

**EXECUTIVE
6 JULY 2021**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR M J HILL OBE (LEADER OF THE COUNCIL)

Councillors Mrs P A Bradwell OBE (Executive Councillor for Children's Services, Community Safety and Procurement) (Deputy Leader), Mrs W Bowkett (Executive Councillor for Adult Care and Public Health), R D Butroid (Executive Councillor for People Management, Legal and Corporate Property), L A Cawrey (Executive Councillor for Fire & Rescue and Cultural Services), C J Davie (Executive Councillor for Economic Development, Environment and Planning), R G Davies (Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT), D McNally (Executive Councillor for Waste and Trading Standards) and Mrs S Woolley (Executive Councillor for NHS Liaison, Community Engagement, Registration and Coroners)

Councillors: attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Debbie Barnes OBE (Chief Executive), Andrew Crookham (Executive Director Resources), James Drury (Executive Director Commercial), Glen Garrod (Executive Director - Adult Care and Community Wellbeing), Michelle Grady (Assistant Director – Finance), Charlotte Gray (Head of Service – Children's Commissioning), Andy Gutherson (Executive Director Place), Sophie Reeve (Assistant Director - Commercial), Heather Sandy (Executive Director of Children's Services), Jasmine Sodhi (Performance and Equalities Manager), Richard Waters (Principal Engineer (Structures)), Nigel West (Head of Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Officer) and Rachel Wilson (Democratic Services Officer)

11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

12 DECLARATIONS OF COUNCILLORS' INTERESTS

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

13 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE LEADER, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

There were no announcements by the Leader, Executive Councillors or Executive Directors.

14 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE HELD ON 2 JUNE 2021

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 2 June 2021 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

It was subsequently clarified that any councillor who wished to observe a meeting of the Council virtually would be required to join through a dedicated link, in order to be considered as an observer of the meeting.

15 REVIEW OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE 2020/21

Consideration was given to a report, which was presented by the Executive Director – Resources and Assistant Director – Finance, on the Council's financial performance in 2020/21, which included an overall underspend of £28.746m on Council budgets and £13.976m on schools budgets. The report also identified and explained variances from the Council's revenue and capital budgets. Prudential and financial performance indicators for 2020/21 were also included.

Proposals for the use of underspends which were in excess of the 1% approved budget from 2020/21, in the current financial year (2021/22) were set out in paragraphs 1.61 to 1.65 of the report. These would be submitted to the County Council for approval.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board presented the comments from the Board, which had included reference to the continuing cost pressures from Home to School transport; the proposed investment in capital for special schools; pressure points in certain services, such as foster care, which had been created by the Covid-19 pandemic, and it was suggested that these should continue to be monitored by the relevant scrutiny committees.

The Leader of the Council highlighted the significant amount of financial support which had been received by local government in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Executive was advised that it was likely that there would be a one year financial settlement for local government again, and there may be further challenges for local government in the coming years as a result of the pandemic. The advice was that the authority should keep the volatility fund at a reasonable level.

The following issues were raised:

- The additional funding received to assist the authority in dealing with Covid-19 had been of benefit, and had helped residential homes to continue operating and supporting people.
- The entire staff of the Council should be thanked for their hard work over the past 15 months.
- Reservations regarding the future finances were shared by members of the Executive, and it was commented that the recovery phase would take 2 – 3 years, and so a careful approach to funds was the correct one to ensure that there was a sensible amount of reserves.

- There would be challenges around construction costs and pay inflation, as well as a skills shortage in the county.
- It was noted that the Council currently had a healthy level of reserves, and as a result the Council had been able to use £12m to establish a business support fund earlier in the year. There had been clear messages in the lead up to the election that more investment in the county's roads was needed.

RESOLVED

That Executive:

1. Notes the carry forwards set out in paragraph 1.58 to 1.60 of the report, which are made in line with the Council's Financial Regulations;
2. Recommends to the County Council that the proposals in paragraph 1.61 to 1.65, relating to the treatment of underspends, be approved subject to the following amendments:
 - a) The proposed transfer to the Financial Volatility Reserve set out in paragraph 1.64 is reduced by £10m to £2.2m;
 - b) A corresponding £10m increase to the Development Fund, for use on highways initiatives.
3. Notes the transfers to and from reserves carried out in 2020/21 as set out in Table F;
4. Notes the financial performance in 2020/21 as set out in Table A (Key Financial Performance Measures), Table B (Revenue Budget Final Outturn), Table C (Net Capital Programme Summary Outturn), Appendix N (Prudential Indicators).

16 EXTENSION TO BEST START LINCOLNSHIRE: EARLY YEARS AND FAMILY SERVICE CONTRACT

A report was submitted to the Executive which sought an exception to the County Council's Contract Regulations, to extend the Council's contract with the Pre-School Learning Alliance (trading name Early Years Alliance) for the Best Start Lincolnshire: Early Years and Family Service, for up to 12 months to 30 June 2023.

It was reported that a review was being undertaken of the Commissioned Early Years Services, which includes the Best Start Lincolnshire: Early Years and Family Service, however, the timescales for the review completion had been delayed by the impact of Covid-19 pandemic and a number of interdependencies that had also been impacted by Covid-19, including timescales for any potential re-procurement of an Early Years and Family Service.

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee had considered the report on 25 June 2021, and the Chairman of the Committee presented the comments, and highlighted that

Committee members had unanimously supported the recommendations to the Executive. The Committee had also highlighted the importance investing in early intervention services for children.

In response to a question, it was noted that the focus of this review was not on the children's centre buildings, but the services delivered within them. It was highlighted that the Council was very keen for children's centres to be open, and they were increasingly opening in line with current government guidance.

RESOLVED

That an extension to the contract for the Best Start Lincolnshire: Early Years and Family Service with Pre-School Learning Alliance for up to a maximum of 12 months from 1 July 2022 to 20 June 2023 (9 months initially to 31 March 2023), while the Commissioned Early Years Services review is concluded, be approved.

17 RE-PAINTING AND MAINTENANCE WORKS TO CROSS KEYS SWING BRIDGE

A report by the Executive Director – Place was received which sought approval to carry out re-painting of the super structure and other maintenance works to Cross Keys Swing Bridge, carrying the A17 over the River Nene at Sutton Bridge.

Following discussion by the Executive, the following points were noted:

- It was confirmed that records of how often the swing bridge opened and for how long had been collated and the contractor would be provided with that information, as they would be required to remove their staff from the bridge during this time.
- Clarification was sought regarding the longer terms issues of the swing bridge, and whether it would need to be replaced in the future. The Executive was advised that the proposed maintenance removed the risk of the failure of the bridge, and officers continued to examine a range of schemes that may be appropriate.
- In relation to the timeline for the project, it was clarified that the programme of works would include preparatory work which would take place in February/March 2022.
- It was considered important that the lifespan of the asset was maximised as it was a critical route.

RESOLVED

That the Executive:

1. Approves the carrying out of a scheme of re-painting of the superstructure and other maintenance works to Cross Keys Swing Bridge.

2. Delegates to the Executive Director for Place in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT, authority to approve the form and entering into of any contractual documentation necessary to give effect to the Scheme.

18 ONE COUNCIL COMMISSIONING FRAMEWORK

A report was presented to the Executive, which provided the One Council Commissioning Framework for consideration following further work and changes as a result of comments made when the Framework was considered by the Executive on 7 April 2021.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board presented the comments of the Board following its consideration at its meeting on 1 July 2021, where it was unanimously supported. The Board was supportive of the increased emphasis on championing Lincolnshire and keeping commissioning local was welcomed.

Following discussion by the Executive, the following was noted:

- There was a need for balance between value for money and championing Lincolnshire. Officers advised that it was proposed to hold sessions to raise awareness amongst Lincolnshire suppliers about how to participate in the procurement process and also to advise of any upcoming procurements.
- It was commented that using local suppliers where possible (where they were able to deliver) was the right way forward. There was also a need to recognise issues around carbon footprint and the green masterplan.
- Any training which could be provided to businesses would be beneficial. However, there were concerns about how much benefit was gained through 'local' alone, the decision to award a contract should also be based on value and quality.
- It was highlighted that a green paper was expected in relation to procurement rules, however no fundamental changes for high value contracts was expected, but there may be options around how to deal with lower value procurements. Further information on this was expected later in 2021.

RESOLVED

That the One Council Commissioning Framework be approved

19 PERFORMANCE REPORTING AGAINST THE CORPORATE PLAN PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK 2020-2021 - QUARTER 4

An overview of the performance for Quarter 4 (January – March 2021) against the Corporate Plan was introduced by the Performance and Equalities Manager who advised that Covid-19 was continuing to have an impact, with 66% of the 53 activities with milestones due to be reported in Quarter 4 either On plan or Ahead of plan.

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The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board confirmed that the Board had recorded its support for the recommendations to the Executive. The Board had requested further information in relation to the life expectancy for Lincolnshire residents. The reduction in people Killed or Seriously Injured on Lincolnshire's roads was also noted, and recognised that this was likely to be due to the fact that people were making fewer journeys due to the Covid-19 restrictions which were in force during this time. It was highlighted that a number of issues had been highlighted which would be reported back to the Board.

Clarification was provided in relation to frequency of road surveys, and it was noted that the level of funding the authority received for highways was influenced by the Asset Management Plan. The Highways Team was also increasing the use of different technologies to monitor the condition of Lincolnshire's roads.

RESOLVED

That the Executive:

1. Notes the Quarter 4 performance for 2020/21.
2. Approves the proposal to defer reporting of 2021/2022 Quarter 1 performance and to report Quarters 1 and 2 together in December as set out in the report.

20 CONSIDERATION OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

RESOLVED

That in accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that if they were present there could be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Section 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

21 FUTURE WIDE AREA NETWORK (WAN) OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Consideration was given to a report which set out information in relation to the Future Wide Area Network (WAN) options appraisal.

RESOLVED

That the recommendations, as detailed in the exempt report be approved.

The meeting closed at 12.25 pm