

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
 MANAGEMENT BOARD
 28 JANUARY 2021**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR R B PARKER (CHAIRMAN)

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

Added Members

Parent Governor Representative: Mrs M R Machin

Councillors: M J Hill OBE and M A Whittington attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Michelle Andrews (Assistant Director – Corporate Recovery), Debbie Barnes OBE (Chief Executive), Karen Cassar (Assistant Director - Highways), Pam Clipson (Head of Finance, Adult Care and Community Wellbeing), Andrew Crookham (Executive Director - Resources), John Giblin (Strategic Communications Team Leader), Jeanne Gibson (Programme Leader: Minor Works and Traffic), Michelle Grady (Assistant Director for Strategic Finance), Nick Harrison (Democratic Services Officer), Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer), Natasha Langford (Corporate Project Support Officer - Corporate Transformation, Programmes & Performance), Sue Maycock (Head of Finance (Corporate)), Chris Miller (Team Leader (Countryside Services)), Keith Noyland (Head of Finance - Communities), Mark Popplewell (Head of Finance (Children's Services)), Jasmine Sodhi (Performance and Equalities Manager), Rowan Smith (Local Highways Manager - West) and Nigel West (Head of Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Officer)

74 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

An apology for absence was received from Councillor B Adams. It was reported that, under Regulation 13 of the Local Government Committee and Political Groups) Regulation 1990, Councillor S P Roe was replacing Councillor B Adams, for this meeting only.

Apologies for absence were also received from Councillor E W Strengeil; Miss A Sayer, Parent - Governor Representative; Councillor B Young, Executive Councillor for Community Safety and People Management; Councillor R Davies, Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT and Councillor C L Perraton-Williams, Executive Support Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT.

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75 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor S P Roe declared an interest in agenda items 9 and 10 on the agenda (*Service Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals 2021/22 and Council Budget 2021/22*) and reported that he would be leaving the meeting for those items and the remainder of the meeting and would not taking part in the discussion on them because of a financial interest.

76 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 DECEMBER 2020

RESOLVED:

That minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

77 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND CHIEF OFFICERS

Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman reported that he had attended the meeting of the Executive on the 5th January and presented the comments from the Board on the final report from the Developer Contributions Scrutiny Review. The Executive had welcomed the report and its recommendations, and concluded that the report had provided the basis for a series of activities on developer contributions. An action plan would now be compiled to indicate which recommendations had been accepted and how the issues raised would be addressed. The Board would be receiving the Executive Response Action Plan at its meeting on the 17th March 2021. The Chairman reiterated his thanks to Councillor Linda Wootten, Scrutiny Panel A and the Senior Scrutiny Officer for turning this review around so quickly.

An informal briefing session on the Transformation Programme had been arranged for the Board on the 10th February from 9.30am to 11am. An appointment would be sent out to the Board members after the meeting.

78 CONSIDERATION OF CALL-INS

None had been received.

79 CONSIDERATION OF A COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION - RESOLVING OBSTRUCTION OF THE HIGHWAY / CREATION OF PARKING SPACES ON WEST STREET, BARKSTON

Consideration was given to a Councillor Call for Action request submitted by Councillor R Wootten and received by the Chief Executive in respect of 'Resolving Obstruction of the Highway / Creation of Parking Spaces on West Street, Barkston'. Under Section 119 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and Section 20 of the Police and Justice Act 2006, councillors could submit a Councillor Call for Action (CCfA).

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The report outlined the processes for a Call for Action. Appended to the report was the Call for Action form submitted about the issue from Councillor R Wootten and which summarised the issue.

A farmer and businessman on West Street, Barkston had raised concerns with Councillor R Wootten over the obstruction of the road by parked cars, which in turn were restricting access to his private property. The situation had become worse during the Covid-19 pandemic due to increasing numbers of people following the Government's advice to exercise, and this location had gained popularity as an area for countryside walking along the River Witham. There were no parking spaces along West Street and the passing point was also being used for parking. Councillor R Wootten had attempted to resolve the matter by contacting the Lincolnshire Police Neighbourhood Team, Lincolnshire County Council officers in Highways and Countryside Services, National Farmers Union, the local MP, and the Barkston and Syston Parish Council. As no satisfactory outcome had been achieved to date the matter was now being brought forward as a Councillor Call for Action.

Councillor R Wootten was invited to outline his reasons for the Councillor Call for Action, and what actions he would like to see taken to address the issue. Councillor R Wootten referred to his Call for Action form which had been appended to the report and requested consideration of a resolution which included the following actions: Provision of parking spaces for up to six vehicles to be created from the grass verge; the relocation of a Section 34 notice on Drift Lane; restricted waiting put in place on this section of West Street – Daytime only; the lawful erection of additional white marker posts; restricting entrance to a section of West Street for access only for residents, visitors and deliveries. Councillor R Wootten also presented a short slide show of five photographs as part of his evidence submission. He reported that since the report had been circulated to the Board he had received messages of support from the Parish Council and six local residents for his submission.

(As the advocate for the Councillor Call for Action and in line with legal advice received, Cllr R Wootten was not able to take part in the debate or vote)

It was noted that the County Council's Traffic and Minor Works Team was currently looking to assist with the parking issues but this only centred on the parking within the two passing places. The Team was not currently looking at parking on any other areas at this end of West Street. The Lincolnshire Police Neighbourhood Team had visited the site and given advice on installing posts near the property entrance which had now been actioned.

The Board was requested to: Consider the Councillor Call for Action request; determine whether to refer the Councillor Call for Action request to the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee for final determination and if referred, provide advice to the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee for its consideration at its meeting on 8 March 2021.

Members discussed the report and received views on the issue from the Assistant Director – Highways; Team Leader – Countryside Services; Local Highways Manager

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– West; and the Programme Leader - Minor Works and Traffic, and, during the discussion the following points were noted:

- Officers reported that it was not possible to prevent walkers from using the road. Parking in the lay-by and on verges of the road was a concern. It was suggested that the impact on the verges had been exacerbated by the ditch which required maintenance by the landowner. Officers were keen to find a practical solution and drew the Board's attention to the cost of providing parking spaces requested which was in the region of £30-£40k and which was not in the current budget. Remedial solutions suggested by a member such as retractable bollards, widening the road etc. would be expensive, were not budgeted for and would incur on-going maintenance costs. Also on the suggestion of removing parking from the parking bays it was reported that there would be a need for on-going enforcement.
- The Board supported the submission of the Councillor Call for Action to the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee for final determination. They agreed that the farmer must be able to carry out his job without any barriers to access but also acknowledged the importance of encouraging the public to take exercise and not placing restrictions on this where possible. They also recognised that solutions should be cost effective, which included any on-going maintenance.
- Additional suggestions made by the Board at the meeting for further consideration by the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee included:- The imposition of restrictions - so that only residents could use the road; a review of the use of verges generally in the County; an additional lay-by; the introduction of grass verge meshing; relocation of the Section 34 notice on Drift Lane; encouraging the maintenance of the ditch by the landowner to mitigate the state of the verges.

The Chairman invited members of the Board, with the exception of Councillor R Wootten, to vote to determine whether or not to refer the Councillor Call for Action request to the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee for final determination, and if so to provide advice to that Committee for its consideration.

Following a vote it was unanimously:-

RESOLVED: That the Councillor Call for Action request be submitted to the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee for final determination, together with the comments as outlined above.

80 PERFORMANCE REPORTING AGAINST THE CORPORATE PLAN PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK 2020-2021 - QUARTER 2

Consideration was given to a report from the Performance and Equalities Manager, Commercial Services Projects and Performance, on the Performance Reporting against the Corporate Plan Performance Framework 2020-2021 – Quarter 2. The views of the Board would be reported to the Executive as part of its consideration of this item. The recommendation to the Executive was that Quarter 2 performance for 2020/21 be considered and noted.

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There was good performance overall and three of the four ambitions were on plan and the other ahead of plan. 89% of activities were either on plan or ahead of plan and 71% of Performance Indicators had met or exceeded the target. The integrated finance and people management (Business World) system go-live date would now be November 2021. This had been in part as a result of the impact which Covid-19 had had on the early stages of the project.

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

1. Paragraph 1.4.4 - Promoting of the SHERMAN initiative and implementation of the hoarding protocol (A57) – The SHERMAN initiative was behind plan due to the ceasing of a significant amount of preventative activities at the start of the first lockdown to concentrate on supporting vulnerable communities. The SHERMAN initiative required Fire and Rescue staff to go into people's homes to conduct a safe and well check which had been hindered due to Covid-19 restrictions. There was an opportunity to undertake a safe and well check when entering someone's home for other reasons and for high risk circumstances.
- Paragraph 1.4.9 - In relation to the 59% of contacts where the customer considers their concerns have been fully addressed through achieving early resolution (exclusive of statutory complaints), it was questioned whether the other 41% were dissatisfied or they just took longer to resolve. Officers confirmed that they would investigate this further.
- Appendix A – Ambition: Create Thriving Environments – in relation to both of these objectives, the milestones were for Quarter 2, which had been achieved. There would be further milestones for Quarters 3 and 4 for the two objectives. It was suggested that it would helpful to see planned milestones included in future reports to inform members of the next steps for achieving the objectives.

RESOLVED:

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

81 COVID-19 UPDATE

Consideration was given to an update report from the Assistant Director – Corporate Recovery, on Covid-19. The report provided an overview of the work by the Local Resilience Forum (LRF), partners and Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) to manage Lincolnshire's response to the Covid-19 pandemic since the last report presented to the Board on the 17th December 2020.

As reported in the paper to the Board on the 17th December, from the 2nd December 2020 Lincolnshire had been placed in Tier 3 following the end of the national lockdown during November. The Covid-19 Winter Plan arrangements set out how the

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Government intended to allow the mixing of households in England for the Christmas period from the 23rd December to 27th December 2020; these were known as "Christmas Bubbles". However, due to the rising number of cases across the country and the identification of a new variant of the virus, these arrangements were revoked and replaced with new arrangements that were announced on the 19th December. The new arrangements allowed the mixing of two households for Christmas Day only, with no overnight stays unless these were part of a support bubble. In addition, people were advised to only travel from home to a place which was accessible for a return trip during that 24 hour period. Following this, the existing Tier system was enforced once again and would remain in place until the next review period on the 30th December 2020. As of the 30th December, Tier 4 restrictions were announced with many parts of the country including Lincolnshire placed in this Tier from midnight that day. This had placed even greater restrictions on residents; this was in response to the rate of infections increasing at a national level. As the New Year began, there were rising calls for schools to return to online learning from the start of term. Although schools reopened on the 4th January 2021, in line with Government advice, as of the 5th January it was confirmed that schools would close to all children except for those of key workers and those children who were vulnerable. On the 6th January a further period of national lockdown began in England which was expected to remain in place until at least mid-February.

The report highlighted the key data as of 24 January in relation to tests carried out, details of the testing programme, the number of cases, deaths and vaccinations carried out (by age group) and the public health measures introduced to mitigate the transmission of Covid-19.

Lincolnshire had commenced its vaccination programme from the 8th December 2020 with the priority groups as advised by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) as follows:- Over 80 year olds; Health and care staff; those who were clinically extremely vulnerable and those between the ages of 70-79 years. A report to the Board in February would be able to give further details of the progress to the targets set.

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

- For comparative purposes it would be helpful if future reports included the figures for the number of vaccinations achieved by target category. It was reported that as at the date of the report there were around 48,000 people over 80 years of age in the County, of which approximately 52% had been vaccinated. There had been no significant resistance to the take up of the vaccinations to date; however some people may not have taken up their appointment due to illness. It was noted that appointments and re appointments were being made by telephone for the Primary Care Network sites.
- It was also requested that the next report include, for comparative purposes, the statistics contained in the previous reports.

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- There had been very few problems to date associated with the delivery of vaccines to the County. However, there could be, according to reports, some issues nationally in the near future.
- The Chief Executive recorded her thanks to the health and care services workers and reported that to date 78% of County Council front line health and care staff had been offered a vaccine and this number was expected to increase to 100% by the end of the month which was a fantastic achievement by all those involved.
- The Board expressed its thanks and appreciation to all County Council staff and health workers for their dedication and hard work during the current pandemic.
- There was anecdotal evidence that some people had been vaccinated who were not in the priority categories and therefore not due to receive it. It was reported that the NHS undertook 'opportunistic vaccinations' rather than throw any out. The aim was for the priority groups to be vaccinated first. Officers would investigate for inclusion in the next report if there were any selection criteria for 'opportunistic vaccinations'.
- Subject to vaccination availability, there was confidence in the capacity to deliver the vaccine to target.
- The location, number, and expansion of testing sites were a fast changing picture. In addition to the sites in Lincoln and Boston, and as part of the funding agreement, setting up a site in Sleaford was being looked into which would be for staff. Conversations were underway with the District Councils to consider extending testing programmes in their areas.
- Data on the numbers not attending appointments for a vaccination by District were expected from the Department of Health in the future.
- Officers undertook to investigate concerns from a member on the relatively low numbers vaccinated in the Skegness area, reports of difficulties in getting vaccination appointments via the 119 telephone number and the need for consistent and up to date Facebook messaging.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

(Councillor S P Roe gave his apologies for the remainder of the meeting)

82 SERVICE REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET PROPOSALS 2021/22

Consideration was given to a report from the Head of Finance – Communities, which outlined the budget proposals for the next financial year 2021/22, specifically looking at the budget implications for the Council's Commercial, Resources and Corporate Services within the remit of the Board. The Board was invited to scrutinise and comment on the proposals, prior to the Executive meeting on 2 February 2021 when it would make its final budget proposals.

The coronavirus pandemic had had a significant impact in the 2020/21 financial year, on both Council services and the local economy, and central Government had provided grant funding to cover the Council's costs and losses arising directly from the pandemic. It was assumed that where direct impacts carried on into 2021/22

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these would continue to be funded by Government grant. The SR2020 announcement confirmed that there would be funding in 2021/22 to cover continuing coronavirus costs and losses. The Final Local Government Finance Settlement was expected to be published in February 2021. The budget proposals reflected the level of government funding expected to be available to the Council and a proposal to increase general Council Tax in 2021/22 by 1.99%. A thorough review of the Council's services was carried out during the budget process which had identified unavoidable cost pressures, some savings with minimal or no impact on the level of service provided and the capital programme had been reviewed. The budget proposals therefore aimed to reflect the Council's priorities whilst operating within the resources available to it.

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

- Legal Services – The £1.099m underspend referred to the chargeable income anticipated to be received by the service, and was not expected savings. There were proposals to expand Legal Services in the future which would bring in additional chargeable income. The amount included in the budget proposals reflected guaranteed income rather than speculated income.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Board support the Service Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals 2021/22, as set out in the report;
2. That a summary of the comments made be passed on to the Executive in relation to this item.

83 COUNCIL BUDGET 2021/22

Consideration was given to a report from the Assistant Director – Strategic Finance, which invited the Board to consider and comment on the Council's budget proposals 2021/22, which were approved for consultation by the Executive at its meeting on the 5 January 2021. The views of the Board would be reported to the Executive when it made its final budget proposals on 2 February 2021 as part of its consideration of this item.

The report outlined budget proposals for the next financial year 2021/22. The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2021/22 had been issued on 17 December 2020, and was expected to be in line with the Final Settlement, which was due to be published in February 2021. Further budgetary information from the Lincolnshire District Councils was awaited so the budget proposals for 2021/22 were therefore estimated at this stage. The Executive was asked to approve the proposals for the Council's budget for 2021/22, set out in this report and based on those estimates, for internal and external consultation.

The recommended option took into account the anticipated levels of Government grant and Business Rates funding to the Council and allowed for an increase in Council Tax of 1.99%. The budget included unavoidable cost pressures which would

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support the delivery of Council services, and a number of savings which did not impact negatively on services. The recommendation was for a one year budget for the financial year 2021/22, which took into account the expected reforms to local authority funding from April 2022. The recommended option currently presented a surplus budget of £1.921M, although this may become a deficit budget once all budgetary information had been received by the end of January 2021. If the final position was a deficit budget, then a contribution from reserves would be used to balance the budget for 2021/22.

The budget proposals reflected the level of government funding available to the Council in 2021/22. Service areas had been reviewed and the budget proposals aimed to support the Council's priorities within the financial resources available.

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

- Adults Extra Care Housing Schemes – the Capital Programme attached at Appendix C of the report included the Dewint Court and Linelands Extra Care Housing Schemes. Including the proposed Hoplands, Sleaford Extra Care Housing Scheme in the Capital Programme would be considered by the Executive on 2 February 2021. It was confirmed that the financial allocation for the Scheme was in place.
- A 1% increase in council tax would generate just over £3m of additional income to the Council. The Adult Care Precept of up to 3% would not be raised by the Council for 2021/22.
- The additional income raised by the council tax increase would enable the Council to address cost pressures, especially in relation to the Adult Social Care and Children's Services proposals, which were key services valued by residents. The costs for these services increased each year and the council tax increase helped to meet the increasing demands for these services. Council tax increases was one way to meet these costs; the other was to find further significant savings.
- With regards to the Capital Programme, uncommitted spend had been rephased into future years which enabled the Council to bring forward costs for other schemes to smooth out the Capital Programme and reduce the impact on the Council's reserves. The uncommitted budgets related to funds allocated to a long term programme of activity for the Boston Development Schemes (Infrastructure and Economic) and Local Highways Improvements (Pinch points) – Coastal Route Schemes, for which there were no specific projects in progress.
- Funding for the Transformation Programme had already been allocated in the budget for 2020/21. The aspirations in the Corporate Plan and Transformation Programme were now being progressed through a number of different activities. As the Corporate Plan was for 10 years, the levels in investment would change over time.
- Covid-19 would have a huge impact on the Council's finances going forward, particularly in relation to the adult social care market. However, the Council was currently in a strong financial position which would help mitigate the impact.

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- The significant cost pressures in relation to Home to School Transport were being addressed as part of the Transformation Programme. An in depth review by an external consultant was being undertaken and the outcomes of the review would be reported back to the relevant scrutiny committees.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Board support the budget proposals, as set out in the report;
2. That a summary of the comments made be passed on to the Executive as part of its consideration of the final budget proposals.

(Councillors R B Parker and Mrs A M Newton wished to be recorded as abstaining from the decision on this item)

84 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD WORK PROGRAMME

Members were advised that this item was for information only.

RESOLVED: That the work programme be noted.

The meeting closed at 12.09 pm