

Agenda Item 6

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 01 DECEMBER 2023

Statement from: Councillor Martin Hill OBE – Leader of the Council, Executive Councillor for Resources, Communications, Community Engagement and Commissioning

COMMERCIAL

The Commercial Team continues to jointly lead with HR and Finance colleagues the re-provision of the Corporate Support Services and the exit and transition into the new arrangements as the existing contract with Serco draws to a close.

The team is supporting and procuring a range of other projects including:

- The re-commissioning and re-provision of the Council's Facilities Management Services.
- The re-procurement of the Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Control and mobilisation system, using specialist framework agreements after rapid and extensive market engagement.
- The re-provision of laptops on a phased basis, prioritizing older equipment to maintain effective security.
- The next iteration of the DBS and Right to Work checks, required for recruitment and ongoing assurance of staff working with vulnerable people.
- The re-provision of the Gritting Salt Contract, which will continue to ensure the Council meets its statutory duty to keep the highways safe at all times.
- The early stages of the re-commissioning of the library service, undertaking pre-market engagement to inform our specification and commercial arrangements.
- The printing and distribution of County News.
- Following confirmation that, from 2026, local authorities must divert food waste from landfill, re-procuring the Council's waste processing and haulage solutions in a timely way to enable transition to the new arrangements.

The Team concluded the award of a single supplier Framework for the supply of Refuse Collection Vehicles (RCVs). Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) is the framework operator and all District and Local Authorities within the geographic Lincolnshire and Yorkshire boundaries are eligible to place orders directly with the supplier. This will enable authorities to meet their municipal waste collection requirements including food waste collection. As the Framework operator LCC receives a small rebate on all purchases under the framework.

FINANCE

Revenue Budget and Capital Programme for 2023/2024 – Monitoring Reports

During this continued financially challenging period we continue to keep a vigilant eye on our finances. Our latest budget monitoring reports for the current financial year were based on the position as of 30 September 2023. The reports were presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Management Board at its meeting on 30 November 2023 and the comments of the Board will be presented to the Executive on 5 December 2023. In spite of the on-going inflationary cost pressures and service demands, we remain financially resilient, delivering savings and forecasting an underspend of our revenue service budgets and our capital programme for the current year.

Setting a Budget for 2024/2025

Following on from the government's recent autumn budget announcements, we will be consulting in January on our budget proposals for 2024/2025. This will incorporate the awaited financial settlement from government, which we hope to receive later in the month. The council continues to face significant cost pressures relating to inflation and growth in demand for services, and in this challenging environment, we are planning to propose a one-year revenue budget for 2024/2025 with a review of the capital programme to meet the commitments of our on-going capital schemes and ensure the programme and our investment in services remains affordable.

CORPORATE SERVICES

A Devolution deal has been agreed between Government and Greater Lincolnshire Leaders which will be endorsed by a signing ceremony with Local Government Minister Jacob Young in Lincolnshire. Following that, the three future constituent councils including LCC will be invited to endorse that before the proposal is put to public consultation.

Extensive engagement continues with city, district and borough councils. This includes all member briefings, and one to one sessions with leaders to talk through the details of the deal.

Work has been completed to develop the devolution proposal which will form the basis of the devolution consultation. The proposal document draws from the prospectus that was approved by Council in December 2022, the 2050 vision document, and the devolution deal that has been negotiated with government. The proposal, along with the equality analysis and consultation plans will be considered by members through Overview and Scrutiny Management Board in November and Council on 1 December. Subject to the three upper tier councils' agreement, public consultation will start on 4 December and last for a period of eight weeks.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In the 2023-2024 financial year to the end of October, there were 45 engagement activities carried out by services across the council. This includes five consultations, 33 public and wider stakeholder engagements and seven internal engagements. Further, the engagement team supported 33 customer feedback surveys hosted on Let's Talk. A recent example of our engagement work is the local nature recovery strategy. It is still open to participate in and has already seen 717 people provide responses.

Our corporate engagement platform, Let's Talk Lincolnshire, helps us engage with our communities, stakeholders, and staff to shape our services and inform decision-making. Since its launch in September 2021, we received over 134,000 site visits and have seen 21,000 people taking part in engagement activities on the site. There are over 3,200 registered participants we regularly communicate with. We received nearly 1,900 responses to our Parental childcare sufficiency survey and had nearly 520 responses to the Stamford transport strategy survey. Online engagements like these help us to reach a wide range of people across Lincolnshire and what we learn from our respondents' priorities informs and shapes our work.

The engagement process has a strong focus on clear reporting. To close the feedback loop, we share reports widely internally and externally. We publish reports on engagement activities on Let's Talk Lincolnshire, to update local people on the impact of their contributions.

Our County Views survey helps us get a snapshot of how we're doing as a council and improve services for people across Lincolnshire. We run these surveys three times a year. The surveys are available online on Let's Talk Lincolnshire, are printed in the County News magazine and are available via a dedicated telephone line which provides a good opportunity for all to take part in them. The current survey, on the topic of vaping is open until 8 January 2024.

The last survey, on the topic of helping people access information about care, had 360 responses. The feedback will feed into the information and advice offer review to improve service provision in Lincolnshire. The results of all County Views surveys are available on Let's Talk Lincolnshire including a dashboard with responses and trends over time.

TRANSFORMATION

In April this year, the council successfully went live with the implementation of its Business World ERP application, hosted through Hoople Ltd. Rigorous testing and planning resulted in a positive implementation, ensuring our staff and suppliers are being paid and that the council can receipt the income it is due. The council is now operating on the latest version of the application and is working with Hoople on future developments.

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