

# Agenda Item 6

## COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 27 September 2022

**Statement from: Councillor M J Hill OBE – Leader of the Council**

### **COMMERCIAL TEAM**

#### **Infrastructure Services**

The Commercial Team have worked on a wide variety of projects over the past year to the benefit of LCC and its wider District Council Partners. The team supported the Transport Transformation programme by helping establish a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) for Transport Services providing a more streamlined, simple to access pre-approved list of suitably qualified and experienced transport providers to meet the Councils transport requirements over the next 8-year period.

The Council's short-term vehicle hire contract was re-procured, supporting both the Green Masterplan and the Smarter Working Policy with a range of different vehicles and fuel types available for selection. The contract has a 'no-turn down policy' and staff can book cars to their home address. Some rates have been removed or improved.

A consultant has been procured to support the authorities within Greater Lincolnshire to develop a vision and an evidenced based assessment to deliver a better future for the communities, visitors and businesses of Greater Lincolnshire.

A furniture contract has been put in place to support the Smarter Working Programme which includes a design service, utilising the supplier's knowledge and experience in re-establishing office areas to best effect.

The Council's Learning Management System (LMS), known as 'Lincs2Learn', which allows for up to 7000 users to access a wide catalogue of courses has been re-procured.

The team have also worked on a range of projects for our key district partners, as well as other wider collaborative contracts. These included a collaboration with NKDC to procure a new Occupational Health Contract, enabling all parties to benefit from the combined volumes rates as well as a range of benefits including mobile clinics to conduct the medicals at fire stations and video appointments reducing the need for staff travel.

#### **People Services**

Work has recently concluded on the re-procurement of the Carers Support Service with a new contract being effective from 1 October 2022. The Carers Support Service seeks to improve the quality of life of carers by providing interventions that promote and support their health and wellbeing and sustain their caring role. The remodelled service has a renewed focus on early identification of carers, strength-based interventions and access to preventative community-based support. The team has also recently concluded the re-procurement of the Lincolnshire Sensory Services, which is a preventative and reablement service for children and adults with a sensory impairment both cognitive and acquired and their associated disabilities where applicable.

## FINANCE

### **Statement of Accounts 2021/22**

The government has extended the date for the publication of the audited statement of accounts for 2021/22 to the end of November 2022. The Council's draft accounts were presented to Audit Committee on the 11 July and were available for public inspection during July and August. 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 Quarter 1 (Q1)**

The first budget monitoring reports for the current financial year 2022/23 are based on the forecast position as of 30 June 2022. The reports were presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Management Board at its meeting on 25 August with the comments of the Board presented to the Executive on 6 September 2022. Whilst in Q1 we are reporting a small variance against our budgets, we are also aware of increasing inflationary pressures impacting our budgets, so will continue to monitor this closely and report further updates for quarter 2.

## TRANSFORMATION, PROGRAMMES & PERFORMANCE

The Transformation Programme is made up of highly complex programmes of change which require a new way of working; the consideration of optimisation and digitalisation of our processes; and the development of a different skillset for our workforce.

The programme will help drive financial savings and maximise independence in order to minimise future demand on our services; all with the aim of helping to protect frontline services through delivering good value, considering the environmental benefits, demonstrating a return on investment and delivering better outcomes for all.

The programme has developed four key strategies, which are all now being implemented to help us achieve our priorities set out in the Corporate Plan:

- Our **People Strategy** drives the commitment made in our Corporate Plan to be the 'employer of choice' in Lincolnshire. The People Strategy seeks to deliver our workforce ambitions and is focusing on a variety of workstreams, including areas such as Attracting and Retaining Talent, Learning and Development and Workforce Transformation and Innovation, to name a few.
- Our **Business Intelligence Strategy** aims to provide us with the intelligence to better understand the needs of our residents and businesses. Optimising our intelligence will help us to ensure our services are aligned to these needs, whilst being more assured of the impact of our decisions and will be critical in evaluating what we can do to ensure we are continuously developing the services we provide to meet their needs in the future.
- Our **Customer Strategy** aims to deliver strong, joined up services, that are designed to ensure we are able to meet our customer's current and future needs. We put our customers at the heart of what we do, and through the strategy we will ensure our employees are clear and fair when communicating with customers and we will work with customers to improve the way that we do things. In delivery of this strategy, we are also focusing on the future

offer for the Customer Service Centre to ensure we have the right operating model in place from 2024 onwards.

- Our **Digital Strategy** outlines our digital-specific priorities that we must focus on and deliver to adapt for a digital future and to achieve our corporate vision and commitments. In looking to the future, we must make sure we have the skills, processes, culture, and tools to work collaboratively and creatively in a digital world.

Our immediate priority focusses on digital opportunities within the customer service centre; enabling greater opportunities to self-serve and reduce the number and cost of calls coming into the CSC. Specific areas of calls being looked at include: switchboard, transport, highways, libraries, registrations and email contacts.

We are also looking at process optimisation and automation opportunities across our back-office functions including areas such as managing post, blue badge processing and support to our fire service.

In addition to these four key strategies, the Transformation Programme continues to drive our Smarter Working ambitions to ensure we have the right balance of office accommodation in place to meet future business needs and ways of working.

The Passenger Travel project is reviewing our educational transport operation, including how we procure transport and support independent travel to help stabilise the budget and avoid future cost escalation.

The Corporate Support Optimisation programme is leading the implementation of the new corporate services operating model ready for when the Serco contract ends in 2024; it's also reviewing how we perform our financial services aligned to the re-design of Business World and is overseeing cost saving activity through the review of our Business Support service.

The Children in Care programme is delivering a number of workstreams across the child's journey in care to prevent escalation of need and improve outcomes for our children and young people. We are reviewing our residential estate and Valuing Care offer, and as at July 2022, 31 children have returned at a cost avoidance of £3m.

A number of other projects supporting areas such as Special Educational Needs, Adult Care and corporate systems like our Intranet have been completed and moved into business as usual delivery; however these continue to be monitored by the transformation programme to ensure they continue to deliver their intended benefits.

## **CORPORATE SERVICES**

### **Devolution**

Lincolnshire has huge potential for growth in the economy in high skill, high wage jobs and for spreading opportunity for our residents. Working with local authorities across Greater Lincolnshire, the Council is developing proposals for devolution that would bring the right investment into our area to unlock growth and boost living standards.

Devolution for Lincolnshire would see Government transfer some of its powers, services and budgets through a County Deal so that we can integrate them with our existing local services and target them to local need and growth across our key food, ports and logistics, and green energy sectors. This would enable strategic decisions on skills and infrastructure to be taken locally and used to drive the creation of high wage, high skills jobs across Lincolnshire.

Development of the Council's devolution asks has included consideration of how each of the powers contained within the Government's devolution framework might be used to benefit the County's residents. Careful consideration has also been given to identifying further powers beyond those listed in the framework which could be used to address the unique needs and opportunities for levelling up Lincolnshire. Devolution of these bespoke powers would not only meet local need but would provide the Government with an opportunity to enhance the devolution framework to reflect new and innovative asks such as the ones we are considering for Lincolnshire.

Greater Lincolnshire's Local Industrial Strategy and Economic Recovery Plan have been reviewed and underpin the emerging proposals; and the views of local businesses towards devolution have been sought through the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership.

The Council is now seeking to learn from the experience of pilot deals in neighbouring areas such as Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, to finalise proposals by the end of the year and to position Lincolnshire as an early candidate for any future wave of devolution deals.