

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT  
 BOARD  
 25 NOVEMBER 2021**

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

Councillors T Smith (Vice-Chairman), Mrs J Brockway, P M Dilks, R J Kendrick, C S Macey, C E H Marfleet, N H Pepper, R Wootten, Dr M E Thompson and A M Hall

**Added Members**

Church Representative:

Parent Governor Representatives: Miss A E I Sayer

Councillors: M J Hill OBE, P A Skinner, H Spratt, M A Whittington and Mrs S Woolley attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Debbie Barnes OBE (Chief Executive), Pam Clipson (Head of Finance, Adult Care and Community Wellbeing), Andrew Crookham (Executive Director Resources), James Drury (Executive Director Commercial), Brendan Gallagher (Principal Planning Officer – Infrastructure), Michelle Grady (Assistant Director – Finance), Caroline Jackson (Head of Corporate Performance), Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer), Sue Maycock (Head of Finance (Corporate)), Andrew McLean (Assistant Director - Transformation), Keith Noyland (Head of Finance - Communities), Mark Popplewell (Head of Finance (Children's Services)), Heather Sandy (Executive Director of Children's Services), Karen Tonge (Treasury Manager), Nigel West (Head of Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Officer) and Emily Wilcox (Democratic Services Officer)

**68      APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor E W Strengiel and Megan Machin (Parent Governor Representative).

It was reported that, under Regulation 13 of the Local Government (Committee and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, Councillor Dr M E Thompson had been appointed as a replacement for Councillor E W Strengiel and Councillor A M Hall had been appointed as a replacement for the Conservative Vacancy, for this meeting only.

**69      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

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70 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 OCTOBER 2021

In relation to the minutes, it was questioned whether the increase in slips, trips and falls had any correlation to the fact that the Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service had continued to work throughout the pandemic.

RESOLVED:

That minutes of the meeting held on 28 October be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

71 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND CHIEF OFFICERS

With great sadness the Chairman announced the passing of Councillor Bob Adams, who had been the Chairman of the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee and a member of the Board since 17 May 2019. The Board held a minute's silence in honour of Councillor Adams.

The Leader of the Council informed the Board that there had been an announcement on the Adult Care Reform which would have dramatic changes for Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) as the authority responsible for Adult Care. The three year budget settlement from the Chancellor had proposed levels of caps on council tax and extra money for local government which was expected to be taken up by the extra costs, but this would be dealt within the budget process. It was expected that councils would receive their settlement figures on 13 December 2021. A further update would be provided when details had been announced.

In relation to a white paper for Devolution , an announcement was expected before Christmas, which would set out any proposed future plans for Devolution and Levelling Up.

72 CONSIDERATION OF CALL-INS

None had been received.

73 CONSIDERATION OF COUNCILLOR CALLS FOR ACTION

None had been received.

74 CORPORATE PLAN SUCCESS FRAMEWORK 2021/22 - AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2021

The Executive Director – Commercial introduced the report and highlighted the work that had been carried out to improve and support the delivery of the Corporate Plan Success Framework, including the introduction of Power BI which was part of the Microsoft suite of programmes which has allowed the Council to better understand and analyse data.

The Head of Corporate Performance then invited the Board to consider the report on the 2021/2022 Corporate Plan performance as at 30 September 2021, which would be presented to the Executive on 07 December 2021. The report also set out the performance of the service level performance indicator for 2021/22 Quarter 2 that was within the remit of the Board.

Of the 36 activities with milestones due to be reported, eight were ahead of plan and 28 were on plan.

There had been significant changes with the types of KPI being used in the reporting of the Corporate Plan, in particular a focus on measures which were 'for context' which meant that the delivery activity relating to these measures may not be within the direct control of the Council, but were a way of understanding the progress needed to achieve wider ambitions for the residents, communities, businesses and visitors of Lincolnshire.

It was hoped that the change would enable future iterations of the reporting to be developed with Executive Councillors and for agreement to be reached on which, if any, of the context measures require ambitions to be set in order to support targeted change.

Of the KPIs reported, six could be compared with a target that had been set for Quarter 2. Of the six KPI's that were comparable, there was one KPI that had not met its target - Percentage of people who are unemployed (PI 11). Details were set out within the report.

The Board was advised that Covid-19 had impacted a number of the KPI's, namely schools Ofsted rating as inspections were ceased during the Covid period. In addition, a number of KPIs were not able to be recorded as a result of Covid-19 and in particular because educational attainment data had not been released.

The relevant performance data had been updated on the Council's website to provide the public with a more accessible account of performance information across the Council. The Board received a short demonstration of the website.

The Board considered the report and during the discussion, the following points were noted:

- In relation to the Government's financial settlement, it was announced in October 2021 that £4.8bn would be spread fairly evenly over the three years of the spending review period. There were some specific funding announcements such as around supporting families and cyber security, and once these had been taken into account, the remaining amount was around £1.4bn. The Council usually received around 1% of the national funding announcement which would equate to about £14m.
- There were numerous cost pressures facing the Council, which included Adult Care cost pressures of between £7m and £9m per year, increase in inflation which was expected to peak at around 5% in 2022, and the potential ending of the public sector pay freeze. In addition, the Secretary of State for Housing,

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Communities and Local Government had recently started to indicate potential changes such as moving away from the localised business rates system which could open the door for a potential fairer funding review which the Council had lobbied for over the last six years due to the County's rural and sparse nature. Different factors, such as deprivation, would need to be taken into account in a distribution formula. The general levels of reserves held by councils might also impact on a fairer funding distribution formula.

- A lot of the capital programme expenditure was reliant on Government grants coming from the Department for Transport (DfT) and the Department for Education (DfE). These grants often did not line up with the Government's announcements on the financial settlement which made it difficult to plan for these areas. The financial settlement for Highways maintenance in 2021/22 was reduced leading to the shortfall being backfilled with local money. There were currently no announcements in relation to the DfT's settlement for 2022/23 but it was expected to be similar to the current year's settlement.
- The United States \$1 trillion Infrastructure Bill could have a huge impact on global supply issues and inflation if agreed by the Senate. There were already supply issues impacting on the construction industry and IT, which was already leading to long waiting times for items such as cars and laptops due to the supply issues, as well as the issue of the delivery of the supply and finding tradespeople to undertake the work. Significant increase in demand anywhere globally would impact negatively on global supply which was already insufficient to meet current demand. This would have an impact on the UK and possibly lead to increased inflation as well.
- There was currently no direct data about the potential US impact on supply but the Council was monitoring the impact on individual programmes from a corporate perspective to understand what those impacts were. The market was also being analysed to try to understand the impact, and currently supply was beginning to slightly even out in some areas but was still very short in other areas. Costs were plateauing but at a higher level, and there was very little expectation that these costs would drop back to previous levels.
- The capital programme was being monitored regularly including what impact any slippage would have. This was being looked at project by project and programme to see what the overall impact would be on budget setting in future years.
- The whole life budget position was roughly on target. However, it was too early to understand the full impact on the capital programme from inflation pressures and potential changes in interest rates. There was a need to reach a settled position before making any changes to the capital programme, but the Council would need to absorb some post Covid-19 costs into the capital programme.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the recommendations as set out in the Executive report be supported;
2. That a summary of the comments made be reported to the Executive for its consideration.

75 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2021/22 - QUARTER 2 TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2021

During this item, Councillor Mrs J Brockway declared a personal interest as a member of her family accessed the Home to School Transport Service.

Consideration was given to a report by the Assistant Director – Finance, which invited the Board to consider the Revenue Budget Monitoring 2021/22 Quarter 2 report which was due to be considered by the Executive on 07 December 2021.

The Board was advised that the Council was forecasting an underspend of £5.760m (excluding schools and Covid-19), which mainly related to grants that had been received by the Council, particularly the grant of £1.4m for Domestic Abuse Services, as well as a net gain of £2m on the pool for business rates, both of which had not been accounted for when the budget had been set originally.

The impact of Covid-19 on the Council's Revenue Budget was set out in Appendix K to the report and Appendix I set out the total number of grants that had been received from the government which related to the support for Covid-19 and Appendix L showed that all budget savings were on target to be delivered for 2021/22.

Members considered the report and during the discussion the following points were noted:

- The extra funding of £1.445m for Domestic Abuse services was welcomed, with the sharp increase in the number of reports of domestic violence particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- It was confirmed that a Domestic Abuse Strategy was being drafted by officers which would be brought through the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee on 14 December 2021 before approval by the Executive Councillor for Children's Services, Community Safety and Procurement. The strategy would focus on supporting victims and signposting to support.
- The lack of provision for male domestic abuse victims across the country was emphasised. The Chairman of the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee highlighted that he would raise questions to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) on the policy of domestic violence at the meeting of the Police and Crime Panel on 26 November 2021. The Chief Executive further highlighted the work being undertaken with the PCC in terms of victim support and that she would investigate what support was provided to male domestic abuse victims. It was agreed that a briefing note on this issue would be circulated to the Board.
- The budget setting process for 2021/22, which started back in October 2020, had been more difficult due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the budget approved in February 2021 had since been impacted by the Covid grants received from the Government. There was a need to maximise the grants

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received to the benefit of local tax payers and recycle the underspends for use elsewhere.

- The Public Health underspend of £1.283m had arisen due to redirecting resources into supporting the Covid-19 pandemic and these costs had been covered by the Covid grant which was causing an underspend in the core activity, such as track and trace and outbreak management. For the 2021/22 financial year, Public Health and Wellbeing had received £50m of Covid grants in addition to its core budget. At the time when the budget was set in February 2021, it was expected that this core activity would be required to continue and was therefore budgeted for. The announcements about the additional Covid grants came after the Council's budget had been set. For example, it was at the end of March 2021 when the Council received notification that it would receive £160,000 in support grants per month for four months, which then turned into a £1.3m grant continuing to the end of March 2022. The late notification made it very difficult to plan for in terms of utilising the money while ensuring there were exit strategies for all these grants so that the Council did not incur any ongoing financial pressure.
- The Resources underspend of £1.820m was partly due to the new Domestic Abuse grant of £1.445m, and reduced staffing costs due to Business Support staff being redeployed to work on Covid-19 activity and therefore some of the staffing costs had been covered by the Covid grant.
- Members commended the Home School transport service which was considered exemplary and essential for families to ensure children and young people could access their education.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the recommendations as set out in the Executive report be supported;
2. That a summary of the comments made be reported to the Executive for its consideration.

**76      CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2021/22 - QUARTER 2 TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2021**

Consideration was given to a report by the Assistant Director – Finance, which invited the Board to consider a report on the Council's Capital Budget Monitoring for 2021/22, which was due to be considered by the Executive on 07 December 2021.

The Council was currently forecasting an underspend of £33.9m, a breakdown of which could be found in Appendix A to the report.

The largest underspend to the Capital Programme was currently for contingency planning, with £7.5m being allocated for contingency plans. The main variances across projects related to some of the major highways schemes, in particular the Spalding Western Relief Road which had been subject to some delays in land acquisition and design requirements.

The Board considered the report and during the discussion the following points were noted:

- In relation to the Government's financial settlement, it was announced in October 2021 that £4.8bn would be spread fairly evenly over the three years of the spending review period. There were some specific funding announcements such as around supporting families and cyber security, and once these had been taken into account, the remaining amount was around £1.4bn. The Council usually received around 1% of the national funding announcement which would equate to about £14m.
- There were numerous cost pressures facing the Council, which included Adult Care cost pressures of between £7m and £9m per year, increase in inflation which was expected to peak at around 5% in 2022, and the potential ending of the public sector pay freeze. In addition, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government had recently started to indicate potential changes such as moving away from the localised business rates system which could open the door for a potential fairer funding review which the Council had lobbied for over the last six years due to the County's rural and sparse nature. Different factors, such as deprivation, would need to be taken into account in a distribution formula. The general levels of reserves held by councils might also impact on a fairer funding distribution formula.
- A lot of the capital programme expenditure was reliant on Government grants coming from the Department for Transport (DfT) and the Department for Education (DfE). These grants often did not line up with the Government's announcements on the financial settlement which made it difficult to plan for these areas. The financial settlement for Highways maintenance in 2021/22 was reduced leading to the shortfall being backfilled with local money. There were currently no announcements in relation to the DfT's settlement for 2022/23 but it was expected to be similar to the current year's settlement.
- The United States \$1 trillion Infrastructure Bill could have a huge impact on global supply issues and inflation if agreed by the Senate. There were already supply issues impacting on the construction industry and IT, which was already leading to long waiting times for items such as cars and laptops due to the supply issues with chips. There was then the issue of the delivery of the supply and finding tradespeople to undertake the work. If there was a significant increase in demand anywhere globally, this would impact negatively on global supply which was already insufficient to meet current demand. This would have an impact on the UK and possibly lead to increased inflation as well. There was currently no direct data about the potential US impact on supply but the Council was monitoring the impact on individual programmes from a corporate perspective to understand what those impacts were. The market was also being analysed to try to understand the impact, and currently supply was beginning to slightly even out in some areas but was still very short in other areas. Costs were plateauing but at a higher level, and there was very little expectation that these costs would drop back to previous levels.
- The capital programme was being monitored regularly including what impact any slippage would have. This was being looked at project by project and programme by programme to see what the overall impact would be on budget

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setting in future years. The key point was that the whole life budget position was roughly on target. However, it was too early to understand the full impact on the capital programme from inflation pressures and potential changes in interest rates. There was a need to reach a settled position before making any changes to the capital programme, but the Council would need to absorb some post Covid-19 costs into the capital programme. New intelligence would be fed in as it became available.

RESOLVED:

1. That the recommendations as set out in the Executive report be supported;
2. That a summary of the comments made be reported to the Executive for its consideration.

77 DRAFT INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING STATEMENT

Consideration was given to a report by the Principal Planning Officer – Infrastructure, which invited the Board to consider a report on the Draft Infrastructure Funding Statement, which was due to be considered by the Executive on 07 December 2021.

The Draft Infrastructure Funding Statement, set out at appendix A to the Executive Report, provided financial and other contributions Lincolnshire County Council had secured and/or spent for the year ending March 2021 and fulfilled the obligations set out in the Regulations.

The Board was advised that there were three parts to the statement:

- A statement which was future looking
- A report which looked at the funding position for the previous year
- A report on the Section 106 monies received.

The Board was referred to Appendix B to the Executive Report, the draft web text, which set out a description of what the Infrastructure Funding Statement was for including on the Council's website.

Members were advised that there were three districts in Central Lincolnshire which had moved forward with Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), which were, the City of Lincoln, North Kesteven and West Lindsey.

Within the current year, the Council had obtained approximately £700,000 in CIL Receipts by the relevant districts, which was used to pay back some of the investment in the Lincoln Eastern Bypass.

The Board was referred to page 123 of the report, which set out the Council's Section 106 and highways agreements in further detail.



Consideration was given to the report and during the discussion the following points were noted:

- There was no reserve pool of developer contributions held by Lincolnshire County Council to resolve small issues which a community would have liked addressed as part of the planning application, such as new footpaths or cycle paths to the new housing development. This was because the Section 106 money was requested through the district councils as and when required, following the guidance around its use. For those district councils which had CIL in place, the parish councils would receive a percentage of CIL, which was 15% by default and potentially 25% if they had a local neighbourhood plan. Therefore, in the areas of the county covered by CIL, the parish councils would have their own reserve pools to spend as they wish. It was highlighted that if an issue such as a footpath was wanted after planning agreements were in place, then there would need to be a bid for funding as a highways scheme. Under the statutes for Section 106 and CIL, the money requested from developers had to be justified, but it was suggested whether these rules and the law could be interpreted in different ways. It was recommended that the rules for developer contributions should be considered to determine whether a reserve pool could be created.
- In terms of the long term impact for the Council once the legacy applications were out of the system and were not still chargeable, it was anticipated that the Council would receive approximately £1m of CIL receipts per year, assuming everything stayed about the same on other factors. This would vary depending on the level of housing delivery each year.
- The two processes of Section 106 and CIL were both informed by development viability and with housing costs not being very high in Lincolnshire, there was a limit to how much could be requested. There was a political process to go through to establish policies and procedures around this in local plans and the CIL documents.
- Education and Highways and Transport were the main areas for funding requirements. Educational requests were built on how many additional places in the local schools were needed for the additional housing in the area. However, if a number of pupils at a school in the local area were from outside the area, then it would be difficult to argue for Section 106 money to increase places as they would not be counted in the pupil figures because it was not their local school.
- An update on the implementation of the recommendations from the Developer Contributions Scrutiny Review undertaken in 2020 would be considered at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on 16 December 2021.
- The £4,628 cost for a TRO to move the 30mph speed limit on Linchfield Road, Deeping St. James would have included the legal costs for changing the legal limits in addition to the physical costs of moving the posts.
- To determine developer contribution levels, the district council would assess the potential impacts with Lincolnshire County Council of what was on that site and how it was proposed for that site to be developed and come to an

agreement as to what impacts needed to be mitigated in order for planning permission to be granted.

- In relation to a planning application for Theddlethorpe, this would be a national determination because it would be a large application, and therefore there would be national regulations around developer contributions. If the working group was turned into a community group, then the local area would receive £1m a year and if bore holes were drilled, then this would rise to £2m a year.
- Concerns were raised about the disconnect in a lot of local areas between the money received for a housing development in an area to mitigate the impact, but the money was then spent in another area of the county. It was recommended that how and where the money was spent should be considered further to ensure the local area benefitted from the developer contributions received as well.

RESOLVED:

1. That the recommendations as set out in the Executive report be supported;
2. That a summary of the comments made be reported to the Executive for its consideration.

78      SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMMES

During this item, Councillor T J N Smith declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of the Transport for North Board.

Consideration was given to a report by the Chairman of the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee, which provided an update on the recent work of the Committee and its future work programme, as set out on pages 134 – 142. As part of its recent work, the Committee had debated and expressed its views in relation to the invitation to join a Geological Disposal Facility Working Group in Eastern Lincolnshire and recorded its support towards being a part of the working group with a view to help the local community and shape any future decision in relation to the subject. As part of the consideration of this topic, the Committee welcomed the attendance and contribution to the discussion of the leader of a campaigners' group. Another important topic that the Committee had the opportunity to consider and contribute to was in relation to the discontinuity of the Supplementary Waste Collection Services at Stamford and Mablethorpe. In relation to this, the Committee received a petition from a resident of Stamford and gave them the opportunity to attend the session and put on record their views and arguments.

The Chairman of the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee thanked Members and Officers involved with the Committee for their support during the current Council year.

The Board welcomed the consideration of the Tree Strategy and the planting of more trees across the County for visual and environmental reasons.

In relation to a question, the Board was advised that the largest benefit to Lincolnshire from the £96.1bn Integrated Rail Plan was the upgrades to the East Coast Mainline as well as the replacement of the flat level crossing in Newark, which was widely used by Lincolnshire residents and would see significant improvements for Lincolnshire's rail services. The Local Transport Plan, which was currently out for consultation, identified a number of priorities around rail networks for Lincolnshire. The Council was working with Network Rail colleagues and it was hoped that Lincolnshire would benefit from improvements to rail services out of Kings Cross on the East Coast Mainline.

Consideration was given to a report by the Vice Chairman of the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee which provided an update on the recent work of the Committee and its future work programme, as set out on pages 143 – 147.

The Vice Chairman paid tribute to Councillor Bob Adams, and offered his condolences to his family, who had been the Chairman of the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee since May 2019.

It was suggested that the enforcement of double yellow lines could be put forward for future consideration by the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee.

The Board also requested that all Members be provided with an opportunity to comment on the Speed Limit Policy review.

Consideration was then given to a report by the Chairman of the Flood and Water Management Scrutiny Committee, which provided an update on the recent work of the Committee and its future work programme, as set out on pages 148-151.

It was noted that there had been a number of schemes delivered by the Flood and Water Partnership such as the Stamp End and Digby schemes and the tidal barrier in Boston had been used for the first time.

RESOLVED:

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1) That the Board's satisfaction be recorded with the activity undertaken since June 2021 by:

- (a) the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee;
- (b) the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee; and
- (c) the Flood and Water Management Scrutiny Committee.

2) That the Board's satisfaction be recorded with the planned work programme of:

- (a) the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee;
- (b) the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee; and
- (c) the Flood and Water Management Scrutiny Committee.

79 TREASURY MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE 2021/22 - QUARTER 2 TO 30  
SEPTEMBER 2021

Consideration was given to a report by the Treasury Manager, which detailed the treasury management activities and performance for Quarter 2 of 2021/22 to 30 September 2021 against the Treasury Management Strategy for 2021/22.

With regards to interest rates, the short-term base rate had remained flat over the period. There had been market expectations of an increase in the base rate by November, which had not materialised. The movement of Key Interest Rates in 2021/22 to date was set out at Appendix A to the report. The Council's Treasury Advisors, Link Asset Services expected the next increase in interest rates to be of only 0.15%, meaning an expected interest rate of around 0.25% for early 2022.

Long term rates remained volatile it was expected that there would be a gradual increase of long-term rates by around 0.1% per annum.

The Council was currently investing around £363m and further details of the Council's investments were set out at Appendix B to the report.

Cash flows had stabilised following an unstable year due to the uncertainties faced with Covid-19 and no external borrowing had been taken in the year to date.

The Board was informed that the revised Treasury Management Code of Practice and Prudential Code would be issued in December with a proposed implementation by 2023. The Treasury Manager welcomed feedback on the recent training undertaken by the Board.

The Board considered the report and during the discussion the following points were noted:

- It was expected that interest rates would increase around February 2022. Increases often occurred following the quarterly inflation report from the Bank of England, but

there were many other factors that could also influence rates. It was expected that rates would only rise by around 0.25%.

- The Board commended the informative training session that had been undertaken by the Board.
- Concerns were raised over the high levels of taxation that was currently imposed by the Government and suggested Councillors monitored the situation and write to MPs if necessary.
- There was no set formula that was used for the allocation of liquid assets which included call funds and money market funds. It was noted that money market funds provided instant access. Officers looked to maximise the return which comes with the longest period and to manage the period and take opportunities to maximise returns when they arose.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted;
2. That the comments made by the Board be passed on the Executive Councillor for Resources, Communication and Commissioning for his consideration.

80 PEOPLE MANAGEMENT UPDATE - QUARTERS 1 AND 2

Consideration was given to a report by the Assistant Director – HR and Organisational Support, which provided an update on HR Management Information and Corporate HR Projects.

The Board was informed that following the easing of Covid-19 restrictions, voluntary turnover had risen from around 6% to 8.34% at the end of Quarter 2 which was mainly due to attraction and retention of key roles prior to the pandemic and the effects of the pandemic. Officers were implementing the people strategy and action plans were in place to look to improve attraction and retention including the implementation of an attraction and retention framework.

Agency spend had increased due to challenges faced as a result of the pandemic and high turnover rates, particularly in Adult Care and Community Wellbeing and Children's Services. It was possible that rates would continue to increase throughout the financial year. It was noted that agency spend had an important role to play in the stabilisation and support of services, particularly in early help and residential services.

There had been a slow reduction in sickness absence during the pandemic which was due to the restrictions in place. However, the easing of restrictions had seen a rise in sickness absence levels to 7.16% in Quarter 2, which was still below the Council's target of 7.5%. There were many proactive measures in place to address issues with sickness absence, in

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particular an increase in mental health support with the launch of the Mental Health First Aiders Programme and other investments around employee support and counselling offers.

The Council was working hard on its apprenticeship offer and the Assistant Director – HR and Organisation Support was pleased to note that the number of apprenticeships was above target.

The Council continued to support apprenticeships through the levy transfer scheme and as at the end of October 2021, the Council had a total number of 312 apprenticeships active.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that the sickness absence was recorded in days, rather than percentages. Therefore, the level of sickness absence was around 7.5 days per employee per year, which equated to around 4%.

**RESOLVED:**

That assurance be provided to the Board on the HR Management Information and the progress on corporate HR projects.

**81 COVID-19 UPDATE**

Consideration was given to a report by the Assistant Director – Corporate Recovery, which 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 update to the Board on the 28 October 2021.

The Board was referred to the following data, which was detailed within the report:

- Rate of Positive Cases per 100,000 Population is 404.4 per 100,000 (22<sup>nd</sup> November 2021) in comparison to the 25<sup>th</sup> October 2021, which was reported at 521.4 per 100,000.
- On the 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2021, Lincolnshire Covid-19 cases reported in the last seven day period was 3,099, in comparison to the figure reported on the 25<sup>th</sup> October 2021 which was 3,996.
- Deaths reported in the last seven day period up to the 24<sup>th</sup> October 2021 for Lincolnshire was reported as seven, in comparison in the last seven day period up to the 21<sup>st</sup> November 2021 it was reported as 16.
- Number of Covid-19 vaccines administered up to the 17<sup>th</sup> October 2021 for Lincolnshire was 1,131,705, as of the 14<sup>th</sup> November 2021 this was reported as 1,145,465.

As requested by the Board in October, data on cases in surrounding areas of the country to provide a comparison was included, which could be found on pages 3-4 of the report.

The – LRF, Recovery Strategic Coordination Group (RSCG) had received assurance presentations from the Business and Economy Group, Enforce, Engage, and Comply group, and a representative from Lincolnshire Event Safety Partnership setting out the direction of

travel. All representatives had provided a positive position and indicated stability in their respective sectors. Plans were in place to address the ongoing vulnerabilities and risks.

The vaccination programme continued to make good progress through the NHS. In addition there had been confirmation that funding would continue to be provided until the end of March 2022, allowing the Council to deliver ongoing testing and tracing provision locally. This additional funding would provide support to deliver the ongoing response activity at a county level via the public health team.

The LRF has now come to the end of their forward plan for the oversight and assurance phase as part of the recovery 2021 arrangements for the pandemic. Providing that partners no longer needed any further assurance or coordination of recovery activity from the LRF, and the information and evidence provided assurance that recovery could be sustained within everyday core business activity, it was likely that there would be a decision to stand down the existing recovery command structures. The Council's Emergency Planning team would continue to support all of the necessary arrangements under the Civil Contingencies Act.

The Board considered the report and during the discussion the following points were noted:

- The Board requested that the outcome of the recovery strategic coordination group meeting be reported to the Board.
- The online booking system for vaccinations was an NHS function and using the online booking system limited the number of venues that were available to the user. It was noted that GP's were able to assist with booking vaccinations at a number of locations more local to the user when eligible they would be contacted directly by their surgery.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

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This item was for information only.

The meeting closed at 1.30 pm