

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

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Adrianna McNulty and Jaclyn Gibson

18. Confirmation of Minutes - 25 July 2024

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2024 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

19. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Pat Vaughan declared a Personal Interest with regard to the agenda item titled 'Financial Performance- Quarterly Monitoring'. His Grand-daughter works in the Finance Department at the City of Lincoln Council.

Councillor Pat Vaughan declared a Personal Interest with regard to the agenda item titled 'Treasury Management and Prudential Code-Quarterly Update'. His Grand-daughter works in the Finance Department at the City of Lincoln Council.

Councillor Pat Vaughan declared a Personal Interest with regard to the agenda item titled 'Strategic Risk Register- Quarterly Review'. His Grand-daughter works in the Finance Department at the City of Lincoln Council.

Councillor Pat Vaughan declared a Personal Interest with regard to the agenda item titled 'Strategic Risk Register Quarterly Review'. His Grand-daughter works in the Finance Department at the City of Lincoln Council.

20. Portfolio Holder under Scrutiny - Our People and Resources

Councillor Naomi Tweddle, Portfolio Holder for Our People and Resources:

- a. presented a report to update on the Council's current progress towards the Vision 2025 strategic plan, together with updates on each service area under the Portfolio Our People and Resources
- b. presented her report regarding activity and achievements within her portfolio, covering the following main areas:
 - Introduction
 - The Council's Priorities
 - Key Achievements in 2023/24
 - Financial Sustainability
 - Revenues Shared Service
 - Procurement
 - Property Services
 - Emergency Planning
 - Business Continuity
 - Risk Management

- Corporate Health and Safety
- Safety Assurance Team
- Human Resources
- Staff Development
- Workforce Plan
- Policies and Procedures
- Work Based Learning (WBL)
- Craft Apprenticeship Scheme
- Corporate Communications and Media Relations
- Civic and International Partnerships
- International Partnerships
- Legal Services
- Key Performance Results
 - Sickness levels
 - Measures performing below target
 - Measures performing above target
 - Measures performing within target boundary (acceptable performance)
- Looking ahead

c. thanked officers for their assistance with her portfolio

d. invited committees questions and comments.

Question: Why was the Central Market closed evert Monday and Tuesday?

Response: There had been a consultation with the Local Businesses and due to them being open for business at a weekend, it wouldn't allow them a day off. It was hoped that some pop-up businesses would open on those days going forward.

Question: What was your view on temporary accommodation for short term lease?

Response: It was a huge problem financially and needed a national push from government.

Question: Why were only 3 apprentices taken on this year?

Response: Unfortunately it had been a casualty of budget cuts however a more in-depth response would be provided.

Question: Why had there been difficulties in recruiting trades?

Response: Cllr Tweddle agreed to feedback information on this once sought from officers.

Question: When would a local butchers open in the Central Market?

Response: Once a local business had been secured, the City of Lincoln Council were currently liaising with some.

Question: In relation to the Workforce Plan, what were the initial findings?

Response: There were severe capacity issues and there had been difficulties to recruit in certain areas. It was necessary for certain services but there were currently too many agency staff so more emphasis on growing our own would be a focus as well as bringing back career grading.

Question: Were there any zero hour contracts currently within the workforce?

Response: There were currently 2 members of staff on zero hour contracts in the visitor centre and were happy with them.

Question: There had been a growing number of enquiries in the Customer Services Team, why was that?

Response: There were a lot of services that were now online and people had moved to that method of service however there was the choice for people to call so there was still a volume of calls coming through. It fluctuated seasonally depending on rents/council tax etc.

Question: In relation to the 1.75m net cost savings, how would that number be achieved?

Response: Around £1m of the required savings is due to anticipated changes as a result of the Governments Business Rates Reset, with a new Government in place there may be potential for these changes to be delayed, as has been the case in recent years, or amended, if so this would reduce the net savings requirement by c.£1m pa. In terms, of the longer term savings requirement, at present no firms plans are in place but work towards this is ongoing and will be reviewed and further developed as part of the upcoming MTFS cycle in line with the development of Vision 2030.

Question: Had any discussions taken place on Devolution?

Response: One discussion had taken place with the local MP on what the future would look like and labour were still keen going forward.

Question: Had there been any take up on stalls being used for pop up business?

Response: Simon Walters, Director of Communities and Environment agreed to find out the answer to this and report back to the committee.

Question: What did the Council have in place in regards to flexible working practises?

Response: Flexi time was still in force and still remained an incentive to work for the authority. Some work was being undertaken on career development as the Customer Services team was predominantly women.

RESOLVED that:

- a) relevant responses to questions raised by members to be provided following the meeting as requested.
- b) the report be noted by the Performance Scrutiny Committee.

21. Quarter 1 2024/25 Operational Performance Report

The Business Intelligence Officer:

- a. presented a report to Performance Scrutiny Committee with an outturn summary of the council's performance in Quarter 1 of 2024/25
- b. advised that out of the 87 performance measures monitored during the quarter, 63 had targets allocated to them; of those targeted measures, 48 (76.2%) were within or exceeding the targets set

- c. explained that the full report was attached as Appendix A of the report, with the full list of performance measure outturns and supporting performance commentary provided at Appendix B of the report
- d. invited members' comments and questions.

Question: Why was there a longer lead time for calls being answered in Customer Services?

Response: A lot of services such as Council Tax and Rent Collections were due during this Quarter which could increase and had a knock on effect on call times. The Council were doing as much as possible to promote their online services however there were still a lot of people who chose to contact by phone and were given the option of receiving a call back or to wait, this would affect the call time statistics.

Question: How was the EGYM equipment at Yarborough Leisure Centre funded?

Response: The City of Lincoln Council paid for the instalment and Active Nation were paying it back.

RESOLVED that:

1. The Quarter 1 Operational Performance Report found at Appendices A and B, be noted and presented to Executive on 27 August 2024.
2. The format of the report was confirmed and met by the requirements of Performance Scrutiny Committee.

22. Financial Performance- Quarterly Monitoring

Laura Shipley Financial Services Manager:

- a) presented a report to Performance Scrutiny Committee with a summary of the first quarter's performance (up to 30 June 2024), on the Council's
 - General Fund
 - Housing Revenue Account
 - Housing Repairs Service
 - Capital Programmes
- b) requested that Performance Scrutiny Committee note the changes to the capital programmes
- c) referred to paragraph 3.3 & 3.10 of the report and highlighted the following:
 - **General Fund Revenue Account** – for 2024/25 the Council's net General Fund Revenue Budget was set at £15,427,670, including a planned contribution from balances of £146,820 resulting in an estimated level of general balances at the year-end of £2,391,979. The General Fund Summary was currently projecting a forecast underspend of £3,530 (Appendix A provided a forecast General Fund Summary), resulting in general balance at the year-end of £2,395,509. There were a number of forecast year-end variations in

income and expenditure against the approved budget. Full details of the main variances were provided in Appendix B

- **Housing Revenue Account** — for 2024/25 the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) net revenue budget was set with a planned contribution from balances of £101,220, resulting in estimated general balances at year-end of £1,030,024, after allowing for the 2023/24 outturn position. The HRA was currently projecting a forecast underspend of £607,544, which would result in HRA balances of £1,637,568 as at the end of 2024/25 (Appendix C provided a forecast Housing Revenue Account Summary). Although the forecast position was an overspend there was a number of significant variations in income and expenditure. Full details of the main variances were provided at Appendix D
- **Housing Repairs Service** – for 2024/25 the Council's Housing Repairs Service (HRS) net budget was set at zero, which reflected its full cost recovery nature. At Quarter 1 the HRS was forecasting a deficit of £355,311 in 2024/25. Full details of the main variances were provided at Appendix F
- **General Investment Programme** – the original General Investment Programme (GIP) for 2024/25 amounted to £17.5m which increased to 23.2m following the quarter 4 approvals and year end re-profiles from 2023/24. At Quarter 1 the programme had increased by £0.3m to £23.5m as shown at paragraph 7.2. The overall spending on the General Investment Programme for the first quarter of 24/25 was £1.9m, which was 10.58% of the budget as detailed in Appendix I
- **Housing Investment Programme** – the revised programme for 2024/25 amounted to £22.763m following the 2023/24 outturn position. At quarter 1 the programme had been decreased by £5.112m to £17.650m as shown at paragraph 7.9 of the report. The overall expenditure on the Housing Investment Programme at the end of quarter 1 was £2.517m, which was 14.26% of the 2024/25 revised programme. This excluded expenditure relating to Western Growth Corridor, which was currently shown on the GIP, to be apportioned at year end (current forecast outturn £0.984m) as detailed at Appendix J of the report. A further £1.082m had been spent as at the end of July 2024
- invited members' comments and questions.

RESOLVED that:

1. The underlying impact of the pressures and underspends identified in paragraphs 3.3 (and Appendix B), 4.3 (and Appendix D), and 5.2 (and Appendix F) be noted.
2. The changes to the General Investment Programme and Housing Investment Programme as approved by the Chief Finance Officer as detailed in paragraphs 7.5 and 7.12 be noted.

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

23. Treasury Management and Prudential Code-Quarterly Update

Laura Shipley, Financial Services Manager:

- a) presented a report to Performance Scrutiny Committee on the Council's treasury management activity and the prudential indicators at 30 June 2024 as set out at Appendix A of the report
- b) confirmed that the approved limits within the Annual Treasury Management Strategy were not breached during the quarter ended 30 June 2024
- c) gave an overview of the investment portfolio as detailed at paragraph 4 of the report and explained that the Council held 18.760m of investments as at 30 June 2024 achieving an average interest rate of 5.30% (5.11% 23/24).
- d) reported that actual interest earned in the 3 month period to 30 June 2024 totalled £302,000, forecast interest income for the year was £0.891m (£0.356mm General Fund & £0.565m HRA), an overachievement of income of £0.230m against the £0.661m budget
- e) advised that at 30 June 2024 the Council held £107.406 million of external borrowing, of which 100% were fixed rate loans, as detailed at 4.2.3 of the officer's report
- f) explained that as at 30 June 2024, the average rate of interest paid during the first quarter of the year on external borrowing was 3.26%; the Council was currently under-borrowed against the CFR, and whilst the Council had adequate cash balances it employed internal resources until cash flow forecasts indicated the need for additional borrowing or rates were available that reduced the cost of carrying debt
- g) highlighted that current economic update from the Council's treasury advisors (LINK) could be found in Appendix B
- h) invited members' questions and comments.

RESOLVED that the Prudential and Treasury Indicators and the actual performance against Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25 for the quarter ended 30 June 2024 be noted.

24. Work Programme for 2024-25

Jess Cullen, Democratic Services Officer:

- a. presented the draft work programme for 2024/25 as detailed at Appendix A of the report
- b. advised that the work programme for the Performance Scrutiny Committee was put forward annually for approval by Council; the work programme was then regularly updated throughout the year in consultation with the Performance Scrutiny Committee and its Chair
- c. reported that items had been scheduled in accordance with the existing work programme and officers' guidance regarding the meetings at which the most up-to-date information could be reported to the committee; the work programme also included the list of portfolio holders under scrutiny
- d. requested any relevant comments or changes to the proposed work programme for 2024/25.

RESOLVED that the work programme 2024/25 be noted.

25. Strategic Risk Register- Quarterly Review

Laura Shipley, Financial Services Manager:

- a) presented Performance Scrutiny Committee with a status report of the Strategic Risk Register as at the end of the first quarter 2024/25.
- b) reported that the strategic risk registers currently contained fifteen risks as follows:
 - 1 Failure to engage & influence effectively with the Council's strategic partners, council staff and all stakeholders to deliver against e.g. Council's Vision 2030
 - 2. Failure to deliver a sustainable Medium-Term Financial Strategy that supports delivery of the Council's Vision (specifically in relation to the General Fund)
 - 3. Failure to deliver the Towards Financial Sustainability Programme
 - 4. Failure to ensure compliance with existing and new statutory duties/functions
 - 5. Failure to protect the local authority's long term vision due to changing structures and relationships in local government and impact on size, scale and scope of the Council
 - 6. Unable to meet the emerging changes required in the Council's culture, behaviour and skills to support the delivery of the Council's Vision and the transformational journey to one Council approach and service delivery
 - 7. Insufficient levels of resilience and capacity exist in order to deliver key strategic projects & services within the Council
 - 8. Decline in the economic prosperity within the City Centre

9. Failure to deliver key strategic projects
10. Failure of the Council's key contractors and partners to remain sustainable and continue to deliver value for money to the Council
11. Failure to protect the vulnerable in relation to the Council's PREVENT and compliance with safeguarding and domestic abuse duties
12. Failure to mitigate against the risk of a successful cyber-attack against the Council
13. Impacts of uncertainty of Governments policies on migration policy, asylum dispersal, early prison release etc on the Council's service delivery, capacity and MTFS as well as the impacts on Housing, communities and the economic vitality of the City Centre
14. Failure to deliver critical services in an emergency situation
15. Failure of service delivery leading to reputational impacts on the Council and adverse financial implications.

RESOLVED that the Council's strategic risks as at the end of Quarter 1 2024/25 be noted.

26. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item(s) of business because it is likely that if members of the public were present there would be a disclosure to them of 'exempt information' as defined by Section 100I and Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

27. Strategic Risk Register Quarterly Review

Laura Shipley, Financial Services Manager:

- a) provided members with the revised Strategic Risk Register as attached at Appendix A.
- b) invited members' questions and comments.

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