

REPORT UNDER RULE 2(vi) OF THE COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES REPORT BY COUNCILLOR CHRIS BURKE, PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND REVIEW**Introduction**

This has clearly been the most challenging year any community in the United Kingdom has faced since the Second World War and Lincoln has been no exception with all the sectors of our society suffering personal loss, anxiety, disruption, and substantial dislocation. Clearly this challenging period has caused immense change in our working routines with many staff members engaging in roles they never expected to be called upon to perform. All staff at every level have performed superbly and I do thank them. Our guiding principle remains as a progressive local authority one that seeks to serve all the communities of our City of Lincoln providing effective but caring delivery. This report demonstrates that our teamwork has delivered the work needed to achieve a constantly improving City as it enters the third decade of the 21st Century and recovers to face our new challenges. Every single member of staff can take personal credit for this work.

High Performing Services

The council is doing all it can to minimise the effects of the financial and Covid-19 Pandemic related challenges it faces on our residents. We prioritise services that are needed the most and ensure that we deliver effective and efficient services to all.

We already have many services that perform extremely well and as part of our continuing Vision has built up a programme to maintain these high standards so we can continue to improve as an organisation.

The council is on a transformational journey and we will only be successful with this change through our people. Engaging our people fully, equipping them with the right tools and developing the skills, attitudes and behaviours we will need in the future is an ongoing priority.

During 2019/21 the council has been working on plans for the “One Council” approach, which will replace the current High Performing Services theme in the next phase of the Vision – Vision 2025. The four pillars developed will place the council in the best position to tackle challenges and maintain key services in the future.

General Performance

My portfolio has the responsibility for ensuring that there is a process for producing good quality key operational data that is available to those who need or want to see it, on a regular basis. In addition, there are several measures directly linked to the services in my portfolio, which are found at the end of this report.

Local Performance Management Framework (LPMF)

The council works within the LPMF recommendations ensuring appropriate measures are in place to monitor performance. This is fundamental to the council meeting its aspiration to maintain high performing service delivery. The framework is due to be reviewed in 2021/22 and this review will incorporate a move towards a more performance driven culture and will include appropriate performance aspects arising from work within the One Council pillars.

The Performance & Information Management System (PIMS)

PIMS (phase 1) was successfully launched at the end of 2018/19 and as part of this, a new set of key operational measures was identified, given targets agreed by Portfolio Holder's and implemented from 2019/20.

Performance targets are reviewed annually to reflect changes in the marketplace as well as current outturn achievements. During 2020/21 performance of a number of measures were significantly impacted by changes arising as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Data collection and performance reporting were also adversely affected by Covid-19 and uncertainty is likely to continue into 2021/22. We have therefore taken a slightly different approach to reviewing targets this year, maintaining the status quo unless there is evidence to suggest a change is needed. We have also introduced the need for commentary on all measures (not just those with a red status) when quarterly data is input, to enable a greater understanding of performance whilst uncertainty continues

This did result in a number of changes, some of which have been challenged through Performance Scrutiny as is their right. Therefore I will wait for the outcome from the relevant committee sitting on 28th July and respond immediately as requested.

One thing that I can say in advance is that I have already requested that any future proposed target changes will be accompanied by a full rationale to be supplied for each proposal as part of the formal report.

Quarterly performance reporting

The council reports to members and the public through a quarterly performance report which covers around 70 strategic measures, some quarterly, and some annual. This dashboard allows a view of performance across the key services so that stakeholders such as Corporate Management Team, Performance Scrutiny Committee and Executive Committee can review and challenge any under performance and recognise high achievement. The latest figures for my own portfolio services are found in two charts at the back of this report

During the early stages of the pandemic in 2020 it was difficult for some services to provide numerical performance information as they were initially invoking emergency plans and then gradually completing recovery plans. However, the key point here is to note that all essential services were delivered, as well as a number of additional services necessary to support our vulnerable residents and our businesses.

In terms of reporting on this - instead of using PIMS to report performance to expected targets, during the first half of 2020/21 we covered the activity that was underway within service areas to ensure that all our critical services were functioning, details of all the additional work that officers and members undertook and the communication of plans that were being implemented

towards recovery. These information reports were very well received and provided a way of informing members of what and how things were progressing in key service areas.

In the latter half of the year we have been able to return to near normality in terms of performance data collection and as of June this year we have produced a Q3/Q4 performance report for 2020/21 in the original numerical way using PIMS data. This went to Performance Scrutiny on 22nd June and then on to Executive the same week.

I am aware that Performance Scrutiny asked a few questions relating to my services, so I will endeavour to respond to these here:

- I have asked Customer Services to provide an additional commentary breakdown on numbers received of Channel Shift calls by type – starting from Q1 report.
- It is possible to provide data on the average length of calls going forward, and I am currently reviewing whether to introduce this into the defined data set or report as commentary on the existing measures
- It is not feasible for the CS team to determine whether a contact has been completely resolved first time as they are often forwarded on to the relevant service, so the CS does not see the end result, but the customer would probably define the whole process as the end result.

Lincoln City Profile (LCP)

The Lincoln City Profile's purpose is to provide a breadth of information based on the key demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the city. It is a valuable source of summary information contained in one document, which I recommend to all councillors. It draws and collates information from across a full range of measures and sources available publicly, presented in chapters to aid usage.

The profile paints a unique picture of what it is like to live and work in Lincoln. It has eight chapters containing key statistical data on the following subjects:

Population	Education
Economy	Housing
Welfare	Crime
Health	Environment (including climate change)

The LCP is reviewed annually having been last produced internally during Q4 2020/21.

Project Management – the Lincoln Project Management Model (LPMM)

Projects need to be planned and managed in a way that is appropriate to the size of the project (based on cost and anticipated duration), the complexity of the project and the level of risk it brings.

An LPMM guide exists which has been designed to provide the practical advice, tools and techniques to those staff involved in managing projects at three levels:

- **Significant capital build ('Mega') projects**

- **Strategic Projects**
- **Service area projects**

Following the changes to the LPMM process introduced in 2019, a Project Implementation Review was conducted in 2020 by a team of officers from across a range of services – which highlighted additional changes that could be made to make the process more streamlined. As a result we have now combined the two older “Checklist” style documents into a single Project Information Document (PID), which indicates clearly which documentation is required for each size of project and pulls it together into a format that can be used as the formal Project Brief.

Audit Arrangements

Internal Audit continues to operate effectively, working as part of the Assurance Lincolnshire Partnership. The team continues to work with, and provide Audit services to other councils which generates income.

Internal Audit have provided assurance in some key areas during 2020/21 including financial systems, projects and other service areas. The team has continued to use its ‘Combined Assurance’ model to provide a broader level of assurance to management and members.

I am very pleased to report that the latest annual Internal Audit report (2020/21) established that overall the Council was performing well across areas of governance, risk and internal financial control and performing adequately on internal control. There are some improvement areas in relation to IT security policies.

External Audit is undertaken by Mazars. Their most recent annual governance report/Annual audit letter provided an unqualified opinion on the statement of accounts 2019/20 including a positive Value for Money conclusion.

A full audit update is provided to my Portfolio holder meeting which links to the Audit Committee progress reports. This includes updates on all areas of activity including internal audit, counter fraud, finance and treasury, risk management and corporate governance.

I am pleased that the Audit Committee continues to take a positive and pro-active role.

Democratic and Electoral Services

The Electoral Services Team successfully delivered a complex set of elections on 6 May 2021, whilst adhering to Covid-19 restrictions. The elections applied to a third of the City Council’s membership; to the County Council; and to the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. The City of Lincoln Council also acted as the Police Area Returning Officer.

The temporary legislation which allowed formal meetings of the Council to be held virtually came to an end in early May 2021. The Democratic Services Team have made arrangements for a number of in-person committee meetings since the lifting of this temporary legislation. These have included the Annual Meeting of the Council and meetings of the Executive; scrutiny committees; and regulatory committees, and the Team have ensured these meetings have adhered to Covid-19 control measures. These measures have included the use of alternative venues for the Council’s larger meetings such as our wonderful Cathedral and the iconic Alive Church.

Business Development and IT

Throughout the pandemic, the focus of the Business Development and IT Team has been in sustaining business as usual, but with extra support provided to the Authority's by the Covid-19 pandemic response. Within days of the first lockdown being announced, nearly all staff were able to work remotely and continue to deliver services. Extra services were put in place quickly to allow for:

- Increased capacity on Citrix for remote services with all users enabled allowing almost all staff to work from home within days
- Procurement and deployment of laptops and connectivity to 40 staff
- Phone calls to be taken from home by Customer Services, Revenues and Benefits staff allowing for business to continue
- Remote Council meetings through Zoom
- Phone conferencing facilities
- Freephone number for customers with housing emergencies

The Covid-19 pandemic response has been supported by:

- New forms for grants and support payments enabling the claim and payment of £m in grant aid
- New cloud services to aid collaboration within grants and senior management teams
- Bookings for customer appointments
- Support for remote correspondence production
- Website improvements for Covid-19 updates, parking services, customer notices etc.
- Online mapping resources for community support including foodbanks, Covid support etc
- Emergency governance arrangements to facilitate information sharing e.g. befriending service, clinically vulnerable, business grants and isolation payments

However, this has not prevented the service moving forward other key projects, including:

- Teams conferencing deployed to all staff and Councillors
- Rollout of new devices to all staff to enable better joint and location-independent working
- Enhanced Disaster Recovery facilities to enable quicker recovery from major events
- New mobile phone (250+) fleet rolled out
- Development of new web microsite for Visitor Information Centre

- Improvements to the website for accessibility
- Upgrades to systems including document management
- Support for ongoing activities e.g. Garden waste and Council Tax billing

Creating Value Processes

In addition the service is key in driving the One Council Pillars of Technology and Creating Value Processes, all of which will help the Council in post-pandemic service delivery.

Objectives of CVP:

- Maximise the opportunities for agile working amongst staff – so they can truly work flexibly.
- Build services that are simple, intuitive and comprehensible, where digital services will be so easy and efficient, they will become the default choice for our customers.
- Our customers will be at the centre of our service design. We will develop a deep understanding of our customers and their needs to create value processes.
- Utilising technology to automate repeat and mundane processes, we will release capacity to allow our staff to focus time on customers who most need us.
- Our new processes will ensure every customer contact will add value.

Tactical approach:

Stream A: Outward looking: a focus on redesigning services that enable customer interaction 24/7, starting with a review of the high-volume services

Stream B: Inward looking: Redesigning processes that enable the organisation to flex very quickly to meet emerging challenges and opportunities, in particular the organisational shift to home working.

Underpinning database:

Customer survey key messages:

- **95%** responded 'No' when asked if they had any outstanding council service requests waiting to be fulfilled.
- 95% satisfied with service they get from customer services
- 82% could access the internet. Therefore, of this sample only 18% telephoned us because they had no alternative, i.e. no access to the internet
- 51% had been using video calls to contact friends and family (graphs say 61% but numbers calculate to 51%)

- 83% still prefer to telephone the council -so a lot of work still to do to move them to digital methods of communication

Key programmes we are currently developing:

- Simplifying complex high-volume letters to residents/ customers to reduce the level of queries they generate
- Automating some of the very simple requests therefore providing 24/7 coverage. For example, balance enquires on rent accounts/ county tax accounts
- Enable online reporting of a wider range of customer issues -starting with Environmental services and housing repairs
- Developing further sub web sites (micro websites) for some of our trading services that give them a different look and feel to the corporate website and hence tailor them to the markets the services operate in (e.g. Christmas market, Tourist information, Building control)

The current situation, despite its many awful impacts on society, does offer an opportunity to build future processes that match residents/customers changed behaviour. Things will not go back to where they were, so we:

- Must build on changes created by Covid-19 in how people engage with us and not let processes slip back into old ways of working
- Gently push people to engage with us digitally where they can
- Leave no-one behind - dedicate contact centre and wide service-based staff to helping those who most need our help.

Customer Services

The Customer Service team have maintained an accessible service for customers throughout the restrictions that have been in place. The team have ensured that residents have been able to access vital services such as tenancy repairs, benefit payments and advice and guidance on a range of council and external services. We have supported many vulnerable people over the last 12 months with referrals for welfare or money advice, foodbank support and applications for grants and discounts.

Phone calls have mainly been answered by staff working from home with support and performance monitoring being provided remotely from management, utilising the software which directs calls to the most appropriate adviser. In cases where vulnerability or circumstances dictated that customers need a face to face appointment to resolve their issues, these have been undertaken in City Hall. Looking forward we are hoping to build on the increase in self-service and on-line communication, where it is suitable for the customer. This means that advisers can concentrate on helping more vulnerable customers and we can provide the best possible value. We are working through the Creating Value Processes theme, in conjunction with Improving Technology to drive forward our improvements to the way customers interact with us.

I conclude by again praising our staff for their brilliant response to the national emergency at a time when they faced the same anxieties and loss of loved ones our local community faced. I would also like to express my sympathies to all, staff and councillors who have suffered as a result of the pandemic and consequent restrictions.

Of course, the emergency is not yet over and will still impact on our work but the vaccination programme gives us all the hope of a better future. Needless to say, Government cuts also continue to challenge us as we seek to continue the development of our brilliant City.

QUARTERLY MEASURES

To add data, click [here](#)



At or above target



Acceptable performance - results are within target boundaries



Below target



Volumetric/contextual measures that support targeted measures



Performance has improved since last quarter



Performance has stayed the same since last quarter



Performance has deteriorated since last quarter

Strategic Measures

Service Area	Measure ID	Measure	High Or Low	Low Target	High Target	Previous Data Period	Previous Value	Current Quarter	Current Value	Unit	Status	Commentary	
CX	Customer Services	CS 1	Number of face to face enquiries in customer services	N/A	Volumetric	Volumetric	Q3 - 20/21	32	Q4 - 20/21	15	Number	V	City hall is still only offering limited face to face appointments mainly of for communal door keys
	Customer Services	CS 2	Number of telephone enquiries answered in Channel Shift Areas (Rev & Bens, Housing & Env. Services)	N/A	Volumetric	Volumetric	Q3 - 20/21	25,396	Q4 - 20/21	27,453	Number	V	Lower than quarter 4 last year, we have seen an increase in email enquiries, especially for refuse and environment.
	Customer Services	CS 3	Average time taken to answer a call to customer services	Low is good	300	180	Q3 - 20/21	81	Q4 - 20/21	156	Seconds	G	▼ The waiting time has gone up, we answered 32529 calls in quarter 4, the highest number of quarterly calls answered this year. The number of calls in March was 12613, the highest month this year. The average length of call has gone up to 6 minutes 30 seconds, the reasons for this are not yet confirmed, it could show more complicated calls or delays with technology.
DHI	Business Development	BD 1	Number of users logged into the on-line self service system this quarter	High is good	Volumetric	Volumetric	Q3 - 20/21	10,232	Q4 - 20/21	15,276	Number	G	▲ Significant increase due to online services requirement
	IT	ICT 1	Number of calls logged to IT helpdesk	N/A	Volumetric	Volumetric	Q3 - 20/21	701	Q4 - 20/21	614	Number	V	Less incidents recorded in February - general activity variation
	IT	ICT 2	Percentage of first time fixes	N/A	Volumetric	Volumetric	Q3 - 20/21	52.80	Q4 - 20/21	56.50	%	V	General Activity variation - lower overall activity in this quarter

ANNUAL MEASURES - Q3

To add data, click [here](#)



At or above target



Acceptable performance - results are within target boundaries



Below target



Volumetric/contextual measures that support targeted measures

Strategic Measures

Service Area	Measure ID	Measure	High Or Low	Low Target	High Target	Previous Data Period	Previous Value	Current Year	Current Value	Unit	Status	Commentary	
CX	Democratic Services	DEM 1	The number of individuals registered on the electoral register (local elections)	N/A	Volumetric	Volumetric	2019/20	67,919	2020/21	68,203	Number	V	