



**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY  
MANAGEMENT BOARD  
28 MAY 2020**

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

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

**Added Members**

Parent Governor Representatives: Miss A E I Sayer

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

**Officers in attendance:-**

Debbie Barnes OBE (Chief Executive), James Drury (Executive Director Commercial), Arnd Hobohm (Serco Contract Manager), Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer), Sophie Reeve (Assistant Director - Commercial), Lucy Shevill (Strategic People Management Advisor), Dave Simpson (Technical and Development Finance Manager), Nigel West (Head of Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Officer) and Emily Wilcox (Democratic Services Officer)

**121 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS**

Apologies for absence were received by Councillor Mrs W Bowkett, Councillor C E H Marfleet and Reverend Phillip Johnson (Church Representative).

It was reported that, under Regulation 13 of the Local Government (Committee and Political Groups) Regulation 1990, Councillor C R Oxby had been appointed as a representative for Councillor Mrs W Bowkett, for this meeting only.

**122 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**123 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30 APRIL 2020**

**RESOLVED:**

That minutes of the meeting held on 30 April 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**124 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR  
FOR RESOURCES AND COMMUNICATIONS AND CHIEF OFFICERS**

The Vice Chairman, Councillor Ray Wootten had attended the meeting of the Executive on the 5 May 2020 and presented the comments from the Board on the Draft Corporate Plan Success Framework 2020-2023 and the Post 16 Transport Policy Statement 2020-2021. The Chairman thanked The Vice-Chairman for stepping in and chairing the last meeting of the Board and attending the Executive on his behalf.

The Chairman announced that the former Parent Governor Representative, Mrs Patricia Barnett's term of office had ended on 4 March 2020. The Chairman was pleased to confirm that Mrs Megan Machin, Parent Governor at Potterhanworth Church of England Primary School had been elected as the Board's new Parent Governor Representative.

The Leader of the Council advised Members that although there continued to be challenges linked to the coronavirus pandemic, fortunately Lincolnshire had one of the lowest infection rates across the country. The latest Government announcement had been the introduction of the track and trace system, of which there would be local political involvement in making decisions regarding local lockdowns.

The Leader of the Council thanked Lincolnshire County Council staff for their efforts during challenging times to ensure that all vital services had continued to operate as normal. There had been lessons learned from the coronavirus pandemic which would inform new ways of working for the Council in future.

The Executive Councillor for Community Safety and People Management echoed the comments made by the Leader of the Council and thanked the council staff for their hard work during the pandemic.

The Chief Executive announced that the Council had received £10m of funding to support the care home sector in managing the control and prevention of the virus. The Council would also receive part of the £300m funding that had been set aside nationally to help support the track and trace system. It was not yet known what proportion of this funding Lincolnshire would receive.

With regards the introduction of the track and trace system, the Council would have responsibilities to manage local outbreaks through a politically led local outbreak board. The board would analyse the local infection rate and ensure that further action was taken to contain the spread of the virus if it was necessary. It was expected that further guidance would be provided on this in due course.

125 CONSIDERATION OF CALL-INS

None had been received.

126 CONSIDERATION OF COUNCILLOR CALLS FOR ACTION

None had been received.

127 2019 EMPLOYEE SURVEY

Consideration was given to a report by the Strategic HR Business Partner, which provided an update on the results of the 2019 employee survey.

Members were informed that 48% of the workforce had completed the survey. The Strategic HR Business Partner provided a summary of the responses received to the survey, which were set out at Appendix A to the report.

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

- Members raised concerns that some employees did not feel that their contributions were recognised and valued by their senior managers. The Chief Executive explained that the vast majority of employees were happy and felt supported by their colleagues and manager, but felt it was the role of managers to set the conditions for their staff to thrive and staff felt supported with their work and their wellbeing.
- It was noted that all members of staff had a yearly appraisal with their line manager in which they discussed their career development, objectives and highlighted any additional support that they may need. Most staff also took part in monthly supervisions, but these were not consistently implemented. There was a need for regular supervisions/ work sessions to be implemented across the Council to ensure staff were supported and provided with clear guidance.
- A leadership programme for managers was being refreshed and implemented to enhance the programme and enable senior managers to support other managers to develop.
- Other areas of development included enhancing apprenticeship opportunities for staff as well as investing in the mental health and resilience of staff.
- Officers had addressed all issues of concern with the relevant Executive Directors who would consider these within their management teams.
- The completion figures for Fire and Rescue employees could be misleading as there were some people with two contracts with the Council due to being employed by the Council on a full time basis as well as being employed as an on-call Fire Fighter as a separate role.
- In response to concerns raised regarding the percentage of employees that were skipping breaks or not taking regular breaks, the Chief Executive confirmed that the Corporate Leadership Team had discussed this issue and

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whilst they recognised the importance of taking breaks at work, they had concluded that staff should be empowered to take breaks when they need it rather than a central dictate being delivered. It was important to treat staff as adults and empower staff to feel in control of their work demands. The Corporate Leadership Team would also encourage flexible working to improve health and wellbeing and a positive work-life balance as well as being good role models.

- Officers had not considered a prize draw system to encourage employees to fill in the survey, but they would consider this in future if felt this would be helpful. Members were advised that there was a competition element between management directorates which often acted as an incentive to complete the survey.
- Members were encouraged by the fact that over 80% of people said that they felt supported by their line manager.
- The Board highlighted that an increase in home working as a result of the coronavirus pandemic had also resulted in a decrease in sickness levels for other health issues. It was suggested that home working was beneficial to the reduction of sickness across the workforce.
- Officers confirmed that since the majority of employees had been working from home, sickness levels had decreased. This could be due to less people being ill or people finding that they can easier manage conditions whilst working from home. Officers would continue to monitor these figures.
- Officers would continue to use the traffic light system where possible in future reports to indicate the direction of travel for questions reported in previous surveys. It was noted that it was not possible to indicate the direction of travel for any questions that had been newly added to the survey as there was no comparison available.
- The Executive Support Councillor for Culture and Emergency Services explained that 50% of Fire and Rescue employees were on call staff with full time jobs elsewhere. On-call Fire Fighters were usually only on call for two hours a week plus training, making it difficult for them to find the time to fill out the survey. The Chief Fire Officer had recognised the difficulties faced and was looking at ways to improve completion rates across Fire and Rescue.
- It was suggested that there could be allocated time set aside for on-call Fire Fighters to complete the survey which may encourage completion which would be helpful.
- It was noted that the Chief Officer Group inspections which were attended by senior officers and Members of the Council provided an opportunity for Fire Fighters to openly ask questions to Members and officers and raise any concerns they may have.
- Members were concerned that some staff had said that their job did not inspire them and they did not feel like going to work in the morning. Officers advised that the survey had shown that the staff engagement score was in line with last years. Officers were looking at ways to improve staff engagement by encouraging engagement with line managers and increasing health and wellbeing support.

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- The Chairman highlighted a need to address the issues raised by staff and put in place a plan of action to respond to these issues and ensure that they were considered by managers. It was confirmed that a report on the Council People Management and Workforce Plan was scheduled to be reported to the Board in September, and an update on the actions following the employee survey would be included within the report.
- The Executive Councillor for Community Safety and People Management explained that the workforce strategy would depend on progression with regards the coronavirus pandemic and the priorities of the Council during that time.

**RESOLVED:**

That assurance be received on the progress on actions following the 2019 employee survey.

**128     OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD WORK PROGRAMME**

Members were advised that this item was for information only.

**129     CORPORATE SUPPORT SERVICES EXTENSION**

Consideration was given to a report by the Assistant Director – Commercial, which invited the Board to consider a report on the review that had been undertaken to consider possible alternative commissioning approaches to the existing Serco contract, which was due to be considered by the Executive on the 2 June 2020.

Members were informed that there was a further option to extend the Council's corporate support services contract with Serco for a further two years up until the 31 March 2024, which must be exercised by June 2020.

A review had been undertaken to consider possible alternative commissioning approaches to the existing Serco contract, as well as an extension of the Serco contract proposal along with a consideration of the market, Serco's performance, value for money and the Council's future commissioning intentions.

Having reviewed the options available, it was recommended that the Council extend their Corporate Support Services contract with Serco until 31 March 2024 for the reasons set out within the report.

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

- The improved performance of Serco over the past 18 months had provided reassurance that the contract with Serco could be extended for a further two years to 31 March 2024. In addition, Serco had provided a lot of support and worked in partnership with the Council during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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- It had been planned to remove all obsolete IMT equipment from the estate by 1 April 2020, but this had not been achieved within the agreed timeline. Under the extended contract, Serco would release the Council from its obligation to remove obsolete equipment which would have resulted in an increase in costs to the Council to reflect the additional work caused by obsolescence. Obsolete equipment would need to be addressed over the next 12 months as the current situation had gone on for too long, and the Council could not go out to the market with obsolete equipment as it would lead to increased costs for the Council.
- The current Lagan Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system which supported the Customer Service Centre (CSC) was outdated and needed upgrading or replacing. Serco had offered to upgrade to a later version of Lagan at its own cost which would give an updated CRM system to improve delivery for customers. An analysis would be undertaken over the next couple of months to ensure it was the right technical solution and that there would be no unintended technology implications for the Council arising from the proposal.
- The extension of the contract would enable some savings and cost avoidance amounting to approximately £5M over the next four years. The budgets for the additional two years to the contract in 2022/23 and 2023/24 had not yet been approved by the Council but would be set in the future based on the savings identified and current contract volumes. Complete assurance could not be provided as to the sufficiency of the budget, as the budget would be based on predicted volumes of activity whilst the contract charges would be based on the actual volumes of activity carried out. It was expected that the existing budget provision would be sufficient, however, any changes to either the contract or volumes could result in a cost pressure in the future.

The Board unanimously voted to support the recommendations to the Executive, as set out in the report.

**RESOLVED:**

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

The meeting closed at 11.25 am