



**EXECUTIVE
7 SEPTEMBER 2021**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR M J HILL OBE (LEADER OF THE COUNCIL)

Councillors R D Butroid (Executive Councillor for People Management, Legal and Corporate Property), L A Cawrey (Executive Councillor for Fire & Rescue and Cultural Services), C J Davie (Executive Councillor for Economic Development, Environment and Planning), R G Davies (Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT), D McNally (Executive Councillor for Waste and Trading Standards) and Mrs S Woolley (Executive Councillor for NHS Liaison, Community Engagement, Registration and Coroners)

Councillor R B Parker, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board attended the meeting as an observer

Officers in attendance:-

Debbie Barnes OBE (Chief Executive), Pam Clipson (Head of Finance, Adult Care and Community Wellbeing), David Coleman (Chief Legal Officer), Andrew Crookham (Executive Director Resources), Glen Garrod (Executive Director - Adult Care and Community Wellbeing), Michelle Grady (Assistant Director – Finance), Andy Gutherson (Executive Director Place), Heather Sandy (Executive Director of Children's Services), Nigel West (Head of Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Officer) and Rachel Wilson (Democratic Services Officer)

22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs W Bowkett and Mrs P A Bradwell OBE.

An apology for absence was also received from James Drury, Executive Director – Commercial

23 DECLARATIONS OF COUNCILLORS' INTERESTS

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

24 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE LEADER, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

Councillor M J Hill OBE, Leader of the Council stated that the government had announced that it would be exploring the rolling out of devolution to non-metropolitan areas, including rural/county areas. The proposal was that this would be carried out through strategic authorities, and a letter from the Secretary of State had been received. Enquires

were underway to determine what would be involved and what governance would be required to devolve powers to local authorities. It was highlighted that it was important that this agenda was pursued. However, it was noted that there was currently no longer any additional funding being offered, but this may change in the future.

The skills agenda and matching training with business requirements would be focus locally, including a need for people to be re-skilled.

25 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE HELD ON 6 JULY 2021

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 6 July 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

26 FLAT RATE RESPITE CARE (LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN REPORT)

The Executive Director Adult Care and Community Wellbeing introduced the report which informed the Executive of the actions taken by the Council in respect of charging for short term respite care. It was reported that the Council had changed the way it charged for respite care and detailed in the Adult Care Charging Policy, effective 14 April 2020, and had commenced reimbursing those individuals identified as overcharged.

Following discussion by the Executive, the following points were noted:

- It was highlighted that this report was the opinion of the Ombudsman, and was not an indication that the Council had done anything wrong. It was further highlighted that no complaints had been received regarding the flat rate charging policy whilst it had been in place.
- It was noted that there would have been approximately equal numbers of people who were undercharged for their care as well as overcharged under this policy. The Executive Councillor had previously taken the decision that those who had been overcharged would be reimbursed, but the authority would not seek to recover monies from those who had been undercharged.

RESOLVED

1. That the report published by the Ombudsman on 16 March 2021 be received.
2. That the findings and recommendation of the Ombudsman as set out in the Ombudsman report be accepted.
3. That the actions taken both in respect of the Adult Care Charging Policy and the reimbursement of those affected be confirmed.

27 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2021/22 - QUARTER 1 TO 30 JUNE 2021

A report by the executive Director – Resources on Revenue Budget Monitoring set out the Council's expenditure of the approved budget for quarter 1 of 2021-22 with explanations for any significant variations.

It was reported that the current revenue position was that an underspend of £1.194m was forecasted. The report detailed the key impacts of this, with the largest variance reported for Adult Care and Community Wellbeing, however, this was due to the resources needed to support the Covid-19 response.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board presented the comments from the Board's consideration of the report on 26 August 2021. These included the acknowledgement that there were cost pressures in relation to the capital programme and that there was a variety of reasons for these cost increases including supply issues, labour shortages and increase in the cost of raw materials. The Board had also expressed an interest in further examining the forecasted overspend in Fire and Rescue due to the cost of covering long term sickness absences. The Chief Executive advised that she had agreed for more detailed work to be carried out in relation to the sickness absence rates and to examine how the Fire and Rescue service could be supported to reduce its sickness absence.

The Executive raised the following points:

- It was suggested that it was time for the Council to start thinking about the development programme in light of the various supply issues, and whether this needed to start being built into plans now.
- It was acknowledged that labour shortages in particular were likely to result in some major pressures for the Council, and there was a need to examine what mitigating circumstances there were. Consideration would also need to be given to whether there were some things the council would need to do differently.
- A potential risk for Lincolnshire County Council was around the shortage of HGV drivers, who also doubled up as gritter drivers during winter.
- It was commented that these were not likely to be short term issues, and the Council would need to plan for some significant changes, particularly around the labour market in relation to supply and wage costs. There were already significant challenges around home care on the east coast, and the situation was expected to worsen over the winter months if there was a re-emergence of Covid-19.
- It was highlighted that one of the major supermarkets had asked government for more flexibility in its apprenticeships schemes to pay for driving lessons. There would be a need to look at what the Council could do to make the jobs available more attractive in order to recruit a good cohort of staff.
- The current issues already being experienced by home care providers and the NHS across the county were highlighted to the Executive. It was noted that joint working across providers was already being seen, where providers were sharing staff across the county.

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RESOLVED

That the current position on the revenue budget be noted.

28 CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2021/22 - QUARTER 1 TO 30 JUNE 2021

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Assistant Director – Finance on Capital Budget Monitoring, which provided an update on capital spending for quarter 1 of 2021-22, with explanation for any significant variations.

It was reported that an underspend of £26.913m was currently forecasted for the Block schemes and Project schemes, however, it was emphasised that this underspend was a reflection of slippage in timing and not a suggestion that they were underspending in terms of costs of the schemes.

It was requested whether there could be clarity in terms of the over and under spend figures set out in Appendix D – Capital Programme Detail for Selected Projects and Blocks as at 30 June 2021. There was a suggestion that the narrative needed to be simplified. The Assistant Director advised that the comments would be taken on board.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board presented the comments from the Board's consideration of the report on 26 August 2021. These included reference to the risks to the capital programme, the Spalding Western Relief Road underspend and if there was an opportunity to bring forward any other schemes to reduce this underspend, and the forecasted overspend on Highways Asset Protection. However, it was acknowledged that this would be covered by a report seeking approval from the County Council for a further £10m to be added to the capital programme budget for highways.

RESOLVED

That the current position on the capital programme be noted.

The meeting closed at 11.17 am