

Agenda Item 6

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 09 December 2022

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

COMMERCIAL

Infrastructure Services

The Commercial Team (Infrastructure) continues to deliver on a wide variety of key projects that will realise significant benefit into 2023 and beyond.

The team has been supporting the re-procurement of the Customer Services Centre contract. The procurement is being conducted as a competitive procedure with negotiation via the open market to allow further exploration of best value solutions with potential contractors. The evaluation of submitted Selection Questionnaires has been concluded and Invitations to submit initial tenders have been issued to 3 candidates.

The team is also in the process of establishing a category management approach to ICT procurements and is helping to support the development of a range of ICT 'towers' that will help classify spend and activity to facilitate a more strategic approach to procurement going forward. Some significant procurement projects related to this are in development already in areas related to managed cloud and security services, LAN support, strategic software, hardware requirements and the re-procurement of the Council's social care case management system.

Additionally, the team are working with colleagues in Corporate Property to help re-procure the corporate property contract, which is currently one large all-encompassing contract. The team are supporting a range of commissioning activities including consultations with service users, to understand their experience with the contract, as well as with other local authorities and framework providers, to understand how the market has evolved since the last procurement was undertaken in 2014. This activity will help underpin service redesign decisions and the resulting procurement(s).

The procurement approach is expected to be finalised during Q2 of 2023, to allow sufficient time for the utilisation of a more complex procedure such as a competitive procedure with negotiation, if such an approach is ultimately determined to be of benefit.

People Services

Work has recently concluded on the re-procurement of the Lincolnshire Community Equipment Service (LCES) with a new contract being effective from 1 April 2023. The LCES Service is an equipment loan service which is required to help meet the Health and Social Care needs of people of all ages, including children, who have long term conditions and disabilities, offering a critical support function which is at the forefront of maintaining the independence of Lincolnshire's residents. It is a jointly commissioned service between the Council and Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board (ICB), with a Section 75 agreement and Partnership Board underpinning the joint work. Collaborative working has been strengthened with the inclusion of the Wheelchair Services under the umbrella of the new LCES service, currently commissioned by the ICB, which alongside the updated specification and associated processes, will enable the Council to maximise the service impact and benefit to end users, as well as improving the ability to evidence value for money.

The remodelled Carers Support Service successfully mobilised on 1 October 2022 with carers able to self-refer online for support and access strength-based interventions earlier in their caring journey. The team are supporting the embedding of the new arrangements with partners to maximise the service reach and progress the development of a revised reporting suite to enhance service and commissioning intelligence.

The Domestic Abuse Support Service is currently being re-procured through a co-funded partnership between the Council, Lincolnshire's ICB and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). The redesigned service model has drawn on the successes of current arrangements, local needs assessments, emerging legislation and stakeholder engagement to provide an integrated service to enable victims of domestic abuse to be safer and improve their wellbeing and resilience. The new service is due to be in place from 1 April 2023.

The team has also recently initiated a procurement to re-establish a framework for works associated with Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG). The Council is the accountable body for the DFG funding and allocates the Better Care Fund (BCF) monies to each of the seven district councils in Lincolnshire. The district authorities require a compliant mechanism that allows them to allocate work and directly award contracts without going out to tender each time. The framework will enable this, supporting collaboration and consistency across the county. The benchmarking and subsequent adjustment of the schedule of rates has resulted in a payment mechanism that is both attractive in terms of increasing market competition and one that is also affordable and sustainable to the district authorities.

FINANCE

Revenue Budget and Capital Programme for 2022/23 – Monitoring Reports

With rising costs and increasing financial challenges, we continue to keep a vigilant eye on our finances. Our second budget monitoring reports for the current financial year were based on the position as at 30 September 2022. The reports were presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Management Board at its meeting on 24 November, with the comments of the Board presented to the Executive on 6 December 2022. In spite of the inflationary cost pressures, we are forecasting a satisfactory position, with a forecast underspend of just under 1% of the revenue service budgets and our capital programme for the current year.

Setting a Budget for 2023/24

We expect to receive our financial settlement from government shortly, following the Autumn Budget announcements in November. The council continues to face significant cost pressures relating to inflation and growth in demand for services, and in this challenging environment the Executive are planning to propose a one-year revenue budget for 2023/24 with limited changes to the capital programme to meet the commitments of our on-going capital schemes. We continue to lobby through the CCN and other bodies for a fairer deal for Lincolnshire.

TRANSFORMATION, PROGRAMMES & PERFORMANCE

Performance

We are continuing our Business Intelligence (BI) transformation work where we are looking to utilise our Microsoft license by moving our corporate reporting to Power BI in line with our BI Strategy. As a result, we have built on our Corporate Plan reporting and from Q2 we will now deliver service level performance to Scrutiny Committees using Power BI and displayed on the council website. This replaces the Lincolnshire Research Observatory (LRO) and displays the data in an interactive tool which is more visual and easier to navigate. We are also continuing to develop our operational reporting into service areas using the same tool for a consistent approach to reporting business intelligence.

Full service level reporting to all scrutiny committees can be found here [Service Level Performance Indicators](#).

CORPORATE SERVICES, DEVOLUTION AND BOUNDARY REVIEW

Devolution

Proposals for devolution continue to advance in collaboration with colleagues at North Lincolnshire Council, North East Lincolnshire Council, and the seven district councils. The proposals for devolution in Greater Lincolnshire seek to attract investment into the area to unlock growth and boost living standards.

The devolution proposals place a focus on the creation of high skill, high wage jobs, spreading opportunity for our residents. They target growth and productivity across our key sectors of food, ports and logistics, and green energy; and build on the findings of business engagement activities which took place earlier this year.

Lincolnshire has recently been mentioned in media outlets as a 'front runner' for devolution, which is a positive indication which we intend to build upon. The report being considered by Council today presents the latest draft documents and seeks to ensure that we are in a strong position to enter negotiations with government for a devolution deal at the earliest opportunity.

Boundary Review

The Boundary Commission are consulting on changes which will see 10 new constituencies created across England. The number of constituencies in the East Midlands will subsequently increase from 46 to 47. The final consultation of revised constituencies will close on 5 December with final recommendations being submitted to parliament by 1 July 2023.

If the latest proposals are agreed, from the next general election parts of Lincolnshire will be represented by an additional constituency. The proposed new Stamford and Rutland constituency will now include the Harborough villages of Billesdon & Tilton, Nevill & Thurnby and Houghton on top of the planned 11 South Kesteven District Council wards.

The proposals would see an MP operating across three different counties and raises questions about the synergy between the outskirts of Leicester, Grantham and Bourne. Following debate at the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on 24 November I have written to The Commission

about our concerns regarding the proposals and suggest they revert to the previous recommendations.