



**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
MANAGEMENT BOARD
27 JUNE 2019**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR R B PARKER (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors R Wootten (Vice-Chairman), B Adams, Mrs J Brockway, Mrs K Cook, C S Macey, C R Oxby, N H Pepper and E W Strengiel

Added Members

Church Representatives: Mr S C Rudman

Parent Governor Representatives: Miss A E I Sayer

Councillors R D Butroid and M A Whittington, attended the meeting as observers.

Officers in attendance:-

Andrew Crookham (Executive Director Resources), Michelle Grady (Assistant Director - Strategic Finance), Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer), Sue Maycock (Head of Finance (Corporate)), Chris Scott, Link Asset Services Lucy Shevill (Strategic People Management Advisor), Jasmine Sodhi (Performance and Equalities Manager), Karen Tonge (Treasury Manager), Nigel West (Head of Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Officer), Emily Wilcox (Democratic Services Officer), Marie Mettam (Strategic People Management Advisor) and Daniel Steel (Scrutiny Officer)

12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs W Bowkett and C E H Marfleet, and Patricia Barnett (Parent Governor Representative).

It was reported that, under the Local Government (Committee and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, Councillor C R Oxby had been appointed as replacement member for Councillor Mrs W Bowkett, for this meeting only.

13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In relation to item 11, Councillor C R Oxby declared a non-pecuniary interest as the Elected County Councillor representing Digby.

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In relation to the minutes, the Chairman welcomed the opportunity to establish a cross party working group to consider the report on the newly published statutory guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities. It was noted that officers were still awaiting notification of the last nominations, after which the group would be established.

RESOLVED:

That minutes of the meeting held on 30 May 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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

The Chairman welcomed the Executive Support Councillors and the Executive Director -Resources to the meeting.

It was noted that Councillor R Foulkes was no longer a member of the Board, and on behalf of the Board, the Chairman paid tribute to Councillor R Foulkes for his work as Chairman of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee and a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

Members were informed that the Chairman had attended a symposium which had discussed the Government's new statutory guidance on Overview and Scrutiny. The main theme of the event had been the culture of organisations and how this was seen to be related to the effectiveness of scrutiny in local government. It was felt that the relationship between the Executive and Scrutiny was crucial, and there had been a strong emphasis on optimism bias.

The Chairman informed the Board that the East Midlands Council's Scrutiny Conference would take place on the 4 October 2019, and encouraged members and officers to attend.

16 CONSIDERATION OF CALL-INS

None were received.

17 CONSIDERATION OF COUNCILLOR CALLS FOR ACTION

None were received.

18 COUNCIL PEOPLE MANAGEMENT AND WORKFORCE PLAN 2019 - 20
PROGRESS REPORT UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report by Lucy Shevill, Strategic People Management Advisor, which provided an update on the HR Management Information and the actions which had been taken forward following the 2017 employee survey.

The report highlighted the performance of the key areas within HR Management.

Officers acknowledged that there was still work to be carried out to improve sickness rates; mental health support and agency spend within the Council.

It was noted that the Council was focusing on the development of apprenticeships and supporting employees to progress, and ensuring that the Council had the right staff for the future.

Members were invited to ask questions, during which the following points were noted:

- The Strategic People Management Advisor agreed to provide the figures on the percentage of men and women employed above a Grade 13, including a comparison of other local authorities.
- It was explained that the Council did not offer employments on zero hour contracts.
- It was suggested that it would be beneficial to give employees the opportunity to share information with managers which may outline any 'hidden talents' that could help them progress within the Council.
- Members were pleased to see the gender pay gap had decreased.
- It was noted that there was generally a good local understanding of the number of vacancies across each service area, but the vacancy reporting across the organisation was currently under review.
- The Assistant Director – Strategic Finance explained that the Council budgeted for 100% occupancy of posts.
- It was recognised that it was difficult to decrease the level of sickness absence within Adult Care, but officers were working with the Executive Director for Adult Care and Community Wellbeing to improve the sickness levels for the service area.
- It was confirmed that the Council did operate a return to work interview process, which was a standard item across the sickness management process. HR advised all managers to carry out return to work interviews at the earliest opportunity.
- HR policy stated that managers needed to keep regular contact with employees whilst on long term sickness; the amount and level of contact would depend on the individual and their circumstances.
- It was noted that the Council offered an employee support and counselling service, in addition to the perkbox employee benefit scheme providing an opportunity to engage with a telephone counselling service.

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- As part of the health and wellbeing strategy, there were a number of initiatives planned to offer mental health support to employees, which included the introduction of mental health first aiders, increased use of stress risk assessments and the encouragement of general health and wellbeing activities.
- It was agreed that officers would make contact with the Assistant Director of Corporate Property to highlight the possible need for improvements to the childcare facilities for members of the public, as well as requesting information on possible plans to install more electric car charging points to the car park for both employees and members of the public.
- It was explained that the annual leave purchase scheme was used to finance the employee benefits service.
- Members raised concerns over the number of colleagues that had not received their appraisal, and sought assurance that appraisals were taking place where possible. The Strategic People Management Advisor explained that there were valid reasons why some appraisals may not have been recorded, but officers were continually monitoring those cases and looking to ensure that the process was as easy and accessible as possible for managers and employees. HR continued to report back to directors to ensure that appraisals were taking place.
- It was clarified that those employees on long term sickness absence were not included in the appraisal figures.
- It was suggested that the Board could receive a report on sickness absence and appraisal procedures and figures at a future meeting of the Board.
- It was explained that Fire and Rescue employees had a different appraisal system. The Strategic People Management Advisor agreed to inform members of the appraisal statistics for Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue employees.
- The Board requested that once finalised, a copy of the minutes be passed on to the Executive Councillor for Community Safety and People Management for consideration of the concerns raised by the Board.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted;
2. That the concerns raised by Members, specifically in relation to the employee appraisals process, be passed on to the Executive Councillor for Community Safety and People Management for consideration;
3. That the actions listed above be carried out as necessary.

19 PERFORMANCE REPORTING AGAINST THE COUNCIL BUSINESS PLAN - QUARTER 4

Consideration was given to a report by the Performance and Equalities Manager, which invited the Board to consider a report on the 2018/19 Council Business Plan Quarter 4 performance which was due to be presented to the Executive on the 09 July 2019.

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The report set out the performance level of each of the commissioning strategies. Members were referred to Appendix A of the report for a summary of the measures that did not achieve their target in Q4.

Members were advised that there was an error in the report and that the Qualifications achieved by adults (Measure 70) had been reported as not meeting the target in Quarter 4, when in fact the target of 525 had been exceeded and the 2018/2019 outturn was 1,114. As a result, there would be changes to the report that would be presented to the Executive on 9 July 2019 due to an improvement in the number of commissioning strategies that had performed really well from four to five commissioning strategies as the Sustaining and Growing Business and the Economy Commissioning Strategy had now achieved all its targets.

The following changes were proposed to the reporting of performance against the Council Business Plan 2018/19:

- 'Safeguarding enquiries where the 'source of risk' is a service provider' (M114) be removed from the Council Business Plan and replaced with 'Adult safeguarding concerns that lead to a safeguarding enquiry' (M130)
- The title of the measure 'Achievement gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers at Key Stage 4' (M42), had been amended to 'Achievement gap between pupils eligible for Free School Meals and their non-Free School Meals eligible peers nationally at KS4'
- The title of the measure 'Achievement gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers at Foundation Stage' (M48), had been amended to 'Achievement gap between pupils eligible for Free School Meals and their non-Free School Meals eligible peers nationally achieving Good Level of Development'

Members supported the recommendations and agreed that the following comments be passed on to the Executive:

Sustaining and Growing Business and the Economy Commissioning Strategy - Qualifications achieved by adults (Measure 70)

- The Board was informed that the Qualifications achieved by adults (Measure 70) had initially been reported in the Executive report considered by the Board as not meeting the target in Quarter 4, when in fact the target of 525 had been exceeded and the 2018/2019 outturn was 1,114.
- The Board supported the amendment of the annual target from 525 as published in the Council Business Plan 2018/2019 to 1,000 for the 2018/19 and 2019/20 Council Business Plans. As a result, there would be changes to the Executive report due to an improvement in the number of commissioning strategies that had performed really well from four to five commissioning strategies as the Sustaining and Growing Business and the Economy Commissioning Strategy had now achieved all its targets.
- In response to a query about whether the targets were correct where the measures were overachieving all the time, it was confirmed that the targets

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were reviewed throughout the year to ensure there was the right of level of output and to identify any need to redistribute resources.

Readiness for School Commissioning Strategy – Achievement at a good level of development in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Measure 47) and Achievement gap between pupils eligible for Free School Meals and their non-Free School Meal eligible peers nationally achieving Good Level of Development (Measure 48)

- With regards to the two Readiness for School measures, concern was raised regarding the focus on literacy as a priority and whether there would be any negative impact on numeracy as a result.
- In addition, concern was raised in relation to the widening achievement gap between pupils eligible for Free School Meals and their non-Free School Meals eligible peers and whether there would be more pressure on teachers if more pupils were in receipt of Free School Meals. In addition, figures were requested for numeracy and literacy in Lincolnshire including a comparison to other regions. Officers agreed to raise these queries with the service area.

Safeguarding Adults Commissioning Strategy - Safeguarding enquiries where the source of risk is a service provider (Measure 114) and Adult safeguarding concerns that lead to a safeguarding enquiry (Measure 130)

- Concerns were raised regarding the removal of Measure 114 from the Council Business Plan and it being replaced with Measure 130. A Board member highlighted that Measure 114 was a national measure and questioned why it had been removed from the Council Business Plan. It was confirmed that it had been replaced in the Council Business Plan by the new measure to ensure that escalation was occurring at the right level.
- The Board recommended that both measures should be included in the Council Business Plan and agreed that these measures should be referred to the Adults and Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee for consideration and to reflect on the Board's recommendation at its meeting on 3 July 2019, and record its comments for the Executive's consideration on 9 July 2019.

Protecting the Public Commissioning Strategy - Adults Reoffending (Measure 14)

- With regard to Adults Reoffending, concern was raised about the target not being met and it was queried what was being done to tackle the increase in reoffending rates, where the problems were, and what type of crimes were being committed. It was highlighted that the ARC (Assisting Rehabilitation through Collaboration) scheme was in place to help reoffenders, but officers agreed to raise these queries with the service area for a response.

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Community Resilience and Assets Commissioning Strategy - Visits to core libraries and mobile library services (Measure 36)

- In relation to the changing IT requirements at libraries, it was questioned whether this would be addressed as part of the Council's IT roll out. It was reported that a project was going through to enable GLL (Greenwich Leisure Limited) to undertake a rollout of new IT equipment.

Wellbeing Commissioning Strategy – Percentage of alcohol users left specialist treatment successfully (Measure 31)

- It was highlighted that it had been previously agreed to separate out alcohol users and drug users into separate measures, but a measure for drug users had not been put back into the Council Business Plan. Officers agreed to check what had been previously decided in relation to this measure.

General Comment

- With regard to those areas not performing well, it was questioned whether there was any correlation with higher levels of sickness absence and lower levels of appraisal completions. Officers reported that they would consult with HR to see if there were any correlations between these and those areas not performing well.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Board support the recommendations, as set out in the Executive Report;
2. That the comments, as set out above, be passed on to the Executive in relation to this item.

20 REVIEW OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE 2018/19

Consideration was given to a report by the Assistant Director – Strategic Finance, which invited the Board to consider a report on the review of Financial Performance 2018/19, which was due to be presented to the Executive on 09 July 2019.

The Assistant Director – Strategic Finance:

- Highlighted the Council's financial performance in 2018/19;
- identified and explained the variances from the Council's revenue and capital budgets;
- reported the use made of flexible capital receipts to fund revenue expenditure on transformation during the years up to and including 2018/19;
- made proposals on the carry forward of over and under spends into the current financial year 2019/20;

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- reported the Prudential and Financial Performance Indicators for 2018/19; and
- proposed an updated Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy for 2019/20.

The Board supported the recommendations set out in the Executive report and agreed the following comments to be passed on to the Executive for consideration:

School Budgets

- In response to a query about the £21M underspend relating to School budgets, it was confirmed that there was no limit on how much or for how long schools could carry forward their underspend.
- As schools funding was based on pupil numbers, it was subject to variations each year so schools prudently kept some of their funding back to address this. However, finance officers did monitor school budgets and could intervene when necessary.

Flood and Risk Management

- In relation to the £97,000 underspend on flood and risk management, it was queried whether it could be used to address the flooding issues in Wainfleet. It was reported that the funding would be used to match fund proposals from other agencies such as the Environment Agency.

Children's Centres

- In relation to the £161,000 underspend in children's centres, concern was raised as to why the money was not being used to facilitate extra services or equipment.
- It was highlighted that Children's Services utilised a number of grants and therefore it was difficult to commit to a service for a year and then have to remove it altogether if the Council was unable to fund it long term. It was also questioned whether children's centres could be utilised as a day centre for adults with Special Educational Needs.

School Improvement

- Support was given to the use of the Children's Services bid to use its 1% underspend on the City of Lincoln Project, as detailed in Appendix B, to enable schools and academies in Lincoln to work collaboratively together to improve teaching and help children.

Adult Social Care

- Given the financial pressures which Adult Social Care will face in future following the cessation of the Better Care Fund, the Board recommended that a volatility reserve should be set up for Adult Social Care.

Children's Services

- It was suggested that an Invest to Save approach to funding early intervention services was needed to ensure better outcomes overall for children and young people.

Adoption

- It was questioned whether a lack of funding was contributing to adoptions taking 362 days on average and how the Council compared to other local authorities. Officers agreed to raise this query with the service area.

General Comment on Underspends

- The Board agreed that it was good news that the Council had these extra underspends, but a debate was needed on where to look to save the money or spend it to support certain areas.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Board support the recommendations to the Executive, as set out in the report;
2. That the comments made, as set out above, be passed on to the Executive in relation to this item.

21 TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

Consideration was given to a report by the Treasury Manager, which detailed the results of the Council's treasury management activities for the financial year 2018/19.

Attention was drawn to the key areas of the report, which included:

- Economic overview and interest rate review
- Treasury Investments
- Long Term Borrowing
- Other treasury issues arising during 2018/19

Chris Scott, Link Asset Services informed members that the overall performance of the Council's treasury management was very credible, taking into account the economic backdrop and level of risk the Council was willing to take.

Members were invited to ask questions, in which the following points were raised:

- It was clarified that the Council did not hold any property in investment funds or directly in property investment itself, as it was above the Council's risk profile.

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- Chris Scott, Link Asset Services, confirmed that he did not foresee any major issues, or any investors used by the Council to be affected by changes in the market. It was noted that institutions were in a stronger position than they had been historically.
- The Board thanked officers for their work over the past year.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted;
2. That the comments made, as set out above, be passed onto the Executive Councillor with responsibilities for Finance.

22 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMMES

The Vice-Chairman of the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee outlined the recent work undertaken by the Committee, which included the following highlights:

- The Committee had considered the outcomes of the High Street Vitality Working Group and had supported the recommendations to the Executive.
- At its meeting in May, the Committee had supported recommendations to approve the Digby Surface Water Alleviation scheme and recommendations to approve the Council taking up membership of the Water Resources East Company.
- The Committee had considered the Council's procurement of green or brown electricity to power its corporate portfolio. The Committee had unanimously recommended that the County Council procure 'Pure Green' energy as a way to meet the Council's carbon emission targets.

Members were referred to Appendix A of the report, which set out the future work of the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee.

The Chairman of the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee outlined the recent work undertaken by the Committee, which included the following highlights:

- In April, the Committee received reports on Transport Connect; the Winter Maintenance End of Year Report and the Lincoln Transport Strategy.
- At its meeting in June, the Committee had recommended the adoption of the Holbeach Transport Strategy.
- The Committee had also received a report on the Passenger Transport Update and the issues faced by rural communities in accessing public transport, along with a number of other reports.

Members were referred to Appendix B of the report, which set out the future work of the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee.

Members were invited to ask questions, in which the following points were noted:

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- It was suggested that the Council consider letting grass verges grow into wild meadows, which is an approach that some councils had already adopted. The Chairman of the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee agreed that he would consult with the Highways department to look into this further.
- It was suggested that the reduction of rural transport services be monitored and scrutinised wherever possible.

RESOLVED:

That the Board is satisfied with the future work programmes of the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee and the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee.

23 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD WORK
 PROGRAMME

The Head of Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Officer presented the Board's prospective work programme.

Members were reminded that there was no meeting scheduled for July, and that the next meeting of the Board would take place on 29 August 2019.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme be agreed.

The meeting closed at 1.20 pm

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