

Agenda Item 5

EXECUTIVE

4 JULY 2023

DEEPINGS SCHOOL LEISURE CENTRE

STATEMENT FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

On 29 June 2023 the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board unanimously agreed to support the recommendations to the Executive.

The Board was addressed by Councillor Virginia Moran, South Kesteven District Councillor for the Market and West Deeping ward and chair of the Deepings Leisure Centre Community Group, and Councillor Ashley Baxter, County Councillor and Deputy Leader of South Kesteven District Council, who were both supportive of the proposals to the Executive.

The Board welcomed and supported the proposals which provided the local community with an opportunity to find a third party to purchase and operate the leisure centre, but recommended that an end date needed to be agreed in order to move forward. The Board proposed that an end date in nine months time should be considered, subject to further advice from Corporate Property on the feasibility of this timescale. The Board requested a progress update on the proposals in nine months time.

As part of the Board's consideration of this item, the following information was confirmed:

- In relation to the former grant of approximately £124,000 from the County Council to assist with the running of the leisure centre, this ceased when the Deepings school converted from a local authority maintained school to an academy. When the school became an academy, the assets transferred over to the school (via a Tenancy at Will – a precursor to a 125 year lease) from the County Council, with the exception of the leisure centre building which the school did not want transferring to them. The Leisure Centre at that time was operated by South Kesteven District Council.
- With respect to the disposal of the land to the academy, it was confirmed that the land would be passported under the Academy Act 2010 at no cost to the academy on a standard 125 year Academy lease.
- With regards to any potential funding from the government to assist with the re-opening of the Deepings Leisure Centre, it was confirmed that there may be some grant funding available, and Sir John Hayes MP, with an interest in bringing the Leisure Centre back into use, was attempting to source some additional funding.

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ITEM 5: SUSTANCE MISUSE SERVICES - RECOMMISSIONING

On 28 June 2023, the Adults and Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee agreed to support the two recommendations on the recommissioning of Substance Misuse Services. The Committee recognises the serious impacts of alcohol and drugs misuse on individuals, their families, and communities as a whole.

The Committee has been advised that the number of dependent alcohol users in Lincolnshire is estimated at 7,000 and the number of crack cocaine and opiate users is at 4,000. The Committee feels that these estimates represent a likely understatement of the level of need. In view of this, the Committee's view is that the service is may only be able to 'scratch the surface' in terms of tackling needs, but acknowledges the existing constraints on expenditure.

The Committee also makes the following observations:

- (1) Development of the New Contract – The Committee recognises that there has been significant work in developing the proposed content of the contract, including a detailed review of the existing service, and an assessment of need through the joint strategic needs assessment. This has led to several changes, including the treatment service and the recovery service being placed in one contract lot.
- (2) Public Health Grant for Substance Misuse Family Support Service (Paragraph 6.1 of the report) – The Committee has been assured that the figure of £60,000 of public health grant for the substance misuse family support service does not represent the expected level of expenditure on this service. Subsequent to the meeting, it was confirmed that the amount of expenditure on the family support service was expected to be £240,000 per annum (funded by £60,000 public health grant and £180,000 supplemental grant). The remaining supplemental grant funding would be allocated to treatment and recovery services.
- (3) Signposting and Pathways into the Service – The Committee emphasises that professionals and communities need to be aware of the services offered, including digital routes into the service and the facility of self-referral. In addition, an aspiration could be that existing public sector assets are used to enhance local provision, improving access and the range of services on offer, in this contract and contracts for other services, that would benefit from a local community base.
- (4) Investment in People and Communities – During the Committee's discussion, a figure of £1 expenditure on treatment services leading to an estimated £4 of savings from reduced demand on other services was cited. The Committee has been advised government is developing ways to capture the range of benefits from investment in substance misuse services as part of the national strategy, which when available Lincolnshire would follow. Irrespective of these figures, the Committee has concluded that service represents a direct investment in the wellbeing of people and communities.

- (5) Key Performance Indicators – The Committee looks forward to the development and implementation of the key performance indicators, as outlined in paragraph 9.5 of the report, with these indicators supporting a high-performing service.

Agenda Item 7

EXECUTIVE

4 JULY 2023

RE-COMMISSIONING OF PROPERTY SERVICES

STATEMENT FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

On 29 June 2023 the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board unanimously agreed to support the recommendations to the Executive.

As part of the Board's consideration of this item, the following information was confirmed:

- With regards to whether there would be sufficient qualified staff within the Corporate Property team, it was confirmed that there were enough across the client team and Vinci Kier but not necessarily in the correct places. Currently, the only qualified chartered surveyor within the team was the Assistant Director for Corporate Property. The other qualified chartered surveyors were currently provided by Kier and sat within the estates and property records team, so it was proposed to bring this service in house to strengthen the client team and improve synergies and robustness.
- With the adoption of the corporate landlord approach, the direction of travel for the property services offer based on lessons learned from the current contract, and looking at the market and other local authorities with similar property services contracts, it was considered that going forward this was the right model for delivery and reflected and replicated best practice elsewhere.
- In relation to the personal liability of the staff, it was confirmed that the insourcing of asbestos management, fire and legionella management would provide a more robust management set up to ensure these areas were covered. This new delivery model would give officers and the Council more protection by ensuring the Council was fulfilling its statutory duties.
- Smaller jobs were currently added to a repairs and maintenance programme and planned in depending on the priority level. The new minor works manager would help to improve the processes for smaller jobs, which amount to nearly 10 000 jobs a year, and drive down the costs while ensuring the jobs were completed properly with the quality required. The current contract had the ability to potentially make these jobs a little bit more expensive as it used the target cost system which meant that it was in the contractor's interest to make the costs higher to start with so that they remained within their KPIs. The new contract would use actual priced costs so the Council would have a market price it deemed acceptable to pay, which would give the Council more control to make sure that the contractor was not able to charge more than they should be doing. When building and designing the new contract, consideration would be given to how these smaller jobs would be managed and completed, and the priority levels would be changed to reduce the lengthy timescales.

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Agenda Item 8

EXECUTIVE

4 JULY 2023

REVIEW OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE 2022/23

STATEMENT FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

On 29 June 2023 the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board unanimously agreed to support the recommendations to the Executive.

As part of the Board's consideration of this item, the following information was confirmed:

- In response to the existence of observable trends in expenditure and the awareness of relevance to such government announcements, Officers explained that the inflation impact and the education travel budget continued to be of concern. A contingency around the first has been retained and a contingency was introduced specific to education travel. Budgets for 2024/25 were anticipated to be static, whereas foresight indicated that budgets would continue being under pressure in the 2025/26 period. Therefore, scenario planning was a core activity. Assurance was provided that the Board would receive further information as part of the process for setting the budgets for the next financial year.
- Relevant to the Fairer Funding Review, it was confirmed that it extended beyond the current government period; potential funding reductions were being factored into that, along with challenges experienced around inflation and interest rates which had an impact on government borrowing. Officers provided assurances that careful planning was employed as a measure of securing the Council's future position beyond the next financial year. The Leader of the Council added that pressures were covered by contingencies; these were being built into next year's base budget, acknowledging that further information on additional funding was anticipated around the same time as budgets were being set. It was also noted that any underspend was put forward to the Council in September 2023 for decision on how that may be used/allocated. In the interim, funds remained under *development funding*, until further notice.
- In relation to underspend and how that affected totals when moved across different pots of funding, Officers explained that when budgets were set, overall pressures were considered for decisions such as around allocation, council tax and services funding to be made. Money set aside to contingencies allowed for addressing additional costs (e.g., pay award due to additional inflation on education travel); otherwise, funds were being allocated and spent elsewhere which posed a potential threat to the Council's ability to deal with unexpected pressures.
- Relevant to settlement agreements, Officers clarified that they had received indications of what the settlement would be for 2024/25, but this was likely to be followed by savings and potential austerity measures in subsequent years. The settlement was expected in December 2023, following which a new spending review period would be entered into under the remit of the new government.

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Agenda Item 9

EXECUTIVE

4 JULY 2023

CORPORATE PLAN SUCCESS FRAMEWORK 2022-23 - QUARTER 4

STATEMENT FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

On 29 June 2023, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board agreed to support the recommendations to the Executive.

During its consideration, the Board was provided an overview of the nine indicators, which had not been achieved (*page 180 of the Executive's agenda pack, and detailed on subsequent pages*). Three of these nine indicators related to academic achievement, and in this regard, the Board was advised that the targets had been challenging given the impacts of the pandemic, and the loss of time in schools for many pupils. These targets would continue into 2023-24. Two of the indicators were based on 'good' or 'outstanding' ratings for schools, and would become contextual measures for 2023-24. The remaining four indicators had seen improvements, and although were still below target they remain as targeted measures in the 2023-24 framework.

The Board's specific comments and clarifications were on these specific indicators:

- PI 37 – Recycling Rate (New National Formula) (*page 202*) - The Board was advised that as each local authority across the country may have slightly different arrangements, it was understandable when confusion occurs. In addition, to general campaigns to reduce contamination of recycled materials, there was specific work in primary schools, although it would always be a challenge to influence behaviours. People with disabilities could be supported using recycling bins by their families or carers, or ultimately receive advice from their waste collection authority.
- PI 68 – Percentage of Three to Four Year Olds Taking Up Universal Entitlement (*page 187*) – The Board was advised that the reason that eight per cent of children were not taking up the universal entitlement was most likely a combination of parental choice; and a lack of awareness of the offer. In relation to the latter, as set out in the report, there were several initiatives aimed at raising awareness, including engagement events over holiday periods, and support from the Council's partners.
- PI 1 – Percentage of Schools Judged 'Good' or 'Outstanding' (*Page 195*)
PI 2 – Percentage of Pupils in 'Good' or 'Outstanding' Schools (*Pages 195-196*)
The Board reflected on the extent to which the level of academisation of schools in the county was largely or partly responsible for the non-achievement of these two indicators.

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