

Agenda Item 5

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 17 September 2021

Statement from: Councillor M J Hill OBE – Leader of the Council, Executive Councillor for Resources, Communications and Commissioning

FINANCE

Statement of Accounts 2020/21

The Government has again extended the date for the publication of the statement of accounts for 2020/21 to the end of November 2021. We have continued to work to an earlier deadline and the draft accounts were presented to Audit Committee on 12 July. Our external auditors, Mazars, are currently reviewing our accounts with an aim to publish our final accounts within the reporting deadline.

Revenue and Capital budget monitoring Q1 and financial impact of Covid-19

The first budget monitoring reports for the current financial year 2021/22 are based on the forecast position as at 30 June 2021. The reports include the financial impacts of Covid-19 for which the Government has provided funding for in the first quarter of this year. The reports were presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Management Board at its meeting on 26 August, with the comments of the Board presented to the Executive on 7 September 2021.

COMMERCIAL TEAM

New One Council Commissioning Framework

A new One Council Commissioning Framework setting out what commissioning means to the Council, our vision, aims and principles more closely aligned to the Corporate Plan, was agreed by the Executive on the 6 July 2021. It increases the emphasis on listening, collaboration and partnership, supporting local business and the environment whilst making the best use of the scarce public pound in Lincolnshire. The focus on partnership reflects the importance of joint commissioning with other public sector bodies, particularly the Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group and the desire to work across Greater Lincolnshire.

Serco

Serco and the Council (IMT and Democratic Services) worked very closely together on the Councillor's IT refresh, applying lessons learned and providing sufficient individual support so that the refresh was successful.

Serco has achieved Customer Service Excellence, the Government's national standard for excellence in customer service, for the Customer Service Centre. Assessments for the standard includes robust examination of evidence against 57 elements across key areas, which research has indicated are a priority for customers. These include insight, organisational culture, information, accessibility, service performance and the quality of service delivered.

Following a two day final assessment, which included discussion with members of the Serco Management Team, Customer Service Advisors and service representatives from Lincolnshire County Council, Serco exceeded the standard and achieved a Compliance Plus grading.

Commercial Team Infrastructure

The team has recently conducted a number of procurements including: ERP Testing Support, Route Planning Software for School Admissions and Transport eligibility, Microsoft Unified Support, a committee management system, a replacement data management system for Waste Services, and Lincolnshire growth grant fund. In addition, the team has supported the Smarter Working Programme procuring contracts for office furniture and the cloud booking system.

A significant piece of work during this period has been the development of a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) for post-mortems and mortuary services. This provides flexibility in the event that there is a merger of coronial areas with North Lincolnshire and/or North East Lincolnshire Council as it allows those authorities and others to call off from the DPS.

The team is in the initial stages of a procurement for a Framework Agreement for refuse collection vehicles, the current framework has yielded income for the Council and we are hoping to replicate its success into the future as District Council partners consider new vehicle technologies. We are also in the process of establishing a framework for grounds maintenance services which is due to be live before the end of 2021.

We are working closely with our colleagues in Highways to establish the Highways Select Framework and on initial work on the North Hykeham Relief Road.

We have also delivered a number of procurements for our District Council partners including the Cogglesford Watermill restoration project, document management system for WLDC and data centre for NKDC.

Commercial Team People

We have recently concluded the homecare re-procurement and have awarded new contracts to 9 different organisations to cover 12 geographical zones across the county. We are welcoming 3 new organisations to the county and look forward to working with them. The procurement was due to take place in 2020 but was delayed due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

New contracts will commence on 1 October 2021 and have been awarded for a 5 year duration with the option to extend for a further 3 years. This length of contract help provide a level of stability in an extremely challenging sector.

COLLABORATIVE WORKING WITH OUR PARTNERS

Devolution

The Government announced its intention in the Queens Speech to introduce a Levelling Up White Paper later this year. The Levelling Up White Paper is expected to put Councils at the heart of delivering the Government's programme to improve opportunities in all parts of the country, advance recovery from the pandemic and deliver on the Government's manifesto commitment to devolve power to all parts of the country.

In advance of the publication of the White Paper, the Secretary of State wrote to local authorities setting out the Government's commitment to devolving power to local places and closer to citizens through 'County Deals' and inviting discussions on early pilots for readily deliverable proposals. All Councils across Greater Lincolnshire have offered to participate in such discussions and commenced work to develop a range of options setting out the types of flexibilities and specific powers that could form part of a deal and the benefits that a deal could bring for residents across Greater Lincolnshire.

Lincolnshire Day

Plans for Lincolnshire Day are now well developed across Greater Lincolnshire. A civic event has been planned for 1 October and will be held at Normanby Hall in North Lincolnshire. The event will include a tree planting ceremony to show the commitment of each authority to enhancing and protecting our environment. As part of the activities surrounding Lincolnshire Day, we are running the Greater Lincolnshire Menu competition and inviting chefs and food business to submit a recipe for a Lincolnshire dish. We're already inviting entries to this event and are working closely with local media outlets to promote the excellent offer that Greater Lincolnshire has. The judging will take place across the three authorities, with the three winning entries being invited to the civic celebration at Normanby Hall where they will be able to present their dishes.

Lincolnshire Day has a strong community focus to it. We've developed digital resource packs for our schools that offer activities to do on the history of Greater Lincolnshire. We are also working with Town and Parish Councils, the Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses and a range of community groups to promote the celebration of Lincolnshire Day.

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