



**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT
BOARD
16 DECEMBER 2021**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR R B PARKER (CHAIRMAN)

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

Added Members

Church Representative:

Parent Governor Representatives: Miss A E I Sayer

Councillors: M J Hill OBE, M A Whittington and Mrs S Woolley attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Debbie Barnes OBE (Chief Executive), Sue Cline (ICT Contracts and Licenses Officer), James Drury (Executive Director Commercial), Paul Elverstone (ICT Contracts and Licenses Officer), Simon Evans (Health Scrutiny Officer), Louisa Harvey (ERP System Delivery Manager), Andrew Houseman (Senior Procurement Officer), Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer), Andrew McLean (Assistant Director - Transformation), Warren Peppard (Head of Development Management), Sadie Rossington (Business World Project Manager), Clare Rowley (Head of Transformation), Nigel West (Head of Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Officer), John Wickens (Assistant Director - IMT and Enterprise Architecture), Emily Wilcox (Democratic Services Officer) and Carrie Forrester (Programme Manager - SEND Transformation)

83 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

An apology for absence had been received from Megan Machin, Parent Governor Representative.

It was reported that, under Regulation 13 of the Local Government (Committee and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, Councillor A M Hall had been appointed as a replacement for the Conservative Vacancy until further notice.

Apologies were also noted from the Executive Councillor for People Management, Legal and Corporate Property and the Executive Director – Resources.

84 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

85 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 NOVEMBER 2021

RESOLVED:

That minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

86 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND CHIEF OFFICERS

The Chairman announced that he had attended the last meeting of the Executive on the 7th December and presented the comments from the Board on the Revenue and Capital budget monitoring reports, the Corporate Plan Success Framework and the Infrastructure Funding Statement.

In light of the new Government guidelines and the current situation in relation to Covid-19, it was noted that officers attending for Items 7 to 12 of the agenda were in attendance via Microsoft Teams.

The Executive Support Councillor for Resources, Communications and Commissioning informed the Board that a ministerial statement on the budget was expected to be received on the 16 December and Officers would be working to assess the financial implications for the Council.

87 CONSIDERATION OF CALL-INS

None had been received.

88 CONSIDERATION OF COUNCILLOR CALLS FOR ACTION

None had been received.

89 APPROVAL TO AWARD A CONTRACT FOR GAS PROVISION FOR LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PROPERTY PORTFOLIO

Consideration was given to a report by the Commercial and Procurement Manager, which invited the Board to consider a report on the Approval to Award a Contract for Gas Provision for Lincolnshire County Council's Corporate Property Portfolio, which was due to be considered by the Executive Councillor for Children's Services, Community Safety and Procurement between the 17 and 23 December 2021.

In line with the National Procurement Strategy and as a result of ongoing uncertainty and price rises in energy, it was proposed that the Council continued to maintain the Purchase in Advance commodity strategy, which also provided the flexibility to annually consider green gas as the market developed as well as providing a complete bill validation service that would eradicate the need for utility bill audits. The Purchase in Advance Strategy provided budgetary certainty in an exceptionally volatile market.

It was proposed that the Council award the contract for Gas Services and Provision to ESPO as they had performed well historically and provided value for money in past contracts. As a member of ESPO, the Council was unable to influence the Energy Market but could influence its commodity trading strategy having a seat on the Energy Governance Panel.

The report also proposed that the Council continued to purchase brown gas, which would be reviewed annually.

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

- The annual consideration of whether to purchase green gas would be based on availability and financial viability when compared to the cost of purchasing brown gas, taking into account the green agenda as well. It was recommended that the first annual review of whether to purchase green or brown gas should be brought back through the decision-making process to consider the financial viability of purchasing green gas and whether the market had changed.
- The green gas market was very new and underdeveloped. There was currently not enough green gas available to enable ESPO to meet all its portfolio. It was noted that no council under the ESPO portfolio was currently buying green gas. In addition, the current prices for green gas were extremely high.
- The Council had made a commitment to net zero carbon by 2050 and had developed the Green Masterplan which set out the guiding principles of how this challenge would be met. It was recognised that moving to green gas would contribute to this ambition, but that this was not currently achievable due to the underdeveloped market. It was unlikely that this situation would change within the next 12 months.
- Support was given to the Purchase in Advance approach as this would allow the Council to fix its price for 12 months to ensure stable costs and reduce the financial implications for the Council. This approach had saved the Council over £234,000 in 2021/22 based on the current wholesale gas costs.
- It was recognised that the disparity in price between green and brown gas was likely to reduce in the future, which would then enable the Council to give due consideration between financial viability and the green agenda.

RESOLVED:

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1. That the recommendations, as set out in the Executive Councillor report, be supported;
2. That a summary of the comments made by the Board be reported to the Executive Councillor for Children's Services, Community Safety and Procurement as part of her consideration of this item.

90 BUSINESS WORLD ERP SYSTEM RE-DESIGN UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report by the ERP System Delivery Manager, which provided an update on the progress of the re-design of the Council's Business World ERP system following approval from the Executive on 17 December 2019 to move to the Hoople Limited platform.

The Board received a presentation, which gave an overview of the project including the following:

- A recap of the business case
- The approach to the project
- The design of the system
- How the system was built
- The testing methods used
- Change management
- Proposed plans for the system to 'go live' including ongoing monitoring

The Board was advised that the Council was currently in the 'test' stages of implementation, which included full system testing and payroll testing ahead of the system going live. Testing activities had also been used as a method of identifying any issues with that data to ensure that all of the issues were resolved and that where possible, existing (un-necessary) manual calculation work-arounds were removed to prevent manual error and automate processes. Changes to the payroll system to date had been positive and testing had been successfully completed for each of the four areas of the Council's payroll systems. A training strategy with guidance had been implemented and all relevant Officers would be trained on the new system.

It was recommended that a report on the progress of the project be reported to the Board at its meeting on 26 May 2022, subject to the completion of the next test phase, which was scheduled for 29 April 2022.

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

- The Board was reassured that although Hoople Ltd was a Limited Company, the Council attended Board meetings alongside other shareholders, allowing them to have input into the development of systems and future priorities.

- Assurance was provided that there were stringent requirements in place to ensure that the Council's data was secure within the system. Officers worked closely with the Council's information assurance team to ensure that data was as secure as possible which included routine testing on a regular basis to ensure the security of the Council's data. The Board was assured that before entering into the agreement with Hoople Ltd, stringent information assurance checks were made and were carried out on an ongoing basis to ensure the security of the Council's data.
- The team was focused on the immediate benefits that the system would bring alongside introducing a development plan which would be implemented in the following 12 months to ensure the system was being used to its fullest effect.
- Officers were working with the HR service on the complexities of the system which would highlight any areas for review to ensure that the system was as streamlined as possible despite the number of payment and deduction codes.
- The Board was reassured that the project was taking longer than expected because the Officers were passionate about ensuring that all due diligence had been carried out and that the roll-out was successful and systems as accurate as possible. Officers were therefore satisfied that the time taken on the project was necessary to ensure that the roll-out was a success.
- At the next update to the Committee there would be a clearer picture of the next milestones and a date in which the system would 'go live'.
- Providing that all testing was successful and carried out to the proposed schedule, it was hoped that the system could go live around three months after the final test phase, which was planned for April 2022.
- As a result of challenges posed by the pandemic, there had been some challenges for the availability of testing and training within schools. Extra support was being brought in to ensure they were familiar with the system and were confident using it.
- Assurance was provided that lessons had been learned from the previous change in payroll system and that systems would be much simpler to use with the changes made.
- Delays were due to staffing resources and difficulty in obtaining experienced and appropriately trained staff for the new payroll system. The Council had faced challenges in finding staff that were experienced and resourced to investigate and review the system, as well as data migration exercises taking considerably longer to complete than anticipated. It was also noted that the delay in the project had impacted other areas in the Council as it had reduced the ability for project officers and IT officers to support other areas of the Council whilst ensuring that the Business World programme is delivered to its fullest.

RESOLVED:

1. That consideration be given to the report and the comments made be noted; That a report be received by the Board on progress of the Business World ERP System Design at its meeting on 26 May 2022, subject to the completion of the next test phase, which was scheduled for 29 April 2022.

91 TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME UPDATE

During this item, Councillor J Brockway declared an interest as her grandchild was in receipt of SEND support.

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Transformation, which provided the Board with an update on the Transformation Programme, including a focussed section on the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) High Needs project, to demonstrate the positive impact of the Transformation Programme.

A presentation was received by the Board which provided further detail on:

- The focus of the Council's overall transformation programme which was to Deliver Council Policy and Corporate priorities; contribute to the sustainability of the organisation and delivery high complexity and high risk projects requiring a different approach
- The key projects as part of the overall Transformation Programme were contributing to – enabling everybody to live life to the full; provide good value council services and deliver high aspirations

The presentation then provided further detail on the Transformation programme in relation to the transformation for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) High Needs, including:

- Context of the SEND programme both nationally and locally in relation to the SEND code of practice 2015
- Data and intelligence gathered during the initial stages of the programme
- The eight elements of the high needs strategy which sought to reduce demand; prevent escalation; and step down inappropriate support
- The work carried out to date, which involved improving earlier identification and response to reduce the level of new demand for statutory support; reducing the escalation of need and ensuring that children and young people are placed in a setting which best meets their need. This may include stepping down children from specialist provision to mainstream where better outcomes can be achieved
- Achievements and differences that had been made as a result of the implementation of the strategy so far
- Key messages of performance for the transformation of SEND high needs

The Board was advised that the SEND Code of Practice 2015 included an expectation that the majority of children with SEND would have their needs met and outcomes achieved through mainstream education provision without the need for an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. Initial findings from the transformation project into SEND high needs concluded that the local offer was not sufficiently understood to divert partners and parents to early intervention and that there had been a significant rise in the number of EHC plans that were being made, of which practitioners felt that 69% could have had needs prevented, reduced

or delayed. It was therefore felt that there was a need to move to a social model of SEND and trauma-informed practice to which work was carried out to produce a high needs strategy which would look to reduce demand, prevent escalation and step down where in the best interests of the child.

The Board was advised that the SEND programme had commenced at the end of 2019, in which a full review of SEND began. As part of the project, it was found that career prospects and other long term outcomes may be better achieved for some children if they were able to move from a special education setting to a mainstream education settings, where they would have access to a wider curriculum. The project would look to support the transition from special education to mainstream education, so that where possible children achieved the best outcomes and their needs were best met. For some children in special education their needs could be better served in a mainstream school.

As part of the transformation project, six children had begun their transition from special to mainstream school, in which summaries of the children's circumstances, next steps and RAG rated actions are being monitored by the Project Board to ensure timely support for the children, parents and schools involved. Other benefits had included a reduction in requests for EHC assessment being received monthly; a reduction in requests for EHC assessment converting to full assessments monthly and a reduction in new plans being created monthly.

11:52am – Councillor E W Strenziel left the meeting and did not return.

11:56am – Councillor N H Pepper left the meeting and did not return.

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

- The Board raised concerns that children could become lost within mainstream schools and would often be separated from other children due to displaying different behaviours as well as there being frequent errors within EHCP's, which were often not communicated to parents. Officers acknowledged the concerns raised, and the Board was reassured that an educational psychologist would assess the support available to each young person to ensure that any means of support would be put in place. Valuing Send Assessment Tool was discussed as well as assessing the needs of the child, looked at the school's ability to meet those needs, which would include the perception of other pupils within the educational setting as well as the parents confidence in how their child's need was being met within the home. Care Plans were child centric and would always consider the child's view. Regular reviews would take place to assess how the child was integrating into their new setting.
- The Young Voices group had been established which would provide an opportunity for young people to show things from their perspective.
- Members emphasised the importance of early intervention and carrying out timely assessments of SEND needs where appropriate to ensure that children received the correct support as quickly as possible to prevent a need for escalation. Members were advised that strategies such as 'Ask SALL' could access support from an

educational psychologist for complex cases to assess whether a child needed to apply for an EHCP or could be managed within a mainstream education setting. If it was concluded that a child needed intervention, a request would be made and the process would be reviewed within six weeks of the receipt of the request and by 20 weeks a plan would be in place if it was deemed necessary.

- As part of its prevention work, ask SALL had access to an educational psychologist one and a half days a week which was fully utilised and was having a positive impact. It was agreed that Officers provide further information on the availability or support from an Educational Psychologist as part of the statutory process.
- Members raised concerns that not all schools had the appropriate knowledge to effectively support pupils with SEND needs.
- Concerns were also raised that the removal of specialisation for some schools could be quite harmful.
- It was suggested that SEND plans should work to a social model, rather than a medical model as this would best meet the individual needs of young people with SEND.
- It was noted that some parents may wish to put their child onto an EHCP as it provided the most protection and rights under current legislation. Officers emphasised that in many situations EHC Plans delivered the best outcome for the child. Members were assured that the programme only sought to reduce the number of EHC Plans that were seen to be inappropriate and hindered progress for the child.
- Assurance was provided that the process was carefully managed and reviewed to ensure the best outcome for the child. During transition, children did not lose their registration to their previous school until all parties involved were completely assured that the move was the best outcome for the child.
- The Board was advised that since the publication of the report, the Corporate Leadership Team had agreed that Children in Care transformation, SEND and adult improvement and development would remain active on the transformation programme to ensure regular monitoring of critical projects.
- It was noted that special schools were not able to offer such a wide range of subjects as secondary schools could as they did not have the same level of staff to cover a wider range of subjects.

RESOVLED:

1. That consideration be given to the report and that the comments made be noted;
2. That an update on Transformation Programme be reported to the Board in three months' time.

92 DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS SCRUTINY REVIEW - FIRST MONITORING UPDATE OF ACTION PLAN

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Development Management, which provided an update on the recommendations from Scrutiny Panel A's review on Developer Contributions.

On 5 January 2021 the Executive considered and approved Scrutiny Panel A's recommendations to the Executive on Developer Contributions, which were set out at Appendix A to the report.

The Board was advised that relationships with stakeholders were continuing to be strengthened to ensure that the Council were communicating with local communities where possible.

In addition, all statutory responses made by the Council in response to planning applications were now also being posted on the Council's website, which would allow the public to have visibility of planning applications including all responses and requests for contributions that were being made in relation to individual applications.

In relation to recommendation six, it was noted that Officers had offered a training session to all Members to raise awareness of developer contributions and their role in the process. Feedback to the training had been positive and the Head of Development Management invited Members to provide any further feedback on the training. It was emphasised that proactive engagement with Members was critical to build an early picture of the desires of the public before the Council requested developer contributions.

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

- Concerns were raised over the unfair distribution of Section 106 monies within some developments, with monies being distributed to communities outside of the area of development, when there were opportunities to develop within the community. Officers acknowledged that further work could be carried out to better understand the local need of communities. It was hoped that the development of frameworks would build a more collaborative coordinated picture of local needs.
- The Board emphasised the need for even distribution between the needs of urban areas with a high density of population and housing and rural areas.

RESOLVED:

That the progress made on implementing the recommendations from the Developer Contributions review be noted.

93 UPDATE ON IMT SERVICES - DATA SERVICES AND SERCO CONTRACT PERFORMANCE

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Data Services and Data Intelligence and the Assistant Director - IMT and Enterprise Architecture which provided an update on the function and current work programme of the IMT Data Services Department and Serco's performance against its contract Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) between June 2021 and October 2021.

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IMT services had continued to establish an embedded function of the data services team within the last 12 months and were supporting key pieces of work, such as the implementation of the business intelligence strategy as well as continuing to help and support service areas in the management and transformation of their data to assist improvements in their reporting.

Examples of key improvements over the last year included making available a large data set from the Care Quality Commission, which related to providers of regulated services and in particular, their inspection outcomes that had been released; working with the home to school transport service to provide a reporting solution for their new home to school application solution and working with colleagues in corporate finance to define their reporting needs, which when implemented would remove manual processes and create a central data set for use by all.

Over the next 12 months, there were a number of key activities scheduled including the consumption of data from core Lincolnshire County Council databases such as Business World and the Mosaic case management system, which would streamline reporting and data processing and reduce costs for service areas who were maybe using other solutions at present. The IMT team would continue to promote the use of Power BI as a reporting solution and its benefit to service areas and colleagues who wish to consume reports.

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

- The Board was reassured that work undertaken on data services had increased capacity of the data services team to support with elements of the transformation programme, in particular work to move from the Business Objects System to Power BI, which looked at all data available and transitioned onto two platforms that were available as part of the Microsoft Office licensing. Officers had worked to embed the data services function as a corporate function within the organisation.
- Officers would be working to identify some performance measurements for the data services team in the coming months which would allow the Board to monitor progress.

In relation to the Serco contract performance for IMT, the Lead IT Contract and Vendor Relationship Officer highlighted that the KPI09 had been replaced by two new KPI's, which were KPI18 and KPI19, which would balance the performance on the two activities.

RESOLVED:

That the Board be assured on the performance of the:

1. IMT Data Services Department; and

2. the Serco contract against its Key Performance Indicators.

94 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMMES

95 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD WORK PROGRAMME

Members were advised that this item was for information only.

The Democratic Services Officer advised Members that the minutes of the last minute contained some duplication and were missing the correct information for minute number 74 and were therefore not a true record of the meeting for that item. It was therefore agreed that the minutes of the meeting on the 25 November be amended and the amended version be considered at the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 12.54 pm

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