

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY  
MANAGEMENT BOARD  
24 SEPTEMBER 2020**

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

Councillors R Wootten (Vice-Chairman), B Adams, Mrs W Bowkett, Mrs J Brockway, R J Kendrick, C S Macey, C E H Marfleet, Mrs A M Newton, N H Pepper and E W Strengiel

**Added Members**

Parent Governor Representatives: Mrs M R Machin and Miss A E I Sayer

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

Officers in attendance:-

Debbie Barnes OBE (Chief Executive), James Drury (Executive Director Commercial), Donna Fryer (Head of Portfolio and Resources, IMT), John Giblin (Communications) (Strategic Communications Team Leader), Nick Harrison (Democratic Services Officer), Caroline Jackson (Interim Head of Corporate Performance), Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer), Sue Maycock (Head of Finance (Corporate)), Lucy Shevill (Strategic HR Business Partner), Jasmine Sodhi (Performance and Equalities Manager), Fiona Thompson (Head of Human Resources), Karen Tonge (Treasury Manager), Nigel West (Head of Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Officer) and John Wickens (Assistant Director, IMT)

**28     APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS**

There were no apologies for absence.

**29     DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**30     MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 AUGUST 2020**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 August 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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#### **31 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND CHIEF OFFICERS**

The Chairman reported that he had attended a meeting of the Executive on the 2 September 2020, and presented the comments from the Board on the Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring reports. In relation to the capital budget monitoring report, he had raised the point about whether there was any further scope to limit overspending on highways schemes through improvements to the forecasting of the cost of capital programme projects. In response, it was highlighted that work was in hand to manage pressures to match the profiling and smooth the capital financing costs.

It has been agreed by Group Leaders that Scrutiny Panel A, chaired by Councillor L Wooten, would undertake an urgent short review of Developer Contributions. The review would start in October and it was anticipated that it would be completed by Christmas. Once completed, the Board would receive the outcome of the scrutiny review.

The Chief Executive reported that Lincolnshire had a relatively low number of Covid-19 cases compared to other areas, however there were signs of a recent increase. No areas of the County were currently in lockdown. Following recent announcements by the Government the Council was working with District Councils on the new Test and Trace Payments. Work was also underway with Lincoln University to ensure the safe return of students to the campus. County Council staff would continue to work from home wherever possible.

#### **32 CONSIDERATION OF CALL-INS**

None had been received.

#### **33 CONSIDERATION OF COUNCILLOR CALLS FOR ACTION**

None had been received.

#### **34 CORPORATE PLAN PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK**

Consideration was given to a report from the Performance and Equalities Manager, on the Corporate Plan Performance Framework, which was due to be presented to the Executive on 6 October 2020. The views of the Board would be reported to the Executive as part of its consideration of this item. Performance reporting would commence against the framework and replace the Council Business Plan performance reporting.

The Framework contained performance indicators and key activities, against which performance/progress would be reported in order to demonstrate whether the Council was achieving the four ambitions for Lincolnshire as set out in the Corporate Plan. The four ambitions were: high aspirations; the opportunity to enjoy life to the full; thriving environments and good-value council services. Services had been asked to

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provide key milestones over the next 18 months (September 2020 – March 2022) for each activity.

Performance would be reported by exception, and include, those performance indicators:- that had not achieved the target; where the target had been achieved but the direction of travel was of concern; where the target had been met and services wanted to celebrate success. An explanation of the performance and steps necessary to improve performance would be included in the report. The report outlined how performance would be reported to scrutiny committees.

Members discussed the report, and during discussion, the following points were noted:

- In relation to paragraph 1.2.2, the service areas would have to report the Tier 2 performance indicators to the relevant scrutiny committees. The service areas had the option to report Tier 1 performance indicators to the scrutiny committees, such as to provide context, but Tier 1 would normally only be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and the Executive to avoid duplication with the scrutiny committees.
- All service areas across the Council were provided with the opportunity to contribute to the criteria for each of the four ambitions contained in Tier 1. The Corporate Leadership Team then identified which criteria to include in Tier 1 of the Performance Framework. There was a need for pragmatism when selecting the criteria as to which ones already had data captured through existing performance indicators, and capturing data for new ones. In addition, there were a number of 'business as usual' activities taking place across the Council which were not captured in the framework as the focus was on any development work for taking the Council forward.
- As this was only the first year of the Performance Framework and it was a 'work in progress', the criteria would be reviewed regularly and be refined and improved upon as and when necessary.
- A number of the criteria in the 'support high aspirations' ambition, such as the achievement levels at Key Stage 2, Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5, would only be reported annually. There was a need to look at ways of monitoring this ambition quarterly in a way that showed current performance.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Board unanimously support the recommendations to the Executive, as set out in the report;
2. That a summary of the above comments be passed on to the Executive as part of its consideration of this item.

### 35 PERFORMANCE REPORTING AGAINST THE COUNCIL BUSINESS PLAN 2019/2020 - QUARTER 4

Consideration was given to a report from the Performance and Equalities Manager, which invited the Board to consider the 2019/2020 Council Business Plan Quarter 4 (Q4) performance which was being presented to the Executive on 6 October 2020

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and the Council Business Plan performance indicators that fell within the remit of the Board. The views of the Board would be reported to the Executive as part of its consideration of this item.

The Council Business Plan 2019/2020 had been approved by Council on 22 February 2019. The report provided highlights of Q4 performance. Of the 17 commissioning strategies reported in Q4:- 9 had performed really well (all measures reported this quarter achieved the target); 4 performed well (all but 1 measure reported this quarter achieved the target); and 3 had mixed performance (some measures achieved and some measures did not achieve the target this quarter); 1 did not achieve any of the targets.

The 17 commissioning strategies included 60 measures that could be compared with a target this quarter. 78% (47) achieved the target. 13 measures did not meet the target (compared with 11 in Q3). Of these 13, the Covid-19 pandemic had had an impact on Q4 performance for the following five measures on which the report outlined further details:- unsafe products removed from the market; high risk premises inspected by Trading Standards; visits to core libraries and mobile library services; jobs created; amount of external funding attracted to Lincolnshire.

Members discussed the report, and during discussion, the following points were noted:

- Congratulations were extended by the Board on the Quarter 4 performance against the Council Business Plan 2019/20.
- Performance for the Percentage of alcohol users that left specialist treatment successfully (M31) – This was always difficult to achieve as it relied on the willingness of individuals to participate in the scheme and benefit from it. The measure was managed very closely in that contract and an option to consider could be that it was measured rather than compared to a target.
- Unsafe products removed from the market (M2) and High risk premises inspected by Trading Standards (M3) - It was suggested that there was now an opportunity to look at premises that were unsafe in a different way, such as overcrowding and people not observing social distancing and not wearing masks, during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- There were a number of performance indicators where information for Quarter 4 was not available. It was agreed that this missing information would be circulated to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board once available.

### **RESOLVED:**

1. That the Board unanimously support the recommendations to the Executive, as set out in the report;
2. That a summary of the above comments be passed on to the Executive as part of its consideration of this item.

## 36 FUTURE REPORTING OF IMT SERVICES

At the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on 2 July 2020, it had been agreed that the Chairman and Vice Chairman should meet with officers to discuss the requirements for future reporting of IMT to the Board. The result of this and subsequent discussions had now led to the Board being asked to consider a report from the Assistant Director - IMT, and Head of Portfolio and Resources - IMT on a retrospective review of the IMT Strategy 2019-2022. The report also provided an update on the progress made against key IMT related transformation and transactional projects being undertaken by Serco and other third party suppliers.

The Board was asked to: seek reassurance about the performance of the IMT service in delivering the IMT Strategy 2019-2022, and, the Key IMT- related projects being undertaken by Serco and other third party suppliers and provide feedback.

It was noted that since the last report to the Board in March 2020, the IMT service had been responding to requests from Lincolnshire County Council staff for support to deliver services throughout the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. This had impacted some of the projects which were planned prior to the pandemic, but had demonstrated IMT's ability to react and respond to the ever changing working environment. The projects impacted by the redirection of resources for the pandemic were now being progressed again and project resourcing would be brought back on track over the coming weeks. Work would also commence on the production of a high level strategy document for Council approval in 2021.

Members discussed the report, and during discussion, the following points were noted:

- Members welcomed the comprehensive report and noted that IT support to councillors had improved and that Simon Firth from Serco was acknowledged as having made a significant contribution to that improvement.
- Going forward, full use of the IT currently available should be exploited.
- A review of business and departmental processes would be undertaken to ensure they were standardised and simplified where possible.
- Innovation had taken place as a result of new ways of working during the Covid – 19 pandemic, and some projects, like the introduction of Teams, had been introduced earlier than planned.
- The IT team had worked hard to fix 'the basics' and despite a significant workload, a number of projects had been delivered before the pandemic struck.
- Lessons had been learnt from the four-year delay in delivering the 2015 strategy. The causes of the delay had been as a result of commercial and strategic issues and the over reliance on one prime provider. A more pragmatic approach had been taken and specialist providers were now being utilised where advantageous.

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#### RESOLVED:

1. That the Board was satisfied with the reassurances given about:-
  - a. The performance of the IMT Service in delivering the IMT Strategy 2019-2022, and the performance of key projects;
  - b. The review the IMT Strategy 2019-2022 Retrospective Review and;
  - c. The review of the Key IMT-related projects being undertaken by Serco and other third party suppliers report.
2. That the comments made at the meeting on the reports as outlined above be noted.

#### 37 HR MANAGEMENT INFORMATION AND WORKFORCE PLAN UPDATE REPORT

Consideration was given to a report from the Strategic HR Business Partner and Head of Human Resources, which provided an update on HR management information and corporate HR projects, on which the board were asked to seek assurance.

The report provided detailed information on the following matters: corporate workforce management information; staffing numbers; the use and cost of agency workers; voluntary turnover rates; leaver reasons; days lost due to sickness absence; reasons for sickness absence; equality data; the gender pay gap; the number of employees with disabilities; the number of employees from BAME backgrounds; management of employee relations cases; review of workforce policies and the apprentice strategy 2020-21.

(The meeting adjourned from 11.34 am to 11.40am due to a loss of IT connection for all those in attendance and loss of live audio streaming. The adjournment was used to ensure that public access to the live audio stream of the meeting was restored).

(Councillor R D Butroid left the meeting at this point).

Following the resumption of the meeting, members discussed the report, and, during discussion, the following points were noted:

- The Board requested further detail on the reasons for an increase in disciplinary cases within the Highways Department be sent to them following the meeting. It was thought that this was partly as a result of the Place Directorate implementing culture change initiatives.
- It was encouraging to note that 85% of those employees who had completed an exit questionnaire on leaving said they would work for LCC again.
- The agency spend under current provider contracts for 2019-2020 was £5,041,641 which showed a £560,000 increase in agency spend compared to 2018-2019. The recent actions undertaken to reduce the numbers of agency workers were noted. This had included the temporary redeployment of employees to cover priority demands, who had not been able to perform their normal duties during the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as offering employment contracts to some agency workers where there was an on-going need for the

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role. The use of agency workers for the Educational Psychology service continued, but with a plan to reduce this through partnership working.

- The strategic future direction of this service was being reviewed with the aim for any new arrangement to be in place by April 2021. Recent increases in agency usage had been for social workers in both Adult and Children's teams. The Corporate Leadership Team had requested further work to be undertaken on why there had been an increase in the use of agency staff, and for a plan to be developed to reduce the increase in spend on the areas mentioned above.
- There was some concern expressed that councillors had not been consulted about changes to the employment policy regarding staff appeals against dismissal. Currently a panel of councillors would consider an appeal. However, as a result of a change to streamline and speed up the process from January 2021 this role would now be undertaken by Directors and Assistant Directors. They would hear appeals except for dismissal appeals for Senior Managers. Additionally, LCC may consider convening an Elected Member appeals panel for all serious cases. It was noted that the changes had been discussed extensively including with the trade unions and been benchmarked with other local authorities. Only a very small number of cases went to appeal. Councillor B Young considered that, in view of the discussion, a report should be submitted to the Executive.
- It was noted that many staff had generally welcomed the move to homeworking during the Covid-19 pandemic, and that in future, it was expected that homeworking may continue based on the nature of the work and the individual circumstances of the employee.

#### RESOLVED:

1. The Board agrees that a report on changes to HR practices relating to councillor involvement in dismissal procedures be submitted by the Executive Councillor for Community Safety and People Management to the Executive;
2. The Information and Workforce Plan Update Report, and the comments outlined above, be noted.

#### 38 TREASURY MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE 2020/21 - QUARTER 1 TO 30 JUNE

Consideration was given to a report from the Treasury Manager, on the treasury management activities and performance for Quarter 1 of 2020/21 to 30 June 2020 compared to the Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Investment Strategy 2020/21. The Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Investment Strategy 2020/21 set out the framework for how the cash flow, borrowing and treasury investments of the Council were managed and the risks involved.

*(Councillor C E H Marfleet gave his apologies for the remainder of the meeting)*

There were no additional comments arising that were not included in the report, apart from an acknowledgement that the Covid-19 pandemic, continued low interest rates and Brexit were the main issues likely to impact on future performance.

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RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted;
2. That comments as outlined above be passed onto the Executive Councillor for Resources and Communications.

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PROGRAMME

Members were advised that this item was for information only and noted the report.

The meeting closed at 12.29 pm