

Appendix C

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 01 DECEMBER 2023

Statement from: **Councillor Richard Butroid – Executive Councillor for People Management, Legal and Corporate Property**

PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

The Council's performance on sickness absence and voluntary turnover has been positive. As of 30 September 2023, we have seen a reduction in the past 12 months to 7.22 days per FTE and 8.41% respectively. Likewise, we have also seen an increase in the number of employments within the Council to 5798, compared with 5668 in September 2022. The figures indicate that the Council's actions on attraction and retention of the workforce over the past 18 months are having an impact.

With respect to our agency spend, our contract with the Council's supplier of agency workers has seen an overall reduction in the last three quarters to an average spend of £1.4m. This is compared with an average of £1.5m during quarters 1, 2 and 3 in 2022. Whilst off-contract spend has risen in the last three quarters, this is largely due to an increase in the usage of educational psychology, in which the model delivers a more cost-effective option to that of direct employment.

LEGAL SERVICES

13 November 2023 saw the commencement in post of Will Bell as the new Chief Legal Officer in place of David Coleman who will be retiring in April 2024. Will was formerly Director of Governance and Partnerships at North Lincolnshire Council, where he acted as their designated Monitoring Officer from 2011.

20 November 2023 saw the commencement in post of Lisa Tremble in the new post of Head of Legal Services. Lisa was formerly Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services at Westmoreland and Furness Unitary Council and prior to that fulfilled the same role and was Monitoring Officer at Eden District Council.

These appointments leave the Legal Service in strong hands and enable an orderly transfer of responsibilities prior to David's retirement.

CORPORATE PROPERTY

Property Services Re-procurement

In July, the Executive approved the new approach for Property Services delivery. The existing contract will come to an end in March 2025 and will be replaced with two new separate contracts, covering facilities management and professional services. The team have been working hard since July to pull together a specification for the facilities management contract. This was sent to the market in mid-October alongside a bidder questionnaire. The next stage is to refine a shortlist of

potential bidders who will be invited to tender early in 2024. The second contract will be for Professional Services and relates to the delivery of our capital projects. The team are in the planning stages and expect to be able to start the procurement process for a new provider, using a framework, next summer. Both new contracts will improve the responsiveness and aid efficient delivery of our property services.

Property Rationalisation Programme

The Property Rationalisation Programme started in earnest over the summer. In October, Corporate Property brought a scrutiny paper to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board which provided an update on the programme and sought pre-decision scrutiny for the refurbishment of Orchard House B. I'm pleased to say that this project is now proceeding, with the final details being added to the technical design. I expect work to start on site early next Spring, with the project being complete by the end of 2024. Completion of the project will enable the sale of Crown House, 4 Lindum Road (where the registrars are located) and we will be able to mothball a number of other properties – generating an anticipated £1.2m in capital receipts and around £320,000 in revenue savings. The programme is also working in the localities, with projects either ongoing or about to start in Boston, Sleaford, Gainsborough, and Spalding. These projects will further rationalise the office estate, disposing of surplus office accommodation and generating further savings.

Deepings Leisure Centre

The Council has a statutory obligation to grant a 125-year academy lease to the Academy Trust operating the Deepings School. To enable this to progress, following an Executive decision on 4 July 2023, an Expression of Interest exercise was launched on 11 August 2023 offering an opportunity for a third party to acquire, refurbish and operate the vacant Deepings Leisure Centre. The opportunity closed on 22 September 2023 and only one expression of interest was received. The business plan and associated papers accompanying this expression of interest are currently under review. Should a successful bid not be received, the Council will look to demolish the Leisure Centre. A formal decision should be made by February 2024, following a full review and evaluation of proposals.