



**EXECUTIVE
6 DECEMBER 2022**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR M J HILL OBE (LEADER OF THE COUNCIL)

Councillors Mrs P A Bradwell OBE (Executive Councillor for Children's Services, Community Safety and Procurement) (Deputy Leader), R D Butroid (Executive Councillor for People Management, Legal and Corporate Property), L A Cawrey (Executive Councillor for Fire & Rescue and Cultural Services), C J Davie (Executive Councillor for Economic Development, Environment and Planning), R G Davies (Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT), D McNally (Executive Councillor for Waste and Trading Standards) and Mrs S Woolley (Executive Councillor for NHS Liaison, Community Engagement, Registration and Coroners)

Councillors: P M Dilks (Leader of the Opposition) and R B Parker (Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board) attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Debbie Barnes OBE (Chief Executive), Glen Garrod (Executive Director - Adult Care and Community Wellbeing), Michelle Grady (Assistant Director – Finance), Andy Gutherson (Executive Director Place), Caroline Jackson (Head of Corporate Performance), Andrew McLean (Assistant Director - Transformation), Heather Sandy (Executive Director of Children's Services), Nigel West (Head of Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Officer) and Rachel Wilson (Democratic Services Officer)

38 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs W Bowkett, Executive Councillor for Adult Care and Public Health.

An apology for absence was also received from Andrew Crookham, Executive Director – Resources.

39 DECLARATIONS OF COUNCILLORS' INTERESTS

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

40 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE LEADER, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

The Executive Councillor for People Management, Legal and Corporate Property announced the appointment of the new Assistant Director – Property – Jane Sowerby- Warrington and advised that she would be starting later in the month.

41 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE HELD ON 1 NOVEMBER 2022

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

42 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2022/23 - QUARTER 2

The Assistant Director – Finance introduced a report on *Revenue Budget Monitoring 2022/23 – Quarter 2* which summarised the forecasts against the budget for the current financial year. More detail on the variances reported were set out in the appendices to the report. It was reported that the current overall position was forecasting an underspend of £1.614m (excluding schools) as at 30 September 2022. This was a movement of £2.3m from the small overspend that was reported in Quarter 1.

The Assistant Director advised that the current budget had been set to include inflationary increases based on the projections at that time. Due to the uncertainty at that time, the contingency fund was also increased in anticipation of some of the pressures. It was noted that the forecast assumed that the pressure created by the pay award had been met by the contingency fund, however, the forecasts did include pressures created by contractor, utility and inflationary price increases. There had been variances reported in the Place directorate including streetlighting costs due to energy price rises, and the Highways contract with the mid-year price increase to support supply chains which was being offset in part by some Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) permitting income, as well as underspends in other directorates, and additional grants which had been received which were not known about when the budget was set. These forecasts were expected to be updated in the future, and it was highlighted that the forecast for Home to School Transport was missing, but this was currently being worked on.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board highlighted to the Executive the main points in the Board's Statement to the Executive and noted that there had been some discussion around the Autumn Statement and the potential for increases to Council Tax. It was also noted that the full implications for the Adult Social Care budget were not yet known. It had also been commented that the increase to the National Living Wage would have an effect on a number of council contracts. There was also recognition that people's ability to pay their council tax bills could be affected by the current financial situation, but that there was a council tax support system in place.

The overspend in Highways was highlighted, but it was noted that this could potentially be offset by the winter maintenance budget if there was less demand for grit runs carried out over the winter period. It was noted that the overspend in Children's Services was predominantly due to recruitment issues within the Children's legal services team, and the need to rely on locum support which was becoming more costly due to a competitive market.

During discussion by the Executive, the following was highlighted:

- In relation to inflationary pressures, it was queried what the projections were for the coming year, and if prices were expected to start decreasing. Officers advised that energy prices were starting to level off, construction prices were also starting to level off, although there may be a time lag on some of the contracts. However, the pay increase may have an impact next year.
- It was highlighted that construction inflation tended to be above the headline inflation level and was something that needed to be kept under close review. There could be wider impacts as there was still volatility within supply chains.
- In terms of Children's social care, staffing pressures were beginning to level off due to the apprentice scheme. However, placement costs were not levelling off and still far exceeded the levels seen pre-pandemic.
- Within Adult Social Care, Occupational Therapist and nurse recruitment had improved slightly, and more people were being retained. In the Home Care market there had also been some slight improvement, but the challenge was still considerable as capacity demands were excessive. Following an announcement from Government, a £15m international recruitment fund for social care was expected. The Executive Director – Adult Care and Community Wellbeing was leading on this for the East Midlands, and it was hoped that the East Midlands, and Lincolnshire in particular, could be promoted as an attractive area for people to work in social care.
- The Executive was informed that there was significant disappointment that the decisions in relation to long term funding for social care had been put back by the Government, and local authorities were being given short term funding when a long term solution was needed. The Chancellor's announcement had made reference to funding that was going to be made available. This was positive and the detail was currently being worked through, but it would help over the next year. The future of the Public Health grant and Better Care Fund was still unknown at this point.
- A report was due to be considered at the Lincolnshire Health and Wellbeing Board later that day regarding the proposals for the allocation of the £500m discharge fund. This was required to be spent this financial year and was to particularly address the flow of patients in hospitals.

RESOLVED

That the current position on the revenue budget be noted.

43 CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2022/23 - QUARTER 2 TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2022

The Assistant Director – Finance presented a report titled Capital Budget Monitoring 2022/23 – Quarter 2 to 30 September 2022. The Executive was advised that the current 2022/23 forecasted position was an underspend of £11.377m (Block schemes £11.913m underspend, Project schemes £0.536m overspend). It was noted that the majority of this variance being reported as the capital contingency, which had been maintained in anticipation of pressures on the budget including the inflationary pressures previously

discussed around construction. This would be explored further during the budget setting process for 2023/24. Other variances highlighted included a small overspend forecast for highways maintenance and a small underspend for Fire and Rescue. The budget setting process would address some of the pressures coming through on the major schemes particularly the North Hykeham Relief Road and the Grantham Southern Relief Road. The level of the contingency fund going forward would also be examined.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board presented the comments of the meeting of the Board held on 24 November 2022 and highlighted Appendix D of the report and the education transport links to school, and concerns had been raised as to whether the health and safety aspect of children cycling to school on busy roads had been considered in the cost versus benefit analysis of sustainable travel schemes. The Executive Director – Place gave reassurance that health and safety was a prime consideration, however some of the proposals that came forward were not as straight forward as would be expected. It was requested whether a written report could be provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board which set this out in further detail. It was also noted that there were a number of Transport Strategies due to be considered by the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee the following week, and these did have a focus on walking and cycling.

RESOLVED

That the position on the capital programme be noted.

44 CORPORATE PLAN SUCCESS FRAMEWORK 2022/23 - QUARTER 2

Consideration was given to a report introduced by the Head of Corporate Performance which presented an overview of performance against the Corporate Plan as at 30 September 2022. Detailed information on performance could be viewed on the Council's website. The full list of activities reported on were set out in Appendix A to the report. It was reported that all 39 activities were progressing as planned, which was a positive picture considering the challenges being faced by the services. Progress would continue to be monitored for the remainder of the year.

There were 22 activities that could be reported on for Quarter 2, 73% were achieving or exceeding target. There were four indicators which were exceeding target, and 12 achieving target. There were now also three KPI's which were now achieving target, which were not achieving target in quarter 1. There were currently six indicators that were not achieving target, and two of these measures related to recycling. However, as two of the KPI's exceeding target also related to waste, there was still a positive picture for this area.

It was reported that work was underway with the Executive Director – Place to ensure consistency around waste measures reporting to Executive and the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee for Quarter 3, including a glossary of terms to ensure that reporting is clear, including definitions around the reporting of national indicators.

In terms of 'Days lost to sickness absence', whilst this was not yet achieving target, a slight reduction in days lost had been seen, but Covid was still having an impact, and without Covid, this measure would be below its target of 7.5 days per FTE. The authority continued to manage sickness absence through its absence management procedures as well as providing a comprehensive package of health and wellbeing support to staff.

There were two new measures which were now underperforming in Quarter 2 which previously were not, these both related to Ofsted Inspection outcomes, which were 'Percentage of schools judged good or outstanding' and 'Percentage of pupils in outstanding or good schools', and it was reported at the meeting that the drop in performance was due to Ofsted judgements of three secondaries and one primary academy whose reports were published during the quarter 2 period. Plans were in place to support the required improvement in these schools.

In relation to the contextual KPI's, where a target was not set but a RAG rating was given by the Executive Director, it was noted that there were four that were exceeding target. There were also a number of measures which could not be reported in Quarter 2, which were listed in paragraph 4.6 of the report, these mainly related to national data which had not yet been released. It was also reported that since the writing of the report, there had been an agreement between the Leader of the Council and the Executive Councillor for Adult Care and Public Health to include a further two measures which related to Adult Social Care Performance which would be reported on from Quarter 3, which were 'Adult Safeguarding Cases supported by an Advocate' and 'Concluded Adult Safeguarding Enquiries where the desired outcomes were achieved'.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board presented the comments of the meeting of the Board held on 24 November 2022, and it was noted that the Board focused on three areas:

- Waste and Recycling – it was discussed whether, when the Energy from Waste (EfW) working at capacity, if there was a risk of the amount of waste being sent to landfill increasing, and to what extent was the facility operating at maximum capacity. Educational campaigns to improve residents understanding of what should go in each bin were also underway and the Board had requested to look further at if there were variations by district, and if there were different recycling rates for different local authorities.
- Education – it was acknowledged that there was a combination of reasons for schools not being judged good or outstanding.
- Early Years – the Board has reflected on the 80% target and queried whether the Council should be aiming for 100% to ensure all young children were engaged in an Early Years setting.

During discussion by the Executive, the following was noted:

- It was commented that the reporting of waste performance could be frustrating, due to some of the national requirements for reporting. It was suggested that the most important indicator in terms of waste was on p.77 of the report and was the amount

of waste which was sent to landfill, which in Lincolnshire was 4.47%. It was important to maintain an overall picture rather than focusing on individual indicators which could be contradictory, and the overall position was in line with the Council's Waste Strategy. It therefore may be more useful to have a narrative of waste performance.

- In terms of education around recycling, it needed to be a joined-up approach across all eight authorities. For example, the paper and card collection was delivering an income stream as Lincolnshire was delivering a product that the market wanted access to.
- It was clarified that in terms of the Corporate Plan, the Council could decide what indicators were included (although there would still be a need to report certain KPI's to government) to ensure that it was meaningful to residents. If it was acceptable to the Executive, officers would discuss with the Executive Councillor for Waste and Trading Standards outside of the meeting, the most appropriate indicators to be included in the Corporate Plan.
- The Executive Director – Children's Services advised that the local authority did not have a formal role in intervention when an academy was judged as inadequate, and this role now sat with the Regional Director of the DfE. Whilst some of these targets were placed on the local authority, some of the control and interventions did not sit with the authority, and the funding had been removed. However, the Council did work with academies, and also worked very closely with the Regional Director to seek further reassurance. The Council had engaged with the academies in question and requested a response. It was commented that it was very important that the academies continued to work with the authority in relation to inclusion, and officers were also working with the Regional Director to raise concerns about inclusion of children in those academies as they move forward.
- It was queried whether local councillors could be kept informed of any issues with academies in their areas. The Executive was advised that workshops would be held for councillors to help them understand how they can gain more information about academies in their areas, as well as expectations about what information they may receive. It was noted that the Regional Directors did often share information with the local authority, however it was often confidential and would not allow officers to share this information with councillors.
- It was suggested that councillors were able to engage with their schools, attend events etc., to build up the relationship with that school to gain a more balanced view.
- There was a discussion regarding whether local councillors could be informed if officers became aware of a serious issue at a school. It was noted that officers may not learn about issues at an academy until there was an Ofsted inspection. It was also highlighted that the council had no jurisdiction to go into an academy, but once the Ofsted report had been received, councillors could be briefed. Also, if there was an incident that the authority was made aware of, officers would be able to brief councillors on this.
- In terms of the measure relating to Early Years Entitlement for 2 year olds, it was noted that attendance at nursery was parental choice. However, it was highlighted

that Lincolnshire was benchmarked above its statistical neighbours, and it was believed that the target was set at the correct level.

- Carbon emissions – officers would be bringing the Carbon Management Plan for approval in 2023, and there would be two main issues to consider, the carbon footprint of physical buildings and transport.
- It was noted that some national measures were used to enable the authority to benchmark against statistical neighbours. It was suggested that some of these measures needed to be more user friendly so they showed what was really going on in Lincolnshire. Officers agreed to explore the way that local priorities were reported.

RESOLVED

1. That performance for 2022/23 as at 30 September 2022 be noted.
2. That officers examine the way that the delivery of local priorities in the Corporate Plan are more effectively measured for future reporting.

The meeting closed at 11.36 am

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