

Agenda Item 9

EXECUTIVE DECISION – 01 MARCH 2022

CORPORATE PLAN SUCCESS FRAMEWORK 2021/22 – QUARTER 3

COMMENTS FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

At its meeting on 24 February 2022, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board considered the report and unanimously agreed to support the recommendations to the Executive.

In response to questions from members of the Board, the following points were confirmed:

- In response to concerns raised by residents in West Lindsey regarding the roll out of a separate cardboard and paper recycling collection and where to store the recycling bins, especially for those in terraced houses, and that side waste would no longer be collected, these issues would have already been addressed by the other two district councils who had rolled out the separate collection and a flyer was being sent out by West Lindsey District Council which clarified the roll out and directed residents to a series of FAQs on its website. This roll out was being driven by the requirements of the Environment Act and the expectation on all councils to act differently in terms of how they collect and recycle waste. Initial feedback from the other two district councils indicated that it had been positively received, and it was increasing recycling rates and the quality of what was recycled which meant it had a greater value. In relation to side waste, there was a risk that it would become contaminated and damp, which would reduce the quality and therefore its value. Larger quantities of cardboard waste should be taken to HWRC sites for disposal. It was anticipated that the separate cardboard and paper recycling collection would eventually be rolled out in the remaining district councils to provide a joined up approach across the county. As the quality of recyclable material had increased, the Council was receiving an income stream as opposed to incurring costs for disposing of the waste through the Energy from Waste facility. There was not a material recycling facility (MRF) in Lincolnshire, and this was not currently being pursued as the focus was on separate collections in line with the Environment Act. An anaerobic digester for food waste was being explored in addition to looking for new ways to process and dispose of separated waste.
- In response to concerns that the ambition 'Enable everyone to enjoy life to the full' could be subjective and how success against that ambition could be measured, it had been recognised that the Corporate Plan needed to be all encompassing for all businesses, residents and visitors which made it challenging for individual needs to be reflected in the performance indicators. This would be a challenge for all councils when developing a corporate plan. The performance indicators were then proxy measures to try to assess how the Council's services contributed to that. It was

recognised that for many families, this ambition would be a challenge due to economic hardship and rising costs. Consultation had been undertaken on the language used in the Corporate Plan, which could be looked at again when the Corporate Plan was refreshed in the future.

- The number of children in care in Lincolnshire was lower than other local authorities with similar levels of deprivation and geography. This was due to a number of reasons, such as the Council's investment in early help and support to provide preventative support to families; strong links with schools which has helped schools to see their role in supporting vulnerable families; and the use of Signs of Safety where the Council worked alongside the family within the family network and the community to identify what strengths were available and what wrap around support could be provided by the wider family, neighbours and the community. The number of children in care had increased, as it had nationally as well, but it was important to keep children safe with their families and ensure that the right children were in care when they needed to be. Children's Services was inspected by Ofsted regularly and engaged in peer review with other local authorities, and was therefore confident that the thresholds were right and the right children were coming into care. The target would not prevent children being brought into care if that was needed. A contribution to the rising number of children in care was the backlog in the courts due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which was delaying children exiting from care, but this was now starting to ease.
- With regards to children's mental health, the waiting times for treatment had increased, both nationally and in Lincolnshire. The Lincolnshire CCG funded these services which were provided by Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, and the Council was the lead commissioner for these arrangements. The Council would be raising these concerns with the CCG to seek resolutions to the increasing waiting times.
- The majority of complaints received by the Council were in relation to Highways and Children's Services. A lot of work had been undertaken on the early resolution of complaints, but due to the volume of complaints increasing, particularly during the pandemic, this was proving difficult. Additional resource had been put into the team to try to resolve more complaints early on to avoid escalating to the formal process. An annual report on complaints was considered by the Audit Committee which could be shared with the Board in the future.
- In relation to supporting businesses and diversifying employment sectors in Lincolnshire, there were two main routes of government funding to support businesses in addition to the support provided by the economic development team at the Council. The majority of grants would go to either the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership or through the district councils. The Levelling Up White Paper also proposed future funding streams going through district councils rather than the county council.

- The customer strategy and the digital strategy aimed to make it easier for customers to access the Council. The majority of calls go through the Customer Service Centre (CSC), a lot of which were transactional calls or people ringing the Council to check that their online transactions had gone through. As Serco managed the CSC, this meant there was a cost to the Council for each call. Work was being undertaken to identify the highest volume, lowest complexity type of calls to look at potential solutions to reduce the volume of calls, and then introduce changes one at a time. The impact would be monitored as not everyone was able to access the Council online so there was a need to ensure that other avenues for accessing the Council were still available.

The following comments were also made:

- In relation to the increase in crime rates, it was highlighted that there had been an increase in the number of police officers, rural crime officers, police vehicles, drug dogs, and traffic vehicles which should start to have a positive impact on the crime statistics.
- With regards to the Green Masterplan and the Climate Partnership, it was highlighted that these would be difficult to achieve unless additional funding and investment was identified.

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