



**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT
BOARD
28 OCTOBER 2021**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR R B PARKER (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors T Smith (Vice-Chairman), B Adams, Mrs J Brockway, P M Dilks, R J Kendrick, C S Macey, C E H Marfleet, N H Pepper, E W Strengiel and R Wootten

Added Members

Councillors M A Whittington and Mrs S Woolley attended the meeting via Microsoft Teams as observers

Officers in attendance:

Debbie Barnes OBE (Chief Executive), Kiara Chatziioannou (Scrutiny Officer), James Drury (Executive Director Commercial), Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer), Fraser Shooter (Health and Safety Team Leader), Nigel West (Head of Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Officer) and Emily Wilcox (Democratic Services Officer)

Officers in attendance in Microsoft Teams:

Michelle Andrews (Assistant Director – Corporate Recovery), Leanne Fotherby (Senior Commercial and Procurement Officer), Allison Kapethanasis (ICT Business Relationship and User Engagement Manager)

57 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

An apology for absence was received from Alex Sayer (Parent Governor Representative) and Andrew Crookham, Executive Director - Resources.

58 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

59 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30TH SEPTEMBER 2021

RESOLVED:

That minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

60 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND CHIEF OFFICERS

The Chairman encouraged members of the Board to attend the Treasury Management training session which had been scheduled for Wednesday 24 November at 2pm via Microsoft Teams.

The Chairman also reminded the Chairmen of Scrutiny Committees that there was an expectation for them to attend the Executive to present any scrutiny comments following pre-decision scrutiny items being considered at their Committees. If for any reason Chairman of the Scrutiny Committees were unable to attend the Executive, the Chairman of the Board would be available to present comments, subject to being adequately briefed.

The Executive Support Councillor for Resources, Communications and Commissioning announced that the Chancellor's budget proposals had suggested that there could be more funding made available for Local Government. The Council's finance team was expected to be briefed further on this and more information would be made available in due course.

The Chief Executive was delighted that Lincolnshire County Council had been successful in its Levelling Up bid and had been allocated £20m for the road development scheme on the A16. It was also noted that West Lindsey District Council had received funding for its Gainsborough project, which was welcome news for Lincolnshire.

61 CONSIDERATION OF CALL-INS

None had been received.

62 CONSIDERATION OF COUNCILLOR CALLS FOR ACTION

None had been received.

63 APPROVAL TO AWARD A CONTRACT FOR LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S MOBILE VOICE AND DATA SERVICES

Consideration was given to a report by the Senior Commercial and Procurement Officer which invited the Board to consider a report regarding the approval to award a contract for Lincolnshire County Council's Mobile Voice and Data Services which was due to be considered by the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT between 1st and 5th November 2021.

The Board was advised that the Council had now concluded evaluations of tenders received for the Mobile Voice and Data Contract and the preferred tenderer, based on the Council's chosen award criteria, was Vodafone.

The total cost of the contract to the Council over the three year contract duration was £978,614 assuming mobile device purchases remained at the current levels. The current total contract cost was £1,528,596, meaning a saving of approximately £549,982.

Service requirements for the contract largely remained the same, with the main change being the removal of a technical fund due to there being no plans to refresh the current devices.

If the decision was not approved, the Council would revert to a standard tariff of £5.00 for 250MB of data per connection with a data sharer agreement, in comparison to a more favourable tariff as tendered as part of the proposed contract.

Other benefits of awarding the contract included minimal disruption to change SIM cards; the network coverage for Vodafone being one of the best in the county; the service level targets were the same for the new contract; and less resources and disruption in changing to a new provider.

It was therefore proposed that the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT approved the award of a contract to Vodafone Ltd through the CCS Network Services 2 Framework for Mobile Voice and Data Services for Lincolnshire County Council and Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue and delegated to the Executive Director – Commercial authority to determine the final form and approve the entering into of the contract.

The Board welcomed the report and as part of the Board's consideration of the item, the following points were noted:

- Vodafone was the only provider who submitted a bid for the contract. However, the Council would have been open to moving to an alternative provider if a better offer had been submitted, regardless of the challenges this would have presented.
- The contract would be administered by Serco irrespective of who the provider was.
- The proposed contract was a significant improvement on the current contract with a saving of £549,982 and would ensure business continuity across the county.
- The Board welcomed savings of £549,982 that would be made as a result of the contract.
- The Board was reassured that Vodafone was one of the leading providers for network coverage across the county, including where roaming was available. This was evidenced by the network coverage information that providers published to Ofcom. For Lincolnshire, the coverage provided by Vodafone and O2 was approximately the same. Good coverage was important for emergency services who would want the assurance that they could get

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coverage wherever they were in the county, and Vodafone would provide that assurance.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the recommendations to the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT be supported;
- 2) That a summary of the comments made be passed on to the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT for his consideration.

64 HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

Consideration was given to a report by the Health and Safety Team Leader which invited the Board to consider an update 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 Board was advised that the work of the Health and Safety Team over the period had been heavily focussed on the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, with the production of guidance to colleagues and a number of audits conducted to gain assurance that the correct processes were in place to maintain a safe environment for employees to work in, as well as ensuring that the Council was compliant with government guidance.

There had been a small increase in the accidents and incidents reported within the Children's Services directorate, which was partly due to the challenges faced by children with complex needs as a result in a change of routine due to the pandemic.

The Board was advised that the 'Managing Safely in Lincolnshire' training would be transformed into a hybrid learning experience using digital tools, interactive systems and face to face training.

The Board welcomed the update and as part of the Board's consideration of the report, the following points were noted:

- Mental health support including resilience workshops and investments in staff developments were welcomed.
- The information collected to indicate the success and effectiveness of mental health support given to colleagues could be considered subjective. However officers analysed the levels of interactions for existing support as well as mental health related sickness levels to analyse the effectiveness of the support offer.

- Members supported the introduction of mental health first aiders and were encouraged by the number of people who had signed up to offer their support. It was confirmed that mental health first aiders had been chosen from a number of services areas spread evenly across the Council.
- There was a strong commitment to supporting mental health across the Council. Officers planned to collect feedback on the mental health first aiders in due course and would assess whether there was adequate resource to meet demands.
- At the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, senior officers had engaged with the Unions and the Council's HR department to refine and improve the wellbeing support offer and were proud of the current offer that was available to colleagues. Additional support had been provided to colleagues throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.
- It was agreed that the Chief Executive share the link to a video in which employees discussed their positive experiences about accessing wellbeing support.
- Feedback had suggested that the health and wellbeing support offered by the Council was valuable. Officers would continue to promote the offer across the Council to ensure that everybody was aware of the support available.
- The Board recognised that home working could be isolating for some employees and could have a negative impact on their mental wellbeing. Members were reassured that during the lockdown stages of the pandemic, where advice was to stay at home, all managers had been advised that some members of staff were permitted to work from the office for health and wellbeing reasons. Each case was risk assessed by managers on a regular basis. Additional support had been provided to those who needed it.
- It was suggested that the term 'wind down Friday' was not considered the best use of language for the Council who provided a public service.
- Many of the incidents which led to a 63% increase in slips, trips and falls were related to Fire and Rescue services, who had continued to work throughout the pandemic. Fire and Rescue colleagues had also been encouraged to increase their reporting of minor incidents, which had led to a slight increase in the number of incidents reported. Officers would continue to assess ways to support the risks presented, however the Board was reassured that despite the increase, 70% of incidents had resulted in no injury or accident.
- The Board welcomed the introduction of a centralised supplier list for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) from an early stage in the pandemic. Despite initial shortages, the market for PPE had settled but was still a volatile market. It was confirmed that the list of suppliers for PPE was regularly reviewed and it was agreed that the Executive Director – Commercial provide further information on the locality of suppliers and whether they were local to Lincolnshire.
- It was confirmed that when purchasing PPE, the Council considered the supply, cost and quality of the products available.

- The Board was reassured that although there were a significant amount of incidents reported within Children's Services, many were low risk to no injury. An introduction of a new reporting system within Children's Services had meant that more 'near miss' incidents had been recorded, accounting for a slight increase in numbers. However, officers continued to monitor the situation.
- The Council had a legal obligation to gain assurance that contractors were competent in terms of health and safety, and the Council had a duty as a client to ensure that the contractors continued to abide by good health and safety practices throughout the duration of their contract with the Council. For larger contracts, such as Highways contracts, health and safety performance was managed throughout the period of the contracts.
- The Council did not keep a record of individual accident and incident reporting for their contractors. It was agreed that a briefing paper which would identify the health and safety systems in place for the Council's contractors be circulated.
- It was clarified that the 11% increase in incidents in Children's Residential Homes was the result of incidents involving low level contact, usually with children with complex needs. It was acknowledged that the Covid-19 pandemic had resulted in increased challenges and frustrations for those with complex needs. Members were reassured that this would be monitored through the Council's reporting system.

RESOLVED:

That the Board be assured of the Council's compliance and implementation of Health and Safety legislation and its statutory duties, and the comments on the Annual Report for 2020-21 be noted.

65 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.

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

- Rate of Positive Cases per 100,000 Population is 521.4 per 100,000 (25th October 2021) in comparison to the 20th September 2021, which was reported at 257.1 per 100,000.
- On the 24th October 2021, Lincolnshire Covid-19 cases reported in the last 7 day period was 3996, in comparison to the figure reported on the 20th September 2021 which was 1957.

- Deaths reported in the last 7 day period up to the 19th September 2021 for Lincolnshire as defined below was reported as 6, in comparison in the last 7 day period up to 24th October 2021 it was reported as 7.
- Number of Covid-19 vaccines administered up to the 12th September 2021 for Lincolnshire was 1,108,065, as of the 17th October this was reported as 1,131,705.

The Council continued to encourage the public to follow government guidance, as well as emphasising the importance of ensuring that those who were eligible had their influenza vaccination.

Lincolnshire's vaccination roll-out continued to be successful and good progress was being made in administering vaccinations to 12-15 year olds.

The LRF was now operating in the 'oversight and assurance' phases of recovery. However, subject to a review of the progress within the Business and Economy Sector scheduled for November 2021, it was felt that the LRF was in a position to agree to stand down the LRF Covid-19 recovery structure in line with the current timetable. On this basis, LCC would be in a position to safely withdraw the resources from both the Recovery Strategic Co-ordination Group (RSCG) and Recovery Lead Group as the recovery journey would be in a position to be sustained within everyday core business capacity without the need for these additional resources to be in place.

It was therefore proposed that the Board receive a final Covid-19 update report at its meeting in November 2021.

The Board welcomed the update and as part of the Board's consideration of the report, the following points were noted:

- A briefing paper would be provided to the Board to explain the rationale for the changes in how Covid-19 deaths were being recorded nationally.
- The Board was reassured that the extra measures were put in place in vaccination centres where staff did not feel confident or felt unsafe as a result of the increase in abusive behaviour at the centres.
- The Board was encouraged by the uptake in vaccinations for 12-15 year olds. It was confirmed that the take up was around 60-70% of all 12-15 years olds who had registered to receive the vaccine, which was higher than the national average of 40-50%. The programme had not yet been completed, with many children not being able to receive their vaccine yet due to a number of reasons such as testing positive for Covid-19 within 28 days or being unwell on the date of their scheduled vaccine.
- Officers acknowledged that there were communication issues with the online vaccination booking system which needed to be reviewed.
- The Council worked with schools and the relevant partners to encourage uptake of the vaccination.
- The Council followed and reiterated national advice on mask wearing and continued to communicate key messages on social media to ensure the public were aware of guidance.

- It was noted that PCR test results were uploaded via GP registration, so it was difficult to get an absolute overview of vaccinations for Lincolnshire residents, as some residents used GP services within another County.
- Some Members raised concerns about the lack of future reporting to the Board and proposed that a verbal update be provided at future meetings for the foreseeable future.
- The Board acknowledged the public right to protest peacefully. It was clarified that the police had attended an incident at a school where people were expressing their beliefs around anti-vaccination due to concerns about the safety of the staff attending to administer vaccines. The police had not needed to intervene in this instance and would only intervene where the safety of staff was at risk.
- The Chief Executive was satisfied with plans to stand down the RSGG once assurance had been provided from all LRF partners NHS colleagues and the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership in relation to businesses. It was felt that future arrangements for Covid-19 support could be integrated into the Council's normal workload. The Board was reassured that the Council would be stepping down the infrastructure of the LRF to co-ordinate the response, rather than stepping down the response completely. The risk of other non-Covid-19 related emergencies remained high and it was vital that the LRF be in a position to proactively respond to other emergencies should they arrive. The Council would continue to work with public health services and communications teams.

The Board acknowledged that given the pandemic was still on-going, there remained a need for the Board to be updated in some form. It was not felt necessary to present a verbal or written report at each meeting of the Board after the November update. It was therefore proposed and unanimously agreed that a Covid-19 update be circulated to the Board in the form of a briefing paper whenever there was a significant update or it was considered necessary.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the update be noted;
- 2) That following the meeting in November, a Covid-19 update be circulated to the Board in the form of a briefing paper as and when necessary.

66 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMMES

Consideration was given to a report by the Chairman of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, which provided an update of recent work of the Committee and its future work programme, which was set out on pages 39 to 43.

Members were advised that the Committee would be receiving an update on the Joint Diversionary Panel, which was introduced in 2017 in response to detailed analysis of criminal justice disposals which evidenced the inappropriate use of Police Cautions against children and young people.

In partnership with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership, the Council had commissioned The University of Lincoln to conduct an in-depth evaluation of the Joint Diversionary Panel, and the key findings of this evaluation would be considered at the next meeting.

In January 2022, a report on the capital scheme appraisal decision in relation to the Building Communities of Specialist Provision Strategy which was the expansion of St Lawrence School in Horncastle was scheduled. The Committee had received an update on the implementation of this Strategy at its meeting on 15 October and was pleased with the fantastic progress that had been made despite the pandemic. Visits to the special schools would be arranged when it was appropriate and safe to do so.

The Committee had welcomed some new councillors to its membership and the Chairman was pleased to report that the Committee was operating well and there was a good level of questioning taking place within meetings.

The Board considered the report and in response to a concern raised about the need for a better model of transport for schools as well as a review of the exclusion policy and the mechanisms to support it, the Chairman of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee confirmed that the Committee would be considering a report on modes of sustainable school transport in March 2022. The Committee received regular updates on a range of issues raised by Members.

Consideration was then given to a report by the Chairman of the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee, which provided an update on the recent work of the Committee as well its future work programme.

Members were advised that in addition to reoccurring items such as the quarterly Service Level Performance and annual reporting from areas such as the Stay Safe Partnership, Libraries, Heritage, Coroner's Services and others, the Committee had the opportunity to scrutinise and comment on decisions including the adoption of the Community Strategy 2021-24; the Proposed Submission to the Chief Coroner for the merger of the Lincolnshire and Grimsby and North Lincolnshire Coroners Areas, that allowed for a joint business case to be submitted from Lincolnshire County Council, North Lincolnshire Council and North East Lincolnshire Council to the HM Chief Coroner; and the Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue (LFR) Technical Response Unit Refresh, where was reviewed and endorsed.

The Chairman referred the Board to the Committee's future work programme, which was set out within the report.

An additional area highlighted and introduced from the initial meetings of the Committee under its new membership was Fire and Rescue Service attendances at Flooding Incidents, which included performance information on attendances to gauge trends and activity that were not currently forming a part of the quarterly performance indicators.

In response to a question raised, the Scrutiny Officer assured the Board that she would work with the Chairmen of both the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee and the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee to ensure that they had a joined up approach when reviewing the use of average speed camera schemes across the county.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Board's satisfaction be recorded with the activity undertaken since June 2021 by:
 - (a) the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee; and
 - (b) the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee.

- 2) That the Board's satisfaction be recorded with the planned work programme of:
 - (a) the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee; and
 - (b) the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee.

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The Board was informed that this item was for information only.

Councillor H Marfleet requested further information on the Council's different IT platforms and websites, and the usage and costs of running these sites. It was agreed that Councillor Marfleet would contact James Drury, Executive Director – Commercial regarding his request to enable a response to be provided.

The meeting closed at 12.06 pm