the delivery of its strategic priorities and continuous improvement as a high performing council.

There are many achievements to be proud of.

However, the political and economic context remains uncertain and the council needs to be agile and well prepared to successfully meet future challenge and change.

The City continues to thrive, but we need to redouble our efforts to ensure that growth is inclusive and sustainable, the twin challenges of inequality and climate change will preoccupy us for the foreseeable future.

The journey towards financial sustainability remains challenging, with a further £1.2 million savings to be achieved within the lifetime of the current MTFS.

2. THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

In early 2017 we launched Vision 2020 - a new 3-year strategic plan, covering the period 2017 to March 2020. This vision identified four key strategic priorities:

- Let's drive economic growth
- Let's reduce inequality
- Let's deliver quality housing
- Let's enhance our remarkable place

These four priorities are underpinned by a final key element of Vision 2020 - professional high performing service delivery. We will ensure that the council is well run, builds a consensus with the communities we serve and with our partners around our vision and strategic priorities, and can demonstrate that we are capable of delivering these.

What follows is an update on how we are progressing with each of these priorities.

The council has worked to ensure members, staff and partners are informed of progress and are engaged in the delivery of Vision 2020. This has included putting on staff and member roadshows to keep people informed of delivery; member briefing sessions on specific projects and partnership events such as the Lincoln Growth Conference.

Key achievements for ‘Let’s Drive Economic Growth’

- The £30m Transport Hub is now fully operational and over the last year has won many awards for its design and construction including:
 - East Midlands Engineering project of the year 2018
 - Safer bus station awards 2018
 - Park Mark for the MSCP 2018
 - Greater Lincolnshire Construction and Property Awards 2019
 - British Parking Awards 2019 – best new car park
- Western Growth Corridor has progressed significantly over the last year. Actions include:
 - New transport modelling work completed for the new Transport Assessment
 - Offer for £1.88M received from Homes England towards opening up costs
 - Further public consultation completed in early 2019
 - The planning application was submitted in April 2019

Key achievements for ‘Let’s Reduce Inequality’

- As part of the drive to help reduce suicides across the city, a training plan has been rolled out across front line services. To date we have delivered:
 - SafeTALK half day workshops between May and December 2018 (400 places)
 - ASSIST two day course – held in September 2018, with 16 attendees
- The Lincoln Social Responsibility Charter now has 60 organisations in the city signed up to go the extra mile for their employees and communities in the city
- The Lincoln Community Lottery launched in 2018, has been an outstanding success, generating c£42k to support local community good causes in and around the city
- The Sincil Bank Revitalisation Programme has received £235k to fund a range of new projects from a bid to the Controlling Migration fund
- We continue to work with partners to deliver multi-agency support for rough sleepers. Supporting 120 individuals, this project is delivered through £1.3m of Social Impact Bond funding from central government
- Our Revenues and Benefits Shared Service secured a prestigious national award for ‘Excellence in Partnership Working’ through the IRRV Performance Awards.
- We led a project in partnership with Lincoln College, Lincolnshire County Council and DWP to help low income households receive funded educational courses, resulting in 133 learners progress to employment and 18 learners progress to higher education
- Our Universal Credit Support Team, supported 1,743 Lincoln residents with digital support, and 822 customers with budgeting support, during the fiscal year 2018/19.
- Delivery of a Business Rates Growth Relief Policy, to assist qualifying businesses through a discount in their Business Rates for up to three years.
- We continue to support and fund The Network project to help the NEET group obtain advice and support, including advice around training and careers.
- A range of financial products to help our customers has been promoted through our Lincoln Against Poverty website.

Key achievements for 'Let's Deliver Quality Housing'

- Following the successful bid to Homes England for £3.2m grant funding, work has now started on the £12m, 70 unit, De Wint Court Extra Care project. Residents and staff were consulted, outline costs approved and we are now tendering for contracts.
- Progress has been made with the energy efficiency project to tackle fuel poverty:
 - The Private housing central heating scheme is complete
 - The 18/19 Council housing investment programme is complete.
 - The 19/20 housing investment programme is now underway. We are due to install 450 – 500 new boilers, targeting properties with low SAP ratings
- Partnerships with Waterloo Housing Group and Westleigh Developments have provided 184 new build homes which were allocated by December 2018. These were at Blankney Crescent (12 units); Allenby Close (45 units); Lytton Street (7 units); Ingleby Crescent (74 units) and Westwick Drive (46 units)
- We also enabled the delivery of an additional 71 units for shared ownership through Registered Housing Providers on the above sites
- The council is now fully compliant with the new Homelessness Reduction Act 2018, Successful preventions against the total number of applications received since April 2018 stands at 58.7% with a May 2019 figure of 63.7%
- As part of the Health and Housing Assistance Policy adopted in March 2018 – we have delivered 68 Disabled Facilities Grants; 1 Moving on assistance grant; 2 hospital discharge grants and 1 gas central heating scheme

Key achievements for 'Let's Enhance Our Remarkable Place'

- Birchwood Leisure centre has been officially re-opened following the improvements and is performing extremely well with increasing visitor numbers and high satisfaction levels
- The £4m Renovation of Boutham Park is completed and officially opened spring 2018, followed by a Royal visit from Princess Anne
- Work is well progressed in the planning of the renovation of the Boutham Park Lake, with a submission for funding to the HLF scheduled for Autumn 2019
- Regulations are now in place such that 'To Let' boards need advertisement consent in designated residential parts of the City close to the city centre
- Adoption of a character appraisal for conservation areas in the crucial commercial zone which will guide sensitive development of the city centre in future
- The free city centre Wi-Fi system went live - 11,000 users have used it in first 3 months (Nov 2018)
- £1m Major allotment improvements completed with just a new site at Melbourne Road left to complete the project
- Work has started on designing possible new traffic flows within Sincil Bank, supported by resident consultation over summer 2019 re the potential implementation of residents parking. This was approved by the residents and implementation will help remove commuter traffic, give the streets back to the community and further improve air quality
- £1.7m Creation of new all-weather pitches at our two leisure centres was completed and launched in the summer. The athletics track at Yarborough LC is also being refurbished
- Planning applications have been submitted for significant enhancements of the Lincoln Crematorium to include new public gathering spaces, new memorial gardens, new internal equipment and a complete facelift of the building exterior

- Agreement has been reached with Lincoln BIG for the transfer of the Visitor Information Centre back in house from April 1st 2020
- There is a new 10 year vision in place for Lincoln Christmas market
- We launched the innovative Lincoln Intervention team to help address Anti-social Behaviour linked to homelessness and street living problems in November 2018
- The Sincil Bank Regeneration Scheme has progressed well with:
 - The introduction of CCTV
 - All old cast iron street name plates in the area totally renovated,
 - Enforcement work led by the community against wheelie bins,
 - Art trail - the painting of various the virgin media street boxes by local artists
 - Old street railings and barriers removed

Key achievements for ‘High Performing Service Delivery’

- Savings of £3.824m were achieved against the Towards Financial Sustainability target of £3.850 (99.3%). This included significant contributions from the commercial assets purchased over the last two years. This year we have added the purchase of the Stargas contract and that of the Deacon Road site to the commercial portfolio
- A staff travel plan survey was conducted in January 2019 as a precursor to developing a strategy for more ‘green’ activity
- Work has commenced on developing a transformational approach to the way the council does business. This started with the appointment of an Organisational Change Lead for a two year period
- Health and wellbeing initiatives developed in Human Resources have resulted in a significant drop in the levels of sickness across the council, to the lowest in six years
- A new bespoke Corporate Performance and Information Management System (PIMS) has been developed in house to take over from the old TEN system IMPS. From Q1 2019/20 we are reporting through this system including a range of new measures which were reviewed at the time of development.

3. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2018/19 – Our people & Resources

3.1 Financial Sustainability

In common with the rest of local government the Council has continued to face a number of challenges during 2018/19 which continue to threaten its financial sustainability. These challenges have arisen from a legacy of:

- severe central government funding reductions, the distribution of which has not been uniform across the different types of authority with some being significantly more affected than others, this Council being one of those suffering a greater proportionate loss.
- radical reform of the methodology for funding local government, where councils are self-sufficient, funded from local taxes with limited reliance on Central Government. This new methodology for funding local government is inextricably linked to the performance of the local economy via Business Rates, New Homes Bonus, Council Tax and Local Council Tax Reduction schemes and Housing Revenue Account Self-Financing.
- the continued national and local impacts of the government’s deficit reduction programme and austerity measures affecting jobs, housing and business growth, which

has in turn created pressure on the generation of local income streams; financial markets and the subsequent low returns on investments; and creating a rising demand, and increased cost pressures, for council services from customers who rely on the safety net provided by local government.

In response to this the Council has embraced a forward thinking, ambitious and commercial approach in maintaining a sound financial position. This means planning ahead, securing savings in advance, re-investing in more efficient ways of working, adopting a more commercial approach, prioritising resources for economic development measures, whilst making careful use of reserves to meet funding gaps and mitigate risks.

The Council's successful financial management to date has enabled the protection of core services, whilst at the same time ensured that resources are directed towards the priority areas in the Council's Vision 2020.

That is not to say though that the Council will not continue to have to navigate a difficult financial path in the forthcoming years in order to maintain a sustainable financial position. Looking ahead, the financial landscape for local government continues to pose significant challenge to the Council due to the volatility, complexity and uncertainty about future funding. Significant national decisions are still to be made by the government about future departmental spending through the Spending Review 2020 and the timing of this, the allocation of this funding to local government through the Fair Funding Review, and reform of the Business Rates Retention system, all of which will impact on the Council's MTFs. In addition the impact of Brexit and the consequent impact on the economic and political landscapes poses significant uncertainty for central and local government.

Ahead of this, the Council's General Fund continues to face a significant financial challenge to maintain a sustainable financial position and achieve the savings target set out in the MTFs. Over the last 10 year period the Council has delivered savings in excess of £8.4m, a significant reduction in comparison to the overall net expenditure budget. However further savings of £0.8m are still to be delivered in order to achieve the current target by 2020/21, with the potential for further increases as a result of the emerging budget pressures the Council is facing.

The Towards Financial Sustainability (TFS) programme is and continues to be the vital element in ensuring that the Council maintains a sustainable financial position and delivers the required reductions in the net budget. The programme itself has been refocused, reflecting the Council's innovative, forward thinking and commercial approach alongside its ambitions to maintain high performing services and a performance culture. As part of this refocus there are now four agreed strands to achieve savings. These are:

- "One Council" – cross organisational lean reviews to deliver a "one organisational" approach more efficiently and effectively
- Commercialisation – generation of new income streams, and commercial trading opportunities
- Investment Opportunities – to invest in commercial properties as well as regeneration and redevelopment schemes that support the local economy
- Service Reduction/Withdrawal – withdraw from some services or reduce the level of service provided for those non priority services

Alongside this programme the Council will continue to seek ways to maximise its tax bases through economic development measures through its Vision 2020, which enhance the economic prosperity of the City.

As part of the maximisation of tax bases the council, along with the other Lincolnshire District Councils, Lincolnshire County Council and North Lincolnshire Council applied to be a pilot for 100% Business Rates Retention in 2018/19 and was confirmed as one of the ten successful applications.

This meant that for 2018/19 the council received 60% of business rates, with 40% going to Lincolnshire County Council (under 50% retention the funding splits were 50% Central Government, 40% Lincoln City Council and 10% Lincolnshire County Council).

This resulted in additional resources achieved from the pilot of £2.1m which was in excess of the £1.5m original estimate. An element of this additional resource has been set aside to fund the forecast reduction in business rates when the system is due to be reset in April 2021 and to replenish the business rates volatility reserve, with the balance going towards Vision 2020 priorities.

This approach by the council on both its TFS programme and maximisation of tax bases focuses its efforts on sustainability for the future.

3.2 Revenues Shared Service

Our Revenues and Benefits shared service with North Kesteven District Council continues to perform successfully, building on the national accolades achieved in 2018/19 through a prestigious national Performance Awards process.

The service proactively and positively responds to regular changes in policy and legislation, as well as increasing customer demands and expectations. The service has been at the heart of increasing 'customer experience' through a suite of innovative, automated e-forms being delivered.

Collecting monies due to the Councils continues to be increasingly challenging, which includes recovery of monies such as; Council Tax, Business Rates, Former Tenant Arrears and Sundry Debtors – as well as collecting the levy for the Lincoln Business Improvement District. The team not only aims to collect and recover monies, but also helps to provide advice and signpost customers to vital budget and debt management services wherever appropriate.

In terms of performance:

- As at the end of Quarter 2 2019/20, in-year Council Tax collection is 0.07% higher than at the same point in 2018/19 – this is even more positive when considering the net collectable debit has increased by almost £3m in the current financial year;
- As at the end of Quarter 2 2019/20, in-year Business Rates collection is lower than as at the same point in 2018/19, by 0.99%. However, the team has over £60,000 additional rates to collect this financial year, and it is anticipated that another positive performance outturn will be achieved for 2019/20 (in 2018/19, we achieved the 5th highest in-year collection in England);
- Level of outstanding customer changes in the Revenues team stands at 1,177 at the end of Quarter 2 2019/20 – this is an increase since Quarter 1, and also from the same point in 2018/19. However, it should be noted that the team is now in a strong position to

move forward. Work has, and still is, taking place earlier in the financial year – for example, registration of students for Council Tax with appropriate discounts and exemptions. This is largely due to one of the e-forms developed which collects data sooner and in a more efficient manner, meaning this large influx of work can be dealt with earlier in the financial year. Also, there has been a reduction in staffing resources – however, these positions have now been filled so will have a positive impact over the second half of the financial year.

Our Team continues to deliver initiatives aimed at reducing fraud in the system – through new and existing cross-departmental and national data-match exercises, and initiatives through the Lincolnshire Counter Fraud Partnership. Regular reviews of Council Tax Single Person Discounts, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support incomes, and Business Rates potential ‘avoidance’ continue to be key activities for our shared service.

The service continues to deliver savings in excess of £0.5m per annum between City of Lincoln and North Kesteven.

3.3 Procurement

As in previous years the current financial situation has meant that procurement continues to be one of the areas where there is potential to generate savings. However this is with the acknowledgement that this is subject to market forces and therefore is something which we cannot control.

Significant procurement support has been provided within the last year to a number of the key strategic priorities including the Regeneration of De Wint Court Extra Care facility, the Western Growth Corridor scheme, the Crematorium Refurbishment project, the insourcing of the Visitor Information Centre as well as a number of the priorities of Vision 2020.

The Procurement Manager as part of her duties continually reviews whether there are any potential spend areas and/or contracts which could be renegotiated or procured in order to generate savings. At present there are no significant areas to report but when they do arise, these will be reviewed in more detail with the Operational lead.

3.4 Asset Optimisation

The Council has continued to progress with its commercial property investment strategy and has over the last 12 months completed on its purchase of the Travelodge and three retail units at Deacon Road. This brings the total investment in commercial property to £28m, generating annual revenue returns of £1.5m, resulting in additional revenue income of £412k p.a. after the cost of financing.

Each of these investments have been made in Lincoln demonstrating that the Council is focussed on influencing the regeneration and economic development of the City, whilst also seeking financial returns. This is an approach that has seen the Council being shortlisted for the Entrepreneurial Council of the Year award at the LGC Awards and for the Innovation in Finance award at the MJ Awards.

3.5 Emergency Planning

The Emergency Plan provides a framework for the control and co-ordination of a response to an emergency affecting the council and is refreshed annually. Over the past year we have continued to work with the County Council's Emergency Planning unit with the following completed:

- All Strategic Commanders have had further training and new procedure folders
- A national counter terrorism exercise has been conducted in Lincoln and the City council contributed to this
- City of Lincoln Council has been involved with the European Union exit planning

We have a full out of hours rota for emergency planning strategic (gold) commanders which includes a combination of Chief Executive, Directors, Assistant Directors. The strategic commander level was previously CMT level only but has been expanded to Assistant Director level to increase resilience. A review has been conducted of the staff that make up our tactical (silver) commander group, with a number of Service Managers joining the group to expand the numbers and thus further increase the rota resilience. Training is currently being arranged for all new members of both gold and silver commands

Staff have continued to be trained on ACT – Action Counters Terrorism as required over the last year, including colleagues from the DWP. ACT is the new name and format for what was previously known as Project Griffin which is a national police initiative to protect our cities and communities from the threat of terrorism by familiarising staff of organisations such as ours on security, counter-terrorism and crime prevention issues. A review of all safeguarding training is underway which will ensure auto-reminders are sent to staff at appropriate intervals, when refresher training is due.

3.6 Business Continuity

Business Continuity Management (BCM) is a framework that assists in the management of risks which might impact the smooth running of our organisation or the delivery of key services. These risks could be from the external environment (e.g. power outages, severe weather etc.) or from within an organisation (e.g. systems failure, loss of key staff etc.) Well organised Business Continuity plans will facilitate the recovery of key business systems within agreed timescales whilst maintaining the council's critical activities and the delivery of vital services to the public.

Business Continuity Management complements and interrelates with other corporate activities, notably risk management and emergency planning.

The council's overarching business continuity plan is reviewed each year. We have 21 critical service area plans all of which undertake an annual review, led by the service area and supported by the council's Emergency Planning Officer who is from the Joint Emergency Management Service at Lincolnshire County Council.

Although investment in a secondary ICT location at Hamilton House was made in 2015/16, this equipment is now aging and the response levels are no longer sufficient and require further investment. This required investment along with linkages between the IT Disaster Recovery

Plan and critical service area plans have resulted in this area being raised as an area of significant concern in the Annual Governance Statement, an action plan is however in place to address this with an upgrade to the IT infrastructure already underway.

The councils Business Continuity Co-ordinator is the Chief Finance Officer and regularly meets with the council's Emergency Planning Officer, who sits on relevant internal meetings such as Safety Advisory Group and the Christmas Market Safety Advisory Group to provide necessary support and guidance.

3.7 Risk Management

The Council continues to develop and monitor key risks, those which could affect the Council's ability to achieve its priorities during the year. Elements of Risk Management are outsourced to Lincolnshire County Council's (LCC) Assurance Lincolnshire service in order to provide the level of expertise that we require. The development and monitoring of the Council's strategic, operational and project risk registers however remains a role that is undertaken by the Council through the Corporate Management Team and Directorate Management Teams.

The Strategic Risk Register for 2019/20 was initially formulated by the Corporate Leadership Team in July 2019 and as part of the reporting protocol within the current Risk Management Strategy both the Executive Committee and Performance Scrutiny Committee receive reports on the Strategic Risk Register to consider the status and movement of all strategic risks at that particular point in time. At this present time the Strategic Risk Register contains 10 strategic risks.

Each Directorate identifies key risks within their service areas creating a Directorate Risk Register. These registers contain risks that are mainly of an operational nature.

An Internal Audit was undertaken during 2018/19, of the Council's risk management arrangements. The purpose of this review was to focus on the Strategic and Directorate risk registers to ensure that they were up to date, regularly reviewed and risks were actively managed. It was concluded that there was substantial assurance - that the Council had effective risk management arrangements in place.

The Council is part of the Greater Lincolnshire Risk Management Group (GLRMG) who, during 2018/19, conducted their own annual benchmarking exercise between the districts within Lincolnshire. This is a much simpler way of benchmarking and enables us to share best practice. The results of that exercise, across a range of areas with an assessment based on a maturity level on a scale of 1-5, where level 5 is the highest level of maturity, shows Lincoln as follows:

- Leadership and Management – level 4
- Strategy and Policy – level 4
- People – level 4
- Partnership ,Shared Risk and Resources – level 3
- Processes – level 4
- Risk Handling and Assurance – level 3
- Outcomes and Delivery – level 4

Overall this is a good result and a suitable work plan for 2019/20 is in place to support these scores.

3.8 Brexit

The Council has actively been preparing for the potential impacts of the UK's exit from Europe, primarily based on a worse case scenario of a no-deal exit. Internally the Council has an established working group in operation which consists of the City Solicitor, Chief Finance Officer, Procurement Manager, HR & WBL Manager, Communications Manager, Business Manager – Corporate Policy and Internal Audit Manager. This group has focussed on assessing the key impacts of Brexit and identifying and actioning the specific mitigations, along with ongoing monitoring of these, these key areas cover:

- Legal and Regulatory considerations
- Workforce implications
- Finance and Funding
- Procurement/Supply Chains
- Elections
- Civil Contingencies/Business Continuity
- Community Leadership

Additionally the Council, along with all other Council's has a nominated Brexit Lead Officer, which is the Chief Finance Officer, whose role is to ensure the Council is taking all reasonable steps to prepare for the exit from the EU. Including clear communication to local residents and businesses to support their own preparation for Brexit.

3.9 Corporate Health & Safety

A comprehensive two year rolling Health & Safety Development Plan is in place and is prioritised according to risk. It is fully resourced and is approved and monitored by Health & Safety Champions Group. The main focus last year continued to ensure that occupational health measures were suitable and sufficient to protect our employees and improvements were implemented in the management of hand held electrical equipment to reduce exposure to hand/arm vibration. In addition, last year a new online Incident Reporting System was launched which provided the platform to identify trends or hotspots to target improvement, this has been very successful and as an example it identified a high level of anti-social and unacceptable behaviours within our City multi storey car parks and a number of measures to reduce and manage this have been introduced.

The Health, Safety & Welfare Policy has been reviewed during this in consultation with Trade Unions and has consolidated other policies such as, the management of asbestos and the unacceptable behaviour into one policy this is scheduled to be issued in early July 2019.

A robust and positive working relationship with our trade union Safety Representatives continues to flourish which is integral in maintaining and improving our organisations health and safety culture.

3.10 Human Resources

During 2018 the People Strategy and action plan continued to be embedded across the Council. The purpose of the three year strategy is an enabling framework which supports the delivery of the Vision 2020.

A key achievement over the last year is in relation to sickness absence where this has reduced to 10.35 days per FTE which has been the lowest reported figure for a number of years.

Following the introduction of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and action plan there has been a significant focus on the promotion of health and wellbeing initiatives:-

- Global Corporate Challenge (196 employees participated in the challenge of completing 10,000 steps per day)
- Our Health Matters booklet
- Delivery of Financial Wellbeing Courses
- Introduction of Employee Assistance Programme with 24 hour counselling provision
- Relaxation Classes
- Health and Wellbeing events including body MOTs
- Promotion of national health awareness days

The HR team continue to review the HR policies to ensure clarity, harmonisation and compliance with legislation. The reviews are incorporated within a timetable to ensure that all policies are checked at least every three years. The Trade Unions have been actively involved in these reviews. As part of each review, training continues to be provided for all staff who have supervisory duties.

The positive relationship with the Unions continues, largely as a result of the monthly joint HR and Union meeting, where Unions are updated on staffing issues and are given the opportunity to give their opinions and input.

The HR team continue to review and monitor all workforce data in accordance with the equality and diversity action plan.

3.11 Work Based Learning (WBL) - Apprenticeships

The apprenticeship levy was introduced in April 2017. The Council is a levy paying employer with a 2.3% target of the workforce expected to be apprentices. From May 2017 a digital account became accessible to the Council to support the training of apprenticeships.

The Council exceeded the government target at 6.6% of employees for apprenticeship starts in 2017/18. This was the first reported figure (for the period 1st April 17 to 31st March 18) and the council was noted as exemplar on this – data for 2018/19 is not yet available.

The Council continues to deliver apprenticeships as a supporting provider in partnership with our main providers. The partnership with First College continues and the Council has entered into sub-contracting arrangements with LAGAT College to support the delivery of qualifications to SME's.

Despite a decline in numbers on programme for the past academic year 100% of apprentices have achieved on time and 100% have moved into education, employment or training.

The team continue to focus on quality and excellence and a number of apprentices were nominated, shortlisted and winners at the Lincolnshire Public Service Apprentice of the Year awards presented by Karen Lee, MP. The team have also celebrated all apprentices' achievements at the internal awards ceremony.

Over the coming year the WBL team will continue to support apprenticeships, provide career advice and interview support across the Council.

3.12 Craft apprenticeship scheme

We currently have five apprenticeships in position at Hamilton House (two painters, a joiner, and two electricians) and have recruited two apprentices for the forthcoming academic year- a joiner and a plumber to start in September this year.

We continue to ensure every effort is made so that the vacancies are seen as widely as possible, with information available on our website, Lincoln College website, on social media and in HOME, the tenant's magazine. As a result we have seen an increase in the level of applications.

A commitment has been made to recruit at least two apprentices annually, the trade to be determined in consultation with the Housing Repairs Services workforce who provide the day to day supervision.

Housing Repairs continue to work closely with our partners and contractors to provide as much technical and workplace experience as possible. The apprentices are also going to be getting experience of new build on the new housing schemes.

As well as the long term apprenticeships we also provide opportunities for short- placements - we have contacts with Lincoln College who provide college students who require work experience.

3.13 Corporate Communications and media relations

Our communications team continues working hard to ensure our good reputation is maintained and enhanced where possible. Staff are communicated with effectively and often, and the team continues to ensure that Vision 2020 and its priorities are embedded across the organisation and within the local community.

Some of the major successes this year include:

- The ImpsParade19, with more than 20,000 people lining the streets and showing their appreciation for Lincoln City's fantastic achievements in the 18/19 season. The comms team ensured that our Proud To Be Lincoln branding was front and centre on the bus and in the crowds, ensuring fantastic coverage on many local and national media.
- The team supported our HR colleagues in the Global Challenge 2018 and have continued this with the relaunch in May, where even more participants are signed-up. In 2018, staff and members walked in excess of 156,000 km over the 100 day duration of the challenge. This year, more than a third of our workforce is taking part.
- Following the early closure of Lincoln Christmas Market in 2017, the team worked hard to ensure the 2018 edition was well promoted and engaged with more visitors than ever before on social media, launching a new Instagram account and answering more than 240 enquiries on social media in the week before, and during, the event.

- The team has continued to develop new skills in different areas of media. They have modernised the way council communicates with its residents and stakeholders and have continued to produce films for use in many areas.
- With the launch of NETConsent we have been able to communicate with staff quicker and more effectively. In addition, the new staff magazine, Lincoln Lines, has allowed us to produce ever more engaging content for our employees.
- The team were successful in being shortlisted for the 2019 MJ Local Government Excellence Awards in the category of 'Innovation in Communications' for the work they have done on launching and promoting Vision 2020.
- Our social media followers have continued to grow significantly on all accounts. We now have over 14,950 followers to our corporate twitter account – an increase of more than 850 this year. This continues to see us in the top ten of UK councils with the most number of twitter followers per head of population.
- On Facebook, our presence has continued to increase significantly with more than 5,500 people following the council's page. This is a 35 per cent increase year-on-year. Meanwhile, the Lincoln Christmas Market page has recently hit the 35,000 followers mark.

3.14 Annual report

The 2017/18 report went to Performance Scrutiny Committee in August 2018, followed by Executive and Council in September 2018. The 2018/19 report is due to go to Performance Scrutiny Committee in November 2019, followed by Executive and Council.

The Annual Report, aligned to Vision 2020, covers the second year of the three year strategy and reports on the key achievements and projects delivered for each strategic priority (and high performing services strand of work) during the year.

3.15 Civic and International Partnerships

Guildhall:

The City owns some of the oldest Charters in the country and the University of Lincoln has agreed to work with the council to restore and re-condition Lincoln's historic Charters. They will then be on display in the Guildhall, as opposed to being kept at the archives, therefore attracting more visitors. Conservation Department at the University are continuing to work closely with the Guildhall.

The Guildhall received the 'Best Told Story' Award 2018 by Visit England and has been awarded the Trip Advisor Certificate of Excellence for the past four years. It is also, currently, the only place under 'Things to Do in Lincoln' that has a full five-star rating.

Mayoralty:

The Mayor and Civic party successfully attended over 300 events throughout their Mayoral Year. Councillor Keith Weaver chose the 'Lincoln Sea Cadets' as his chosen charity during his Year of Office. Fundraising events organised by Civic Office raised just under £3,000.

Civic Events:

The Lincoln Christmas Lights Switch-on event, as big as ever, attracting over 6,000 people.

The Civic Office also organised a 'Tri-Service' Parade; to commemorate Armistice, which was the first time an event of this kind had been held in the City.

A successful joint RAF Freedom Parade (RAF Waddington and Scampton) also took place in April.

International Partnerships:

The Mayor of Lincoln welcomed a delegation from Neustadt an der Weinstrasse, Germany, which included the new Oberbürgermeister, visiting Lincoln for the first time.

We also welcomed a delegation from our twin town, Nanchang, China, who were particularly interested in the new Sincil Street/Cornhill development.

Plans are now in hand to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the twinning with Neustadt an der Weinstrasse, one of the oldest twinning relationships in the country.

3.16 Legal Services

The support provided to officers by the team has led to excellent outcomes such as the Rogue Landlord project's prosecution of a landlord resulting initially in a fine of £400,000, albeit reduced on appeal, as well as the recent case brought against a landlord for assaulting a CLC officer, on behalf of the CPS.

The team are heavily involved in the conveyancing work for the New Homes Board and have been instrumental in utilising the right to buy receipts to purchase properties. Also supporting the Western Growth Corridor project, enforcement work across the council, as well as on behalf of partners and defending against claims and taking legal action on behalf of the council, to include proceedings to protect the council's staff.

We continue to be innovative in our approach to finding solutions for officers, for example, we recently served documents on an individual of no fixed abode by text. The statutory responsibilities of the data protection framework continue to be carried out where required. We also contribute to the strategic direction of the council through various working groups and policy development, including contributing to the empty properties project and 'Protecting Vulnerable People'/safeguarding work.

4. KEY PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

Sickness has improved greatly throughout the 2018/19 year – to put this in context, the figures over the last six years show that we have reduced back down to under the 2013/14 outturn. This has been achieved through a mixture of improvements in staff welfare management as I have already mentioned, but also through better sickness management by managers.

Cumulative sickness trends - CoLC (Excl. apprentices figures)

Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2013/14	2.68	5.18	7.69	10.78
2014/15	2.99	6.68	9.93	13.43
2015/16	3.01	5.7	8.6	11.63
2016/17	2.43	5.10	8.27	11.52
2017/18	3.11	6.34	9.84	13.62
2018/19	2.9	4.83	7.28	10.35

I should note that the latest figures for Q2 this year shows a cumulative figure of 5.07 average days per FTE, this is slightly over that for last year at the same time but still one of the lowest in the last 7 years.

The tables below are taken from the Performance Information Management System (PIMS) and show performance up to the end of Q2 2019/20 for my Portfolio.

The very positive achievements seen in the final outturn for 2018/19 have been continued through to 2019/20, although there are some areas to mention in Revenues administration.

REV2 – The rate of NNDR collection is showing a little behind target at this half way point through the year, at 0.19% below its lower target. However the net (pounds) collection is actually higher than the last year equivalent. The team continue to chase outstanding amounts.

In addition REV3 the number of outstanding customer changes has increased. There has been an increase in customer contact and an additional 563 properties on the tax base. The team has recently recruited to three vacancies and will be able to reduce this backlog once training is complete.

Our People and resources – quarterly measures

Service Area	Measure ID	Measure	High Or Low	Low Target	High Target	Previous Data Period	Previous Value	Current Quarter	Current Value	Unit	Status
Communications	COM 1	Percentage of media enquiries responded to within four working hours	High is good	70.00	85.00	Q4 - 18/19	0.00	Q2 - 19/20	72.00	%	A
Communications	COM 2	Number of proactive communications issued that help maintain or enhance our reputation	High is good	25	40	Q4 - 18/19		Q2 - 19/20	38	Number	A
Work Based Learning	WBL 1	Percentage of apprentices completing their qualification on time	High is good	92.00	95.00	Q1 - 19/20	100.00	Q2 - 19/20	100.00	%	G
Work Based Learning	WBL 2	Number of new starters on the apprenticeship scheme	High is good	8	10	Q1 - 19/20	5	Q2 - 19/20	8	Number	A
Work Based Learning	WBL 3	Percentage of apprentices moving into Education, Employment or Training	High is good	92.00	95.00	Q2 - 19/20	100.00	Q2 - 19/20	100.00	%	G
Accountancy	ACC 1	Average return on investment portfolio	High is good	0.75	0.85	Q1 - 19/20	0.85	Q2 - 19/20	0.86	%	G
Accountancy	ACC 2	Average interest rate on external borrowing	Low is good	4.75	3.75	Q1 - 19/20	2.84	Q2 - 19/20	3.38	%	G
Revenues Administration	REV 1	Council Tax - in year collection rate for Lincoln	High is good	52.39	52.80	Q1 - 19/20	26.71	Q2 - 19/20	52.87	%	G
Revenues Administration	REV 2	Business Rates - in year collection rate for Lincoln	High is good	59.77	60.57	Q1 - 19/20	34.49	Q2 - 19/20	59.58	%	R
Revenues Administration	REV 3	Number of outstanding customer changes in the Revenues team	Low is good	600	400	Q1 - 19/20	616	Q2 - 19/20	1,177	Number	R

Our people and resources – annual measures

Service Area	Measure ID	Measure	High Or Low	Low Target	High Target	Previous Data Period	Previous Value	Current Year	Current Value	Unit	Status
CX Debtors & Creditors	DCT 1	Percentage of invoices paid within 30 days	High is good	95.00	97.00	2017/18	95.17	2018/19	97.79	%	G

Debtors & Creditors	DCT 2	Percentage of invoices that have a Purchase Order completed	High is good	40.00	50.00	2017/18	41.60	2018/19	46.00	%	A
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For all measures the key is: Green = At or above target; Blue = Acceptable performance – results are within target boundaries; Red = Below target

5. FUTURE CHALLENGES

Following the imminent completion of Phase One of Vision 2020, attention is now focusing on planning the second phase of projects.

Key projects are:

- Continuing to lead on the Western Growth Corridor site to unlock 3,200 homes and 20ha of commercial employment land.
- Working with partners such as Visit Lincoln to launch the 'Invest Lincoln' scheme.
- Developing a local strategic response to the UK Industrial Strategy
- Implementing a Market Strategy and action plan to transform City Square
- Delivering the Empty Homes Strategy to bring increasing numbers of empty homes back into use.
- Completing the site works to De Wint Court which will see it transformed into an Extra Care Facility.
- Delivery of the Spa Road development site for up to 312 new homes.
- Building on the successes of the first phase of the Sincil Bank Regeneration Scheme, to achieve long-term, physical transformation in this part of the city
- Undertaking an outdoor play facilities project, and develop a longer-term view of leisure facilities in the city through the creation of a new strategy.

I would like to express my appreciation to the really excellent range of officers who support me with the work of the Portfolio and to specifically say thank you to the following officers for their assistance in the preparation of this report:

Sara Boothright, Claire Burroughs, Heather Carmichael, Simon Colburn, Kate Fenn, Jaclyn Gibson, Frances Jelly, Pat Jukes, Martin Walmsley, Steve Welsby

**Councillor Ric Metcalfe (Leader of the Council)
Portfolio Holder for People and Resources**