

Appendix 1

Excerpt of Minutes Prosperous Communities Committee 12 November 2024

The Committee heard from the Change, Projects and Performance Officer who presented the progress and delivery report setting out the performance across the council for quarter two, including the performance improvement plan, covering the period July to September 2024. Members were advised there had been one amendment to the report since papers had been published. This was following the agreement of the 2024/25 pay award for staff and meant that measure COF03 – Overall Council Budget Forecast Outturn had reduced to 0.87% with a forecast net underspend of £160k.

In relation to the overall performance, it was explained that 81% of all measures were either exceeding or within agreed tolerance of their targets, compared to 83.7% measures in quarter one. The Officer highlighted the details contained within the performance improvement plan, explaining that the Council Tax Collection Rate and NNDR Collection Rate both reported within tolerance for quarter two and so had been removed from the performance improvement plan, although would continue to be closely monitored. New additions to the plan included the percentage of households spending more than 42 nights in B&B accommodation. The Committee heard it was expected to feature as the target was set at zero, in line with guidance and what the Council needed to strive to achieve. It was recognised that this was a challenging target, with the only temporary accommodation in Cross Street, but the Temporary Accommodation project was now in motion which would provide additional units, with two of these being out of the Gainsborough area.

The percentage of food standards agency inspections completed was also a new addition to the performance improvement plan. This measure was one that Members had been informed of, as it was raised within the annual work plan in May. The Manager had provided an update for the performance improvement plan, however there was a mid-year report due at the Regulatory Committee in December, and so a more detailed update would be made following that report. Members were assured, however, that with increased capacity within the team, it was expected that inspection numbers would begin to increase over the next quarter.

The final new addition to the plan was T24 savings delivered. It was explained this was an annual cumulative target, which was being monitored against the current position, and a position statement would be provided as part of the quarter three update.

It was explained that there were two measures which remained in the Performance Improvement Plan. Those were: the Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) measures and Market Stalls. In relation to the DFGs, it was not expected that the performance of these measures would change given the budget position, the focus being on lobbying for fair distribution of funding, with this due to resuming following the elections in May 2025. When looking at the data regarding the market stalls, it was noted that whilst Saturday market reported above target, this was due to the supporting event program and an additional four antique traders who had registered to continue trading on the Saturday Market. Therefore, whilst the measure was reporting above its target, it

remained in the performance improvement plan alongside the Tuesday market measure. Members were directed to page 51 of their papers for a full breakdown of all stalls per week and the dates on which the farmers markets were held in order to clarify the weeks which were impacted.

Finally, Members were advised that, in relation to services held at the Lea Fields Crematorium, the measure that looked at the percentage of direct cremations had reported below target for two consecutive quarters. It was explained, however, that this reflected an improved position and could not be taken in isolation. For those reasons, it was proposed that for the 2025/26 measure set, all service types be included in line with the business plan targets.

Members of the Committee were invited to comment. In relation to the leisure centre data, it was recognised that customer satisfaction levels were on the way up, however it was enquired as to whether the feedback from the 'Meet the Manager' sessions could be shared, as there were suggestions for improvements which would be useful to be aware of. Officers undertook to consider how this might be shared or included in future reporting options. Similarly, it was requested that further information behind the data could be provided, for example in relation to fly-tipping collection rates where fly tips were on private land and therefore not collectable with the Council, or the upcoming pressures which would be faced by the Trinity Arts Centre.

With regard to the percentage of households in bed and breakfast accommodation, it was enquired as to whether the recent budget announcements for homelessness prevention would have an impact on reducing that figure. It was explained that there was not yet any specific information regarding what those figures might be, however Officers would be working on options as soon as possible. A Member of the Committee requested clarification regarding suitability of placement and it was explained that individuals may be restricted as to where they could be homed, however the ongoing project would provide accommodation outside of Gainsborough.

A Member of the Committee enquired about the feasibility of training extra staff to undertake food safety inspections, in light of the circumstances which had led to the backlog of inspections. It was confirmed that a member of the team had in fact recently completed training and moved into a qualified position. The update due to be presented to the Regulatory Committee in December would provide further details as to the contingency planning and action plan to bring inspection numbers back in line with where they should be. It was further enquired as to why the decision had been made to undertake the funeral parlour inspections as this had not been a mandatory requirement. Members were advised that, due to the recent local and national incidents which had been well-covered by the media, it had been a priority to be able to offer reassurance to members of the public and customers that such inspections were undertaken. It was not anticipated that this would be a recurrent inspection regime.

In response to an enquiry regarding the market stalls and market traders, whether continued growth was being driven by approaching new traders or encouraging new traders to return, it was confirmed that Officers were spending time at markets in other areas, seeking to encourage new traders to the Gainsborough Markets. It was suggested that more could be done in terms of marketing, for example interviews with

traders, wider-spread social media marketing rather than only the West Lindsey pages.

The Chairman thanked Members for their comments and, having been proposed and seconded, took the vote. It was

RESOLVED that the performance of the Council's services had been assessed through agreed performance measures and areas where improvements should be made, having regard to the remedial measures set out in the report, had been indicated.