

**REPORT BY COUNCILLOR REBECCA LONGBOTTOM - PORTFOLIO HOLDER
FOR CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE, REVIEW AND RESOURCES**

1.	Introduction
1.1	<p>I would like to express my thanks to officers and members for their commitment to the council and our customers during the past year.</p> <p>Collectively this commitment has been essential in helping to ensure our customers have been able to access the support available to them efficiently. The 2024 Budget will make positive changes to living standards, for example by raising the National Living Wage, but we are aware that many of our residents continue to navigate ongoing cost of living pressures.</p>
1.2	<p>Whilst a number of the services under my portfolio are back-office services, each play a vital role in supporting our front-line services and ensuring these services function effectively.</p> <p>Over the course of the year, I have continued to meet regularly with the team on a monthly basis and also spent time with individual or small groups of officers. This has allowed me to gain a detailed understanding of the important work that they carry out.</p>
1.3	<p>During the summer, a full review of Portfolio Holder responsibilities was undertaken to help ensure the responsibilities continue to successfully align with the objectives of each portfolio.</p> <p>The review has seen the Portfolio for Customer Experience, Review and Resources gain some additional responsibilities, previously under the Portfolio for Our People and Resources. These responsibilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asset Management • Civic and Twinning • Corporate Health and Safety • Emergency Planning • Finance (including financial strategy and financial position) • Procurement (excluding social value) • Revenues • Risk Management and Governance (including insurance) • Towards Financial Sustainability <p>Additionally, Equality and Diversity (Service user perspective) has also moved under the Portfolio for Customer Experience, Review and Resources having previously been under the Portfolio for Reducing Inequalities.</p>
1.4	<p>The report below provides an insight into the key activity and achievements during the past 12 months for those areas under the Portfolio for Customer</p>

	Experience, Review and Resources. It is deliberately a largely narrative account and applies to activity up until the end of September 2024.
1.5	Alongside this report, the latest quarter 2 2024/25 performance measure outturn data and supporting commentary for those performance measures under my portfolio is provided within the Quarter 2 2024/25 Operational Performance Report also being presented to Performance Scrutiny Committee on the 14 November 2024.
1.6	<p>It is important to note that for those responsibility areas previously under the Portfolio Holder for Our People and Resources, as referenced in section 1.3 above, updates on these areas were included within Cllr Naomi Tweddle's annual Portfolio Holder report to committee in August 2024.</p> <p>Following a discussion with service areas, the updates for the following areas included within Cllr Tweddle's report remain the latest updates available. Therefore, I have not included these updates again within my annual report. These areas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Asset Management - Civic and Twinning - Emergency Planning - Finance (including financial strategy and financial position) - Risk Management and Governance - Towards Financial Sustainability <p>Further updates have, however, been provided for the areas of Corporate Health & Safety, Procurement (excluding social value) and Revenues where a later update is available.</p> <p>Should members wish to revisit the updates provided within Cllr Tweddle's report, the report is available via the council's website – Portfolio Holder Under Scrutiny – Our People and Resources.</p> <p>A later update has also been provided in this report for Equality and Diversity (service user perspective), previously under the Portfolio for Reducing Inequalities.</p>
2.	Audit
2.1	The Audit Team has been fully staffed since July 2024. The structure is slightly different as the team now has a career graded post for the Auditor role. This innovative approach was required following difficulties to recruit an experienced Auditor. During 2023/24 the team engaged contractors to carry out much of the Audit work with continued support from the casual Auditor for one day a week.
2.2	Internal Audit has provided assurance in some key areas during 2023/24 including financial systems 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.

2.3	The revised process for extending and reporting of agreed actions continues to be effective with the number outstanding for long periods of time being low. The quarterly audit of implemented actions found that all actions within the sample selected had been implemented as told.
2.4	The team continues to experience delays in the time taken to issue final reports. This is due to the delays in receiving management responses. A new process has been put into place for 2024/25 aimed at improving this by ensuring that agreed actions are captured during closure meetings.
2.5	The latest annual Internal Audit report (2023/24) established that overall, the council was performing well across areas of governance, risk and internal financial control and performing adequately on internal control. The internal control outcome was due to there being two limited assurance reports (contract management and IT Asset Management), the priority of the recommendations, and also the results of the combined assurance work, which found that the common risks identified in 2022/23 remain as capacity, both staff and financial, which could impact on internal controls. It was also found that there had been some significant changes in staff, particularly at service manager level, which increased the risks around lost knowledge and skills.
2.6	As well as staffing, a further challenge for the team was the decision taken by Lincolnshire County Council to move away from the system used to manage the Audit Process. The City of Lincoln Council had purchased licences to use the system due to the costs involved. This meant that revised processes had to be designed in a short space of time.
2.7	The work of the Internal Audit Team has to comply with a series of standards set by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) based on international standards set by the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA). The IIA have carried out a review of the standards and updated them in January 2024 as the Global Internal Audit Standards. CIPFA issued their draft consultation in October on the application for Public Sector Bodies in the UK. Work is underway to review and revise processes to ensure that the team comply with these standards by 1 April 2025.
2.8	<p>A review of the effectiveness of the Audit Committee was carried out in December 2023 in accordance with the Audit Committee Terms of Reference and good practice as recommended by CIPFA. A score of 165/200 was achieved for the Self-Assessment of Good Practice and, whilst not scored, a good level of compliance was achieved against the evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of the Audit Committee.</p> <p>Following the review an Action Plan was drawn up which is monitored through the Audit Committee. There were 19 actions within the plan with 15 being completed up to September 2024.</p>

2.9	Our External Auditors changed to KPMG from 2023/24. The Audit of the 2023/24 accounts is substantially complete and there are no matters of significance, at this stage, to report. The audit of the 2022/23 accounts was undertaken by Mazars and the accounts have been signed off. Given that measures are now being put in place to deal with the local audit backlog in England, this is a significant achievement.
2.10	A full audit update is provided at my monthly Portfolio Holder meetings, which link to the Audit Committee progress reports. This includes updates on all areas of activity including internal audit, counter fraud, finance & treasury, risk management and corporate governance.
3.	Channel Shift
3.1	For our customers, telephone remains the most popular way of contacting the council. The services that we provide for our tenants, benefit claimants, council taxpayers, and those seeking a new home, can be both complex and pressing. A call can provide the reassurance that people seek when they are experiencing problems and difficulties.
3.2	There are, however, several service areas which can be successfully delivered by giving residents the ability to self-serve. Many people are confident and comfortable using our website and customer portals to manage their own reports and accounts.
3.3	We have had a high level of take-up for self-service in our garden waste subscription for example, with calls to our contact centre reducing significantly over time.
3.4	Self-service channels are very convenient for customers as they are available in the evenings and at weekends. They also release staff resource to deal with more complex queries and to assist those customers who need a helping hand.
3.5	Using data and evidence we do know however, that digital exclusion is a real challenge for some of our residents and we continue to offer access to services in person, over the telephone and digitally. Supporting residents to be more digitally enabled and encouraging better digital inclusion is activity that will be supported under Reducing Inequality. However, addressing digital exclusion in our communities will help residents access services when it is convenient for them and allow us to further progress channel shift initiatives.
3.6	Enquiries which currently come through email requests, or one of a number of online forms, often need to be read and input into a system by the Customer Service Team. This is due to the technical limitations of some of our older 'legacy' systems and applications. The work being undertaken to improve IT, online forms, the website and in particular the HITREP will help us to achieve real channel shift in the coming months. Although receiving an email from an online form and then manually inputting into the system may not be the most efficient way for back office services to operate, online forms

	are still important as it gives customers choice of how and when to contact the council. As technology progresses and systems are reviewed we will be able to further progress our channel shift ambitions.
4.	The Council's Website
4.1	The Corporate Policy & Transformation Team continues to develop and maintain the council's corporate website, consistently striving to meet the latest Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018.
4.2	<p>In the UK, public sector websites and mobile apps must meet level AA (strong accessibility) by October 2024. The Government Digital Service will now start monitoring for compliance with the new criteria. These regulations aim to ensure that all public service websites are accessible to everyone, including individuals requiring additional support due to visual, cognitive, or hearing impairments. The team has been working to achieve the new compliance standards and currently the site boasts a 97% accessibility compliance, giving us the required AA rating for WCAG, this is an improvement of 2% from the previous year, which is notably high.</p> <p>Our newly appointed Web Officer is actively rolling out training on this subject to all interested parties.</p>
4.3	<p>The team monitors website usage and provides service areas with essential business intelligence regarding trends, how and when users access their pages.</p> <p>Our latest figures, covering the period from 10 October 2023 to 10 October 2024, indicate that the website received over 1.5 million page views, reflecting a 5.2% increase from the previous year. Notably, over 75% of our customers accessed the website via mobile phones or tablets, underscoring the importance of our 'mobile first' design approach as prescribed by Government Digital Service.</p>
4.4	From monitoring customer journeys, the team is working to integrate various software solutions seamlessly, enabling customers to complete their digital journeys fully. This includes high-demand services such as finding bin collection days and making payments. Over the past year, the website facilitated more than 84,000 customer payments for council services.
5.	Complaints Handling
5.1	During this year we have seen the introduction of the statutory Complaint Handling Code by the Housing Ombudsman Service (The Code). For complaints about our landlord services, we must comply with the requirements of the code and report on our performance publicly.
5.2	We have updated our Corporate Complaints Policy to ensure that it is compliant with The Code, and as it is best practice and is being piloted by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, we have extended the details of the Code across all service areas.

5.3	Our complaints performance is reported to Performance Scrutiny Committee quarterly and the annual report will be published on our website for the public to view, along with our self-assessment against the requirements of The Code.
6.	Customer Engagement
6.1	<p>Customer Services</p> <p>The Customer Service Team provide a vital point of contact for our customers. The team offer switchboard and reception facilities and provide access across several key service areas to service requests, in depth explanations and enquiry resolutions.</p> <p>With many residents feeling the impact of the current economic climate, Customer Service Advisers are reporting more difficult and challenging calls from our residents and increasingly people do not know where to turn.</p> <p>It is vital that the team are knowledgeable and that they can refer vulnerable people to the council's Welfare Advisers, Cost of Living Team and external partners who provide much needed support.</p>
6.2	<p>Contact Centre</p> <p>The Contact Centre software allows the Customer Services Team to manage calls as efficiently as possible. It is always difficult to accurately predict demand and match the number of available call-takers to the number of calls coming in. The service has periods of peak demand, which are predictable, such as annual billing and Mondays, but sometimes a letter, an article on a programme or even a weather event can result in a spike in demand.</p> <p>The service has been using the call-back option in the Contact Centre with enormous success. This allows callers to secure a place in the queue but instead of hanging on, waiting, and listening to hold music, they can request a call-back. The system then presents the call to an agent and dials the customer back when they get to the top of the queue. The call cannot be forgotten as the system does not allow the call to be closed until a connection is made.</p> <p>In future developments the service is currently exploring the possibility of offering webchat, WhatsApp and AI elements to the contact centre to bring it into line with what customers expect and are used to. We will always consider the needs of callers when making any changes.</p>
6.3	<p>Consultation</p> <p>The Lincoln Citizens' Panel is formed of residents of the city who are asked to provide regular feedback on the services provided to them by the council, together with provide feedback on future proposals.</p>

6.4	<p>In Autumn 2023 work was undertaken to refresh the Lincoln Citizens' Panel to ensure this remains as reflective of the residents of the City of Lincoln as possible. The refresh involved directly contacting residents from across all areas of the city and encouraging them to join the panel. Additionally, a social media campaign was delivered at the same time to encourage participation. This social media campaign is also continuing on a rolling basis.</p> <p>The current Lincoln Citizens' Panel consists of 623 members of which 71 have asked to receive their surveys by post and 552 have asked to receive their surveys via e-mail.</p>
6.5	<p>During the past year, the council has delivered a number of engagement activities with the Lincoln Citizens' Panel. Additionally, some of these activities were also open to all residents of the city, rather than those just on the panel, and some were also aimed at specific areas of the city only.</p> <p>The main engagement activities delivered over the past year have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - November 2023 Lincoln Citizens' Panel Survey <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Food Health & Safety o Waste Management o City Centre Bus Station o Revenues and Benefits Service o Cost of Living Support - City of Lincoln Council Budget Proposals for 2024/25 (included face to face engagement) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Vision 2025 o Budget Allocation o Delivering Savings o Council Tax - July 2024 Lincoln Citizens' Panel Survey <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Car Parking in Lincoln City Centre o Your experience of contacting the council o Leisure and Recreation o Public Open Spaces / Grounds Maintenance o Addressing Climate Change in Lincoln - City of Lincoln Council Caretaking Service Consultation - Public Space Protection Order for St Peters Passage Consultation - Central Lincolnshire Design Code Consultation - Lincoln Lottery Community Fund 2024 Consultation
6.6	<p>Following each Lincoln Citizens' Panel Survey a 'You Said, We Did' summary is provided to panel members highlighting the key areas of feedback provided within survey responses and the subsequent activity being undertaken or planned to be undertaken by the council following reviewing this feedback.</p>
6.7	<p>Looking ahead, the council is currently planning to deliver the Lincoln Citizens' Panel November 2024 survey, whilst also making plans for a</p>

	<p>consultation on the council's new strategic plan, Vision 2030. A budget setting consultation will also take place early in the new year.</p> <p>Members are asked to encourage resident of Lincoln to join the Lincoln Citizens' Panel, which can be completed by visiting - www.lincoln.gov.uk/citizenspanel/signup.</p>
7.	Corporate Health & Safety
7.1	<p>The council continues to have a comprehensive two-year rolling Health & Safety Development Plan in place, which is prioritised according to risk. It is fully resourced and is approved and monitored by the Health & Safety Champions Group.</p>
7.2	<p>Radon in Council Housing</p> <p>The council's radon management plan is progressing, with the first phase of testing having started in mid-September. The housing properties in the first phase include 50 properties in radon class 6 and 10 properties in radon class 5. The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) letter with test kits was sent out on 16th September 2024. Tenants identified as vulnerable were visited by Housing Officers or Independent Living Coordinators to ensure that they understood the letter. A reminder letter from the council asking tenants to return the monitoring devices to UKHSA will be sent out in early December.</p> <p>A robust communication plan has been implemented to ensure that tenants of properties in the first phase of testing are effectively informed about why, how and when testing in their homes is taking place.</p> <p>Tenants have been asked to return their monitoring devices to the UKHSA after the three-month testing period. Results will be provided to the council by mid-January and a full review of results will be carried out and required remediation planned.</p>
7.3	<p>Radon in Workplaces / Corporate Buildings</p> <p>The following workplaces were included in phase 1 of the testing programme, Trent View office, The Guildhall, Castle Hill Car Park toilets, Broadgate Multi-storey Car Park, Westgate Car Park and St Clements Court office and communal areas.</p> <p>Radon monitoring devices were placed in mid-September and will be returned to the UKHSA for analysis in mid-December. Results will be provided to the council in mid-January and a full review of results will be carried out and the required remediation planned.</p>
8.	Democratic and Electoral Services
8.1	<p>The Electoral Services Team successfully delivered elections on 2 May 2024 for the Police and Crime Commissioner, a third of the City of Lincoln Council's membership; and a Lincolnshire County Council by-election. The Chief Executive and Town Clerk also acted as the Police Area Returning</p>

	Officer, supported by Electoral Services, coordinating the arrangements for the election of the Police and Crime Commissioner across Lincolnshire, including receiving nominations, producing all notices, and setting out the process for the counting and declarations of results.
8.2	<p>Shortly after the elections in May had concluded, the Prime Minister at the time had announced on 22 May 2024 that a UK Parliamentary General Election was to be held on 4 July 2024. The Notice of Election for the Lincoln Borough Constituency was published on 3 June, giving 23 working days to deliver the poll.</p> <p>Increased demand is placed on Electoral Services during the delivery of a UK Parliamentary General Election as the number of registrations increases, along with applications for postal and proxy voting. This was also the first General Election under the new Elections Act 2022, with polling station voters being required to present Voter ID.</p>
8.3	The Electoral Services Team is currently working on the annual canvass, with the electoral register due to be published in accordance with legislation on 1 December 2024. The canvass takes place each year and involves writing to all properties in Lincoln to ascertain who resides at each property. If there is no response, door knocks will be undertaken by appointed canvassers. Notifications are received if a property is empty or if the person previously living at the property has moved on. The total number of individuals registered on the electoral register at 1 December 2023 (the last published register) was 62,045. The electorate at 4 July 2024, the date of the General Election, was 65,937 with 61,668 eligible to vote in the UK Parliamentary General Election. Whilst it is a legal requirement to be registered, some residents do not engage with the canvass although extensive engagement and communication is undertaken to encourage participation in the canvass.
8.4	All aspects of the Elections Act 2022 have now been successfully implemented by Electoral Services, which include: the requirement for Voter ID in polling stations, changes to postal and proxy voting, EU citizens' voting and candidacy rights, extended voting rights for British citizens living overseas, and accessibility at polling stations. This has been a significant piece of work for the Electoral Services Team to implement. All councillors have previously received detailed information on the extent of the changes.
8.5	The Democratic Services Team provided support to the Electoral Services Team during the elections set out above in 2024 stepping into a variety of roles to support the process. The team also implemented the induction for new councillors elected to the City of Lincoln Council in May 2024.
8.6	The Democratic Services Team is currently working as business as usual, with the calendar of meetings for 2024/25 recently being approved by Council.

9.	Equality & Diversity - Service user perspective
9.1	<p><u>Public Sector Equality Duty and Equality Act 2010</u></p> <p>The council is required to meet three main equality and diversity focused aims as outlined within the Public Sector Equality Duty and Equality Act 2010. These aims are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
9.2	<p><u>Equality Objectives</u></p> <p>City of Lincoln Council has five Equality Objectives, which help to ensure the council meets its obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty and Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>Our current Equality Objectives were introduced in 2020 and are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Our services are more accessible and do not discriminate on any unjustifiable grounds - Local communities and stakeholders are empowered to influence the way our services are provided to them - Equality and Diversity is at the heart of decision making at all levels within the council - Our workforce at all levels reflects the makeup of the local community - Equalities, Social Inclusion and Community Cohesion have all improved within our communities <p>The current Equality Objectives are in place until the end of 2024/25 and will be reviewed as part of the development of the council's new strategic plan, Vision 2030.</p>
9.3	<p><u>Equality & Diversity Action Plan and Equality Journal</u></p> <p>To help demonstrate the council's progress towards meeting the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty and Equality Act 2010, together with meeting our Equality Objectives, the council monitors an Equality and Diversity Action Plan, together with produces an equality and diversity annual report named the Equality Journal.</p>
9.4	<p><u>Equality & Diversity Action Plan</u></p> <p>The Equality and Diversity Action plan is a live document, which contains the key equality and diversity actions the council is currently working to deliver.</p>

	<p>The actions included within the plan are presented under each of the council's Equality Objectives, with new actions added as required. The actions within the plan consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Actions identified by service areas - Actions requested by the Equality & Diversity Advisory Panel - Recurring actions, which are delivered annually <p>Progress on the actions within the plan is presented to the Equality & Diversity Advisory Panel at each meeting of the panel, and also presented annually within the council's Equality Journal. Currently there are 25 actions within the live plan.</p>
9.5	<p><u>Equality Journal</u></p> <p>The annual City of Lincoln Council Equality Journal details the key equality and diversity focused activity progressed across the council during the previous year. Activity within the Journal is presented under each of the council's Equality Objectives, with case studies being used to highlight key areas of work progressed and achievements. Also included within the Equality Journal is the latest demographic data for the city, together with information on the makeup of the council's workforce.</p> <p>The latest Equality Journal covering the period April 2023 to March 2024 was presented to the Equality & Diversity Advisory Panel in October 2024 and is scheduled to be presented to Council in November 2024 ahead of publication on the equality and diversity section of the council's website.</p>
10.	ICT
10.1	<p>During the year, the ICT Team has been busy making improvements to ICT Systems.</p> <p>Robust security software and services have been implemented. These will substantially improve the council's ability to meet Cyber threats, with 24/7 monitoring, and proactive support to help deal with vulnerabilities.</p> <p>A new contract has been agreed for mobile phones, which has provided savings, which can be utilised into further service improvements and resilience.</p> <p>Further applications are being migrated to 'cloud' providers, again increasing resilience of services. These include the committee management and property management systems.</p> <p>A project to move housing services to a new application is also being supported by the ICT Team. This includes integration with other applications, which will make information more readily available for officers through the council, providing efficiencies and improving services.</p>

	<p>The ICT Team is also supporting services across the council to remove unwanted or aging data. This will help to avoid future storage costs of and help towards compliance with information governance best practice.</p> <p>In addition, the team is migrating away from some older applications and reutilising desktop equipment to improve users' experiences and potentially reduce costs.</p> <p>The ICT Team have resolved over 4,000 user requests during the year.</p> <p>A lot of background and review work has taken place to prepare for options on future provision of infrastructure, applications and devices to ensure that staff, members and customers have the technology needed to access and deliver services.</p>
11.	Performance (Including Systems and Process)
11.1	<p>Performance Monitoring</p> <p>Accurate performance data and supporting commentary ensures that service performance can be monitored clearly, performance improvements can be delivered and accurate decision making can be made. All of which collectively contribute to ensuring the council can provide the best service possible to our customers.</p>
11.2	<p>Quarterly Performance Reporting</p> <p>The council reports performance at a corporate level on a quarterly basis to directors, elected members and to the public through a quarterly performance report.</p> <p>Included within the quarterly performance reports are the latest outturns and supporting commentary for 87 strategic performance measures alongside outturns and supporting commentary for a range of corporate performance measures. The corporate measures focus on complaints, compliments, sickness leave, staff resource and appraisal performance.</p> <p>Of the 87 strategic performance measures, which focus on service area performance across the council, the majority of these measures are reported quarterly, with the exception of a small number which are reported annually at set quarters throughout the year.</p> <p>Performance outturns are either monitored against a low and a high target to provide a status outturn or are recorded as volumetric. Volumetric performance measures do not have any targets allocated to them but provide contextual information to support those targeted measures.</p>
11.3	<p>The layout of the quarterly performance report underwent a review at the end of 2023/24 leading to changes aimed at enhancing the range of performance information presented via the quarterly reporting process and</p>

	<p>to make it easier to assess and scrutinise the performance of each priority / portfolio.</p> <p>The report now includes Appendix A containing a wider range of performance information, including qualitative data in the form of service highlight reports detailing some of the positive work of the council during the quarter, and the impact of this. These are grouped into seven themes, namely the five Vision Priorities and the two inward looking portfolios 'Our People and Resources' and 'Customer Experience and Review.'</p> <p>The more detailed performance data tables are now grouped together in Appendix B, including the suite of corporate measures focused on the areas of resources, health & wellbeing, sickness, complaints (including Ombudsman rulings) and compliments. Appendix B also contains a quarterly update on corporate communications activity.</p> <p>Performance data remains grouped by directorate, and a colour coding system has been introduced to make it simpler to identify which portfolio each measure relates to.</p> <p>Within each report the primary focus is on those performance measures, which have performed above target, returning a green status, together with those performance measures performing below target, returning a red status, as well as those measures performing within the target boundaries, returning a blue status 'acceptable performance.'</p> <p>Performance outturns are reported by directorate and the previous outturn for each measure is presented alongside the current outturn to allow report readers to compare the two figures. A direction of travel indicator is also provided for each targeted measure.</p> <p>To align with the new layout of the report and to ensure the report is as efficient as possible to create each quarter, developments to the council's performance system, Performance Information Management System, have also recently taken place. The system can be viewed at any time by officers and members by using the Performance Information Management System navigation link available on the homepage of the Hub.</p>
11.4	<p>The format of the quarterly performance report continues to evolve and improve to meet the changing needs of the organisation and I am pleased to hear the current format of the report continues to meet the requirements of Directors and Assistant Directors, together with elected members on Performance Scrutiny Committee and Executive.</p> <p>Performance Scrutiny Committee continue to use the report to effectively scrutinise both positive and negative performance and ultimately to help drive performance improvements across the council.</p>
11.5	<p>The latest outturns and commentary for those performance measures linked to my portfolio are provided within the supporting performance report also</p>

	being presented to Performance Scrutiny Committee on 14 th November 2024.
11.6	<p>Annual Review of Performance Measures and Target Setting</p> <p>All performance measures reported through the quarterly reporting process are reviewed on an annual basis. This review helps to ensure the measures continue to be the most appropriate measures to monitor performance across the council.</p> <p>Alongside reviewing the performance measures, all measure targets (both high and low) are also reviewed annually. This ensures the targets set continue to reflect changes in the council's strategic direction, changes in the market place as well as recent performance achievements. It is important that the targets set remain achievable but suitably challenging.</p> <p>The process of setting the performance measure targets for 2024/25 commenced in January 2024 and involved consultation with service areas, Assistant Directors, Directors and Portfolio Holders. The process was led by the Policy and Transformation Team. The targets for 2024/25 were formally approved by Executive in March 2024 after consideration by Performance Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>For 2025/26, the review of performance measures and their targets is expected to commence in December 2024, which will ensure targets are agreed and in place ready for Quarter 1 2025/26 reporting.</p>
12.	Procurement Excluding Social Value
12.1	Whilst in previous years the financial situation meant that procurement was one of the areas where there is potential to generate savings, the impact of the pandemic, war in eastern Europe and Brexit have meant that we are now being faced with significant inflation increases, which we cannot control. However, the Procurement Manager in conjunction with operational leads and finance colleagues will endeavour to help mitigate some of these increases by looking at various options in relation to procurement.
12.2	Significant procurement support has been provided within the last year to a number of the key strategic priorities including the procurement of the Grounds Maintenance, Street Cleaning & Waste Collection provision, Western Growth Corridor and new council house delivery, as well as a number of the priorities of Vision 2025.
12.3	In addition to the above, the Procurement Manager is currently working on the implementation of the new Procurement Act 2023, which received Royal Assent in October 2023 and was due to come into force on 28 th October 2024 (it has recently been announced by Cabinet Office that this has been delayed until February 2025). This new Act will bring into force the most significant changes to effect public sector procurement since 2006.

12.4	<p>These significant changes also mean that there is a requirement for the council's own internal governance in relation to procurement to be reviewed. As such, the Procurement Manager has undertaken a complete redraft of the current Contract Procedure Rules, and these are currently being taken through a consultation process in order to be adopted as part of the council's Constitution.</p>
13.	Project Management
13.1	<p>To assist project managers to deliver projects effectively and following a consistent process, the council uses the Lincoln Project Management Model.</p> <p>All project managers are required to use the model when delivering projects of all sizes including significant capital build projects, strategic projects and service area projects. Training is provided on the model for new and existing staff members.</p> <p>The current model and supporting resources are available on the council's staff intranet, Hub, and can be found via the navigation route Hub sites > Business Essentials > Project Management.</p> <p>During the past year, a review of the Lincoln Project Management Model has taken place as planned. This was with the aim of ensuring the model remains effective at supporting the delivery of council projects, whilst also remains as easy to use as possible to guide project managers through the project management process.</p> <p>It is expected the refreshed model will be launched to project managers in the near future.</p>
14.	Strategic Information
14.1	<p>Lincoln City Profile</p> <p>The Lincoln City Profile provides the latest demographic data for the City of Lincoln, drawing data from national, local, and internal data sets. The data included within the profile paints a unique picture of what it is like to live and work in Lincoln.</p>
14.2	<p>The contents of the profile are split into eight key chapters, each of which begin with a 'key points' page, providing an overview of the data covered within the chapter. The chapters include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Crime - Economy - Education - Environment and Climate - Health - Housing - Population - Welfare

	<p>The latest Lincoln City Profile for 2023/24 was presented to Executive in July 2024 and circulated to all elected members for information shortly after.</p> <p>The profile is available via the council's website - www.lincoln.gov.uk/council/lincoln-city-profile.</p>
14.3	To ensure as many local organisations were made aware of the profile as possible and the information included, the council delivered a social media campaign upon its launch.
14.4	Additionally, the profile was also shared directly with partners and Lincoln Social Responsibility Charter members, who have since shared the profile more widely across their respective networks.
14.5	Data collection for the next version of the Lincoln City Profile is scheduled to commence in February 2025, with publication expected in July 2025.
15.	Revenues Service
15.1	The Revenues update included within Cllr Tweddle's report as referenced in section 1.3 above continues to be important to provide members with an update on the service during 2023/24. A further update is also provided below covering the first six months of the current year, 2024/25.
15.2	The first six months of 2024/25 have continued to present significant demands on this service area, with collection of monies balanced with considering people's welfare and trying to prevent undue hardship to taxpayers and businesses being a real challenge. Likewise, cost of living pressures and delivery of schemes to try and help mitigate some of these impacts (such as Household Support Fund), whilst achieving some real positive outcomes, do require significant people and time resources to deliver. However, it is extremely pleasing to report our customers are being proactively assisted by our Cost of Living, Welfare, and wider Benefits teams.
16.	Conclusion
16.1	I would like to thank officers for their assistance in helping to produce this report. In particular, Sara Boothright, Heather Carmichael, Hazel Claridge, Jo Crookes, Cheryl Evans, Emily Holmes, Denise Huby, Graham Rose, Matt Smith, Amanda Stanislawski and Martin Walmsley.
16.2	Over the year ahead I look forward to working with those service areas contributing to my portfolio and towards continuing to make a real difference within our city.

Councillor Rebecca Longbottom

Portfolio Holder for Customer Experience, Review and Resources