



## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD 25 OCTOBER 2018

### **PRESENT: COUNCILLOR R B PARKER (CHAIRMAN)**

Councillors R Wootten (Vice-Chairman), Mrs J Brockway, M Brookes, Mrs K Cook, B M Dobson, R L Foulkes, C E H Marfleet, N H Pepper and E W Strengiel

### **Added Members**

Church Representatives: Mr S C Rudman

Parent Governor Representatives: Mrs P J Barnett

Councillors: R Butroid, L Cawrey, B Young and M Whittington attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Debbie Barnes OBE (Executive Director, Children's Services), David Forbes (County Finance Officer), Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer), Sue Maycock (Head of Finance (Corporate)) Fiona Thompson (Service Manager - People), Nigel West (Head of Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Officer) and Emily Wilcox (Democratic Services Officer)

### 51 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor C Macey.

### 52 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest at this point in the meeting.

### 53 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 27TH SEPTEMBER 2018

#### **AGREED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the addition of the below sentence:

"Officers explained that Agresso had not worked to its full potential due to the way the Council had originally configured it. And that, as a result, a number of workarounds were necessary"

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54 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR  
FOR RESOURCES AND COMMUNICATIONS AND CHIEF OFFICERS

The Chairman welcomed councillors, officers and members of the public to the meeting.

The Chairman announced that he had attended the meeting of the Executive on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2018, where the Corporate Support Services Re-commissioning was considered. The Board's comments and reservations in relation to the performance of the existing contractor for Fire and Rescue Payroll had been presented at the meeting.

The Chairman had been advised that Councillor B Young, Executive Councillor for Community Safety and People Management, would liaise with the Chairman of the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee to obtain further information regarding the reservations of the Fire and Rescue service, as it was not known to be an ongoing issue.

55 CONSIDERATIONS OF CALL-INS

None were received.

56 CONSIDERATION OF COUNCILLOR CALLS FOR ACTION

None were received.

57 REVIEW OF FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENT

The Board received a report from the Head of Finance (Corporate), which provided an updated review of the Council's financial risks.

Members were referred to Appendix A of the report, which set out the Council's financial risk register for 2019/20.

It was highlighted that the net total of the identified risks currently stood at £13.643m, which was lower than the previous assessment in October 2017, where the net total risks were £15.210m. The reason for the reduction in the net total was explained in relation to Appendix B of the report, which focussed on the 2017/18 risk register outcomes.

The requirement of the Council's Financial Strategy in relation to general reserves was based on its financial risk assessment. It was noted that the Council's reserves as at 31 March 2018 stood at £15.2m, which was equivalent to 3.5% of its budget requirement at that time. The purpose of the risk assessment was to ensure that the reserves were at the right level. The current requirement was that the Council was to maintain its general reserves within a range of 2.5% to 3.5% of its annual budget requirement.

Members were informed that CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) had launched a consultation on the new index to measure the financial resilience of council's which would be taking place in the coming months. There were two measures in the index which both related to financial reserves:

- The total level of reserves
- The total % of reserves over the a three-year period

Members requested that the results of the CIPFA assessments be brought back to the Board once the assessments had been carried out.

Questions and comments from members and officers included the following:

- The County Finance Officer explained that it was unlikely that there would be a large rise in interest rates as a result of Brexit, but that most of the borrowing was on fixed rates, so would be unaffected.
- It was reported that the rise of interest rates as a result of Brexit had been assessed as a risk at £1m and accounted for within the risk register.
- Officers explained that the 'costs of change' budget would differ from service to service, as each service area had different plans for change.
- The Chairman requested that a report on the CIPFA financial resilience of Council's be brought to the Board when it was available.
- It was agreed that for comments from the Board to the Executive Councillor would be passed on through the Executive Support Councillor.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the results of the CIPFA assessments be brought back to the Board when completed.
3. That for future reports, any comments from the Board to the Executive Councillor be passed on through the Executive Support Councillor.

58      COUNCIL PEOPLE MANAGEMENT AND WORKFORCE PLAN 2018 - 19  
PROGRESS REPORT

The Service Manager (People) presented a report which provided a summary of current HR and workforce performance data; actions which were being implemented; and an overview of the medium/longer term corporate projects.

It was noted that there had been significant efforts to input and validate data over the last 12 months and Managers had received assistance from the Business Support and HR teams.

It was highlighted that there had been 6.45 days lost per FTE (full time earner), which was lower than the target of 7.5 sickness days. It was noted that the target would be reviewed next quarter based on recent performance.

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Members were informed that as of 11<sup>th</sup> October 2018 the appraisal meetings of 79% of all eligible employees had been recorded on BWON.

Members were referred to Appendix B of the report, which set out the Corporate People Management and Workforce activity, including the benefits that had been achieved to date and future plans.

The Service Manager (People) was pleased to inform the Board that there were now 128 apprentices employed by the Council as of September 2018, compared with 40 employed in the previous year.

Questions and comments from members and officers included the following:

- The Service Manager (People) agreed to share more detailed information surrounding sickness absences as a result of mental health, and the categorisation of these.
- It was agreed that officers would circulate further information on employees with disabilities and how they were supported.
- In response to a question, it was clarified that in line with current policy, People Management were expected to respond to grievance complaints without unreasonable delay and the outcome of any grievance meeting will be communicated within 5 working days
- One member asked what policies were in place to deal with the reasons reported for sickness absences, in particular 'stomach complaints', which was the highest reported reason for short term absences. It was questioned whether could be any focus on hygiene to reduce stomach illnesses, such as introducing antibacterial gels. In response, officers explained that they worked closely with Public Health to update the employer Health and Wellbeing policy, and would highlight the concerns raised by members regarding hygiene.
- It was noted that a significant proportion of the adult services offered by the council were commissioned out, which is why staffing levels appeared to be lower than other departments.
- Officers agreed to circulate information on apprenticeship reforms to members of the Board.
- Members were pleased to see the rise in apprenticeship numbers.
- The Executive Director of Children's services confirmed that the council offered supported internship opportunities to young people with learning disabilities.
- One member asked whether the council offered any mental health courses to employees as part of the mindful employer programme. In response, officers confirmed that training was already offered to staff members in roles that were considered 'high stress', and there were also plans to offer mental health training to all employees. It was noted that within schools, mental health training would be offered to staff, would which include training on how to assist pupils with mental health issues.

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- In response to a question, it was reported that succession planning was proving highly successful in some departments, particularly in hard to recruit areas, but more work was needed in other areas.
- Members sought reassurance that the vacant senior leadership roles would be filled by capable officers. Officers felt confident that they would find the right candidates for the roles.
- It was acknowledged that the two senior finance positions were more difficult to recruit for, but the Board was assured that they were working with a consultant to ensure the right candidate was appointed.
- Officers agreed to submit a report regarding agency spending to a future meeting of the Board.
- It was noted that challenges with the agresso system had meant that past data was unavailable, so it was not possible to make year to year comparisons at this stage. Members were assured that officers were working with the Chief Executive to improve the system. It was hoped that the changes would ensure that progress reports would be automatic and future reporting would be an easier process.
- It was agreed that an update on workforce actions being taken as a result of HR management information should be included in the quarterly performance updates for the relevant scrutiny committees, and that the People Management and Workforce Plan progress report should be brought to the Board on a six monthly basis.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the report and comments made be noted.
2. That the following information be circulated to members of the Board:
  - Further information on employees with disabilities and how they are supported
  - Further information on apprenticeship reforms
  - Further information on sickness data including detailed information surrounding sickness absences as a result of mental health, and the categorisation of these.
3. That a report on agency spending be submitted to a further meeting of the Board.
4. That workforce action updates be included in the quarterly performance reports presented to the relevant scrutiny committees.
5. That the People Management and Workforce Plan progress report be reported to the Board on a six monthly basis.

**59      SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMMES**

The Board reviewed the Work Programmes of two of the Scrutiny Committees:

**Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee:**

The Chairman of the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee highlighted some of the key issues that the committee had considered since the last OSMB meeting.

It was noted that the committee had considered a report on high street vitality, and as a result, a working group had been set up which would focus on high street vitality within Lincolnshire.

The Committee had also received an update on the Greater Lincolnshire Local Industrial Strategy, and reported that it looked positive for businesses looking to relocate to Lincolnshire.

Concerns had been raised over the permitted development for shale gas exploration and the Committee had unanimously endorsed the need for timely planning decisions whilst also ensuring local communities were fully involved in planning decisions for developments that will not impact on them.

In relation to the Joint Municipal Waste Strategy, members were informed that the food waste trial in South Kesteven was proving successful. There was also a focus on controlling contamination of recycling within the districts.

Some Members of the Board felt that more work needed to be done to ensure that there was a common strategy between the districts. It was clarified that the Joint Municipal Waste Strategy was focussing on partnership working and a common strategy for the County.

**Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee**

The Chairman of the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee provided an update on the work of the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee over recent months.

The Committee had considered the Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan and had supported a robust Asset Management Plan as an instrumental tool towards achieving the aim of maintaining Band 3 Highways status and align with the Well Maintained Highways – Code of Practice. The Committee had unanimously supported the recommendations to the Executive Councillor on this item.

It was noted that the Committee had reviewed the CCTV enforcement trial which had been implemented outside eight schools within the County in an attempt to monitor motorist's behaviour on school clear markings. Members were informed that the

Committee had endorsed that the trial be extended for a further 12 months until the end of 2019.

In response to a question, the Chairman of Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee explained that the parking situation had improved when CCTV vehicles were present as cameras were acting as a deterrent, but the introduction of fixed cameras was considered too costly.

The Parent Governor Representative reported that at Baston C of E Primary School, staff members had actively worked to improve the parking situation and it had proved to be extremely successful. The Parent Governor agreed to put together an action plan based on measures taken at Baston C of E Primary School and share them with the Chairman of the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee.

One member suggested that districts should be consulted in the development of the cycling strategy, as some districts had their own cycling strategies in place.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Board was satisfied with the content of the Work Programmes of the Environment and Economy; and the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee's.
2. That the Parent Governor Representative produce an action plan based on previous measures taken at Baston C of E Primary School to resolve parking issues

60      OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD WORK  
PROGRAMME

The Board was provided with an opportunity to review its own Work Programme.

It was noted that the Capital Strategy item would be deferred until 31<sup>st</sup> January 2019.

Members were informed that the IMT Working Group was progressing positively, and that members were using the working group as an open space to raise issues and explore and develop different ideas. It had emerged that the Chief Executive was keen to resolve IMT issues. It was noted that all issues could not be blamed on the client side, as there had been problems with the way that it had been implemented internally.

The Chief Digital Officer had shared some proposals for the IMT Strategy which the working group had supported.

It was agreed that the Board would receive a report on the progress of the IMT Working Group in due course.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Board was satisfied with the content of the Work Programme.
2. That the Board receive a report on the progress of the IMT Working Group in due course.

The meeting closed at 12.27 pm