

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT
BOARD
27 OCTOBER 2022**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR R B PARKER (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors T J N Smith (Vice-Chairman), M Brookes, I D Carrington, P M Dilks, C S Macey, N H Pepper, E W Strengiel, W H Gray and N Sear

Added Members

Councillors: M J Hill OBE, S P Roe and M A Whittington attended the meeting as observers via Microsoft Teams

Officers in attendance:-

Debbie Barnes OBE (Chief Executive), Graham Beckett (Operations Manager - Serco), Kiara Chatziioannou (Scrutiny Officer), Matthew Clayton (Admissions & Education Provision Manager), Andrew Crookham (Executive Director Resources), Arnd Hobohm (Serco Contract Manager), Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer), Tara Jones (Interim Assistant Director - Children's Services - Safeguarding), Andrew McLean (Assistant Director - Transformation), Fraser Shooter (Health and Safety Team Leader), Nigel West (Head of Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Officer), Emily Wilcox (Democratic Services Officer) and Jess Wosser-Yates (Democratic Services Officer)

51 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors R J Kendrick and Mrs J Brockway.

It was reported that, under Regulation 13 of the Local Government (Committee and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, Councillor W H Gray had been appointed as a replacement Member for Councillor R Kendrick, and Councillor N Sear had been appointed as a replacement Member for Councillor Mrs J Brockway for this meeting only.

52 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received at this point in proceedings.

53 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29 SEPTEMBER 2022

RESOLVED:

That minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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54 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND CHIEF OFFICERS

The Chairman commended the contributions of Miss Alex Sayer whose term of office was due to end on 2 November 2022. It was announced that an election process for a new Parent Governor Representative for the next four-year period would start shortly. Furthermore, the Diocese of Lincoln had advised that the Rev Philip Johnson was no longer the Church Representative on the Board, and the Chairman acknowledged his commitment since his appointment in November 2017. A replacement was being identified by the Diocese of Lincoln

The Chief Executive informed the Board that approximately 200 asylum seekers had been welcomed to Stoke Rochford, and that the Leader of the Council had written to the Secretary of State to ask for improvements to the support offered. The CX was working with the hotel and the Home Office Provider regarding their arrival to improve the quality of the support and provision. It was suggested by the Board that the placement of asylum seeking and migrant families in Lincolnshire should be monitored by the relevant scrutiny committee. It was confirmed that this will be through the Adults and Community Wellbeing scrutiny.

55 CONSIDERATION OF CALL-INS

None had been received.

56 CONSIDERATION OF COUNCILLOR CALLS FOR ACTION

None had been received.

57 TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Committee received an update on the Transformation Programme and a focused overview of the Children in Care transformation project. The report was delivered by the Assistant Director - Corporate Transformation, Programmes and Performance, and the Interim Assistant Director - Children's Safeguarding.

It was reported that the Transformation Programme was performing well particularly in the area of governance, and that a number of Transformation Projects had moved into legacy status. It was reported that £1.1 million of budget savings were achieved through Smarter Working, £0.9 million of budget savings were anticipated from the Adults Improvement Project, and £0.8 million of budget savings were achieved through the Business Support Review.

The Children in Care Transformation Project was to address challenges faced by Children's Services in Lincolnshire, such as the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, volatile market conditions, and limited internal residential capacity for Children in Care. The programme was

reported to have had a positive impact so far on the placement of young people. The programme had led to a cost avoidance of £5.193m, and two new children's homes would be fully operational by October 2023.

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

- The Transformation Programme provided limited detail on the work programme for devolution. The Chief Executive assured Members that Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) was working with the other nine Councils across Greater Lincolnshire towards a devolution deal: the contents of which were contingent on information from the central government and potential changes to the Levelling Up White Paper. By the end of the year, a 'vision' document outlining the principles of government, would be completed. It was agreed that a report on the proposals for Devolution in Lincolnshire be considered at a future meeting.
- The Board was reassured that the fostering process was being made more accessible, with the National Fostering Network (NFN) setting a minimum payment figure that all Local Authorities were required to provide foster parents. It was highlighted that LCC offered additional funding if it was required, and the amount of time to complete the fostering process had also decreased by 50%.
- The Interim Assistant Director of Children's Safeguarding advised that The Children in Care Transformation Project was salient given the role of Councillors as corporate parents. Members were also informed that all District Council Leaders had been contacted regarding sessions about corporate parenting responsibilities.
- There were higher numbers of Care Leavers engaging with higher education, and the Assistant Director of Children's Safeguarding assured that statistics regarding this would be circulated among Members as requested by the Chairman.
- Questions were raised surrounding the budget savings that were quoted in the report, particularly whether the cost avoidance figures reflected gross or net savings for LCC and what the difference was between the £5.193m cost avoidance and what had been spent in order to provide additional services. Members were assured that this information would be circulated to the board upon the Chairman's request. An explanation of these savings would be provided in the budget proposals in January 2023.
- The Interim Assistant Director of Children's Safeguarding stated that the pandemic saw an increase in the number of children in care because courts were closed and could not process children who were able to leave the system, however this had stabilised over the past six months.
- The Chief Executive stated that Lincolnshire was a 'net importer' of Children in Care, with around 800 being placed into the county. These children remained the responsibility of the authority they came from, however their residence in Lincolnshire still had an impact on provisions such as education and police. This was reflective of a national shortage of residential places, although lobbying had resulted in funding for residential homes in Lincolnshire.

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- It was suggested that for future reports, the Board should receive a strategic overview of the Transformation Programme and the individual projects should be monitored by the parent scrutiny committee. It was agreed that officers would review the future arrangements.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report, and the comments made in reviewing the report be noted.
2. That the reporting arrangements of the Transformation Programme to the Board and parent scrutiny committees be reviewed.

58 PERFORMANCE OF THE CORPORATE SUPPORT SERVICES CONTRACT

The Board received a report from the Serco Contract Manager which provided the bi-annual update against contractual Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) specified in the Corporate Support Services Contract. The Serco Contract Manager highlighted that there had been no performance targets missed in the last six months and provided an explanation for mitigations that had taken place. The Serco Operations Director also provided a verbal update on personnel changes and the work undertaken by Serco within the different service areas since the last update in April.

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

- Members queried the 'abandoned calls' level currently in mitigation and requested more detail on the abandoned call rates across the different service areas to indicate whether there were any differences between specific service area performance, and the reasons for any variation. The Serco Contract Manager confirmed that 'abandoned calls' was a composite of multiple service areas' performance and advised that the figures could be affected by seasonal factors, specific events and issues creating pressure on services. Councillors were assured that more specific information would be provided to the Board as requested.
- The Board was informed of a challenge due to an upgrade of the call-back system, meaning there was a temporary limit of ten call-backs being available for users. Members were assured a resolution was being sought with Vodafone.
- Members sought clarification regarding 'seasonal factors' and the Serco Operations Director advised Members that challenges in performance over winter months were mostly experienced within the IT service, but that the service was well prepared, with resourcing models in place. Members were reassured that Serco was ready to address the challenges.
- Members questioned the age of the benchmarking data cited in the report for Local Authorities' abandoned call targets as it was dated from January 2021. The Serco Contract Manager accepted that a further benchmarking exercise could be undertaken if required, but highlighted that due to the length of contracts, benchmarking statistics were unlikely to have changed much if at all. Members subsequently agreed 18 months was a reasonable length of time.

RESOLVED:

1. That assurance be given on the performance of the Corporate Support Services Contract.
2. That the feedback and challenge in relation to the performance of the Corporate Support Services Contract be noted.

59 HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22

The Board received a report by the Health and Safety Team Leader, which provided an overview of key achievements, activities and statistics across all Directorates related to Lincolnshire County Council's (LCC) compliance and implementation of Health and Safety legislation and its statutory duties.

The Health and Safety Team Leader informed Members of a new system being implemented wherein 'near misses' could be reported. He assured that this would lead to an increased level of incidents being recorded, but these cases would be less severe. Additionally, Members were informed that the Health and Safety Team planned to introduce increased information for staff about how to work safely from home.

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

- Concerns were raised about LCCs Amber/Red rating regarding 'Enforcement Action' from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). The Health and Safety Team Leader assured that this rating was under investigation, and was mostly resultant of the impact of Covid-19 on health and safety training for employees and a lack of remote engagement. Councillors were assured that the accessibility of these training sessions had improved as the training was now spread over six weeks, involving a hybrid learning approach. The Health and Safety Team Leader further reassured Members, stating that once the impact of this had been realised, it was anticipated that this rating would improve.
- Members considered whether 'near misses' or incidents at home would be difficult to identify as staff may not feel that reporting was necessary. The Health and Safety Team Leader acknowledged this and assurance was provided that there was currently a heavy focus on educating staff on the validity of these incidents. He admitted that combating reluctance towards reporting near misses, at home or on site, would be a continual process. Both members and the Health and Safety Manager agreed that they would welcome a resource being circulated reminding staff that their safety was valued at home as much as it is in an office environment.
- Questions were raised with regards to the impact of Covid-19 on the mental health of staff, and whether there was any evidence of increasing numbers of staff resultantly taking absence. The Health and Safety Manager assured once research had been completed in conjunction with Human Resources, this figure would be circulated. He further acknowledged the importance of the mental wellbeing of staff, and that LCC

provided support before absence had been taken, and helped others return to work. He also assured that following a recent session held with the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT), it was found that there was a reduction of absences relating to stress, and that it was at its lowest levels in four years.

- Members highlighted that cost and compensation of health and safety incidents were missing from the report, specifically incidents on highways. It was agreed that the Executive Director for Resources would circulate these figures to the Board after the meeting. Members were reminded that highways was not under the remit of Health and Safety, but rather would fall under Insurance as it did not relate to LCC staff.
- It was noted that the EVOSAFE report forms and inspections could only be accessed by LCC maintained schools, whereas academies were offered an optional, paid service. The Chief Executive informed Members that some academies chose to opt in to this service, but unfortunately the Council would not have the same degree of oversight unless the academy chose this service. Reassurance was provided that significant health and safety issues were often still reported due to the strong relationships between the Local Authority and schools and academies.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report, and the comments made, be noted.
2. That assurance be given to the contents of the Health and Safety Annual Report 2021-22.

60 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMMES

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 detailed at Appendix A.

Further to the report, it was noted that the Committee was working towards establishing the membership of its Coastal Car Park Strategy working group which would cover a number of areas such as tourism in coastal areas, car parking provision, motorhomes parking provision and best practice.

The Board was advised of two additions to the list of items to be programmed which were reports on:

- Development Management – Design Approach/Development Road Specification Review (due in April 2023)
- Development Management - Adoption of Stalled Estate Roads (due in May 2023)

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

- Members welcomed the opportunity to increase tourism through providing car parking provision for motor homes in coastal areas and town centres.
- Following a decrease in recycling rates across the county, the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee had requested a breakdown of recycling rates against bench marking data, in an attempt to identify possible trends and behaviours. The Board noted that the separate collection of card and paper had not yet been implemented across all districts.

Consideration was given to a report by the 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 detailed at Appendix B.

The Board noted one addition to the list of items to be programmed which was an item on Permit Schemes

It was reported that the membership for the Traffic Management working group had now been established and its first meeting was scheduled for November 2022.

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

- Following a suggestion, it was agreed that the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee would schedule reports in January and April to monitor the progress made against the impact of winter on Lincolnshire's roads.
- Members welcomed work to reduce the instances of signage being left out following the completion of roadworks and highlighted the potential safety risk and financial cost to the Council as a result.
- The Board acknowledged a need for cooperation between District Council planning authorities and Lincolnshire County Council in installing and communicating the locations of electrical vehicle charging points to residents. In particular that they should be made available across all homes rather than just new build schemes. It was agreed that the Lincolnshire Electric Vehicle Strategy be circulated to members of the Board for information.
- The Chairman of the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee highlighted an issue with a lack of power supply nationally which was impacting on the availability of efficient electrical charging points.
- Members were assured that the availability of electrical charging points across the county was being considered and work was in progress on this matter.

RESOLVED:

1. That satisfaction be given to the activity undertaken since 26 May 2022 by:
 - (a) the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee; and
 - (b) the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee

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2. The satisfaction be given to the work programme of:
 - (a) the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee; and
 - (b) the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee

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Members noted the report.

The meeting closed at 12.43 pm