Leicestershire County Council

CABINET – 24 NOVEMBER 2023

ANNUAL DELIVERY REPORT AND PERFORMANCE COMPENDIUM 2023

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

PART A

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to present the draft Annual Delivery Report and Performance Compendium for 2023 which sets out the Council's progress and performance over the past year. The Delivery Report itself (attached as Appendix A to this report) focuses largely on delivery against the County Council priorities as set out in the Council's Strategic Plan 2022-26 and other main service strategies.

2. The Performance Compendium (attached as Appendix B) includes information on comparative performance and 2022/23 performance outcome results, low overall funding for Leicestershire and the current associated risks.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that:

    (a) The overall good progress in delivering on the Council's Strategic Priorities and Outcomes, as set out in the draft Annual Delivery Report 2023 be noted;

    (b) The Council's current low comparative funding, good but under pressure performance position, and financial pressures and risks now facing the Authority set out in the Performance Compendium be noted;

    (c) In light of the pressure on the Council's financial sustainability arising from continued service demand and cost pressures, the Council continues to press its case for a fairer funding settlement, noting that the delay in implementation has created significant uncertainties as to how the Council can now address the many service challenges and priorities it faces; and

    (d) The Chief Executive, following consultation with the Leader, be authorised to make any amendments to the draft Annual Delivery Report and Performance Compendium prior to its submission for approval to the County Council on 6 December 2023.

Reason for Recommendations

4. It is best practice in performance management, implicit in the LGA Sector-Led approach to local authority performance and part of the Council's Internal Governance Framework, to undertake a review of overall progress at the end of the year and to benchmark performance against comparable authorities. It is also good practice to produce an annual performance report and ensure that it is scrutinised, transparent, and made publicly available.

5. The National Audit Office has issued best practice guidance for annual reports, highlighting that the annual report is a key mechanism for transparent disclosure of an organisation's in-year performance and governance matters. The report should discuss how the entity has performed in the year, including areas where performance has deteriorated or is below expectations, and the other key risks.

6. The County Council is poorly funded in comparison with other local authorities and this, until addressed, will continue to affect delivery, performance, risks, and Council Tax levels.

7. The draft Annual Delivery Report and Performance Compendium may be modified to reflect comments made by the Cabinet as well as to include any final national comparative data which becomes available prior to its consideration by the County Council.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

8. The draft Annual Delivery Report and Performance Compendium 2023 was considered by the Scrutiny Commission on 8 November and its comments are set out in Part B of this report.

9. The Annual Delivery Report and Performance Compendium is scheduled for consideration by the County Council at its meeting on 6 December 2023.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

10. The Annual Delivery Report and Performance Compendium form part of the County Council's Policy Framework. The information outlined in the report provides performance data which will help the Council and its partners to ensure services continue to meet standards, provide value for money, and that outcomes are being achieved for local people.

11. The five priority outcome themes in the Council's Strategic Plan, approved by the County Council in May 2022, encompass a number of supporting outcomes. Together they form the overall Single Outcomes Framework which sets priorities for the Authority and enables more effective deployment and targeting of resources. The Annual Delivery Report and Performance Compendium includes an assessment of progress in relation to the Outcomes Framework.

Resource Implications

12. The report has no direct resource implications.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

None.

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PART B

Background

13. The draft Annual Delivery Report and Performance Compendium, appended to this report, cover County Council delivery over the last twelve months or so. They draw largely on 2022/23 data, although older data and benchmarking is included where more up-to-date information is not available. In some cases, the data is more recent.

14. The assessment of performance has been divided into two parts – the Annual Delivery Report (the first part) is narrative, describing delivery, progress with implementing agreed plans and strategies, and achievements over the last twelve months. It largely focuses on performance against County Council priorities for community outcomes, as set out in the Strategic Plan 2022-26 and other main service strategies.

15. The second part is the 'Performance Compendium' which contains information on:
    - Current inequality in funding and the Council's Fair Funding campaign and proposals.
    - Comparative performance, cost, and service benchmarking 2021/22 including lower comparative performing areas.
    - 2022/23 end-of-year performance figures, where available.
    - Service and corporate risks.

16. There is some comparative data still to be published, some of which is due to be published by December 2023. The overall Council benchmarking position for 2022/23 will also be updated at that point. Previous benchmarking shows the Council to be the most cost effective County Council in England.

17. The appended Annual Report is a draft document and will continue to be developed to incorporate points made by the Cabinet, as well as the inclusion of any final national comparative data which becomes available prior to its consideration by the County Council on 6 December. The final Annual Report will be properly formatted and published on the County Council website (http://www.leics.gov.uk).

Delivery Summary

18. Overall, analysis of the narrative shows good examples of delivery across the theme outcome areas. The Delivery Report has substantial sections on economy, transport, skills, public health and wellbeing, adult social care, safer communities and children and families', clean and green environment and stronger communities, reflecting a range of work which is on-going to meet priority outcomes in these areas.

19. There remain good planning arrangements, financial management and governance in place supporting delivery, including Outcome Delivery Boards for each theme of the Strategic Plan.

20. Examples of some of the delivery highlights from the priority themes include: -

Clean and Green

21. A new Net Zero Strategy with a goal to become a Net Zero county by 2045 and a new Leicestershire Climate and Nature Pact. A successful joint bid with Midlands Connect that is delivering 100 electric vehicle charging points across Leicestershire. Launching Green Living Leicestershire and Solar Together to support vulnerable and other households and those at risk of fuel poverty to reduce bills by installing energy efficiency measures. Researching how community energy can support Net Zero and launching a new Net Zero Toolkit for community groups. Shire environment grants to local projects to reduce carbon emissions and the Council's first zero-carbon primary school. Promoting sustainable tourism and a new sustainable tourism plan.

22. Continuing the Net Zero Council Action Plan which has reduced the Authority's own emissions by over 70% since 2008/09 with new measures to modernise its headquarters and other properties to reduce carbon by 380 tonnes a year including solar panels and air source heat pumps. Progressing work on a new solar farm near Quorn. Working with district councils the Council has ensured the County does not miss out on Government funding allocated to install energy efficiency measures in homes most in need of support. As a result, more than £3m will be spent making Leicestershire's homes warmer and tackling rising energy prices.

23. SHIRE environment grants supporting local projects to improve biodiversity. Planting more than 250,000 trees towards the Council's target of 700,000 across the County and planning a new tree nursery to supply 20,000 trees a year, as well as actions to tackle ash tree dieback and distributing trees to landowners. Improving and restoring grasslands, ecology work at Beacon Hill Park and award-winning work to boost biodiversity on roadside verges. An updated Leicestershire Waste Strategy and initiatives to reduce waste to landfill and new contract to treat residual waste. Campaigns including to reduce waste contamination and on correct battery disposal. Improvements to Kibworth Waste Site and new collection points for medical equipment at Loughborough and Whetstone. Composting bins, theatre sessions, reducing food waste including cooking classes and making the most from leftovers, restoration work and environment grants for projects supporting waste prevention.

Strong Economy

24. In March 2023 the Council helped to launch the new East Midlands Freeport (EMF). Space Park Leicester, the customs site operator, is supporting the Freeport's focus on driving innovation and skills. With 533 hectares of prime strategic development land at 3 sites the EMF will create thousands of high-quality new jobs in the region and boost the East Midlands economy by £8.4bn. The EMF is also driving the low carbon and renewable energy and advanced manufacturing and logistics sectors. EMF approval released £25m of funding to deliver infrastructure and investment projects and a Hydrogen Skills Academy.

25. The Council approved plans to create 120+ jobs by unlocking land at Leaders Farm, Lutterworth. Progressed plans to deliver 2,750 homes, primacy schools, community hub, retail centre and commercial space east of Lutterworth. Through its Investing in Leicestershire Programme the Authority is investing c.£43m in 2023-27 to facilitate delivery of affordable and quality homes and generate economic growth as well as renewable energy. The Programme generated £5.8m to support Council services in 2022/23. Supporting 3 Enterprise Zones underpinning research and development in the County. The Place Marketing Team secured funding to support a variety of promotion activities. Continuing to support business in partnership with the LLEP through the Business Hub and providing business advisers to support the recovery from Covid. The Council has also continued to support creative businesses through securing part of £1.3m to increase capacity of creative businesses and opportunity to bid for a further £7m funding for Create Growth.

26. Working to bring gigabit capable broadband to 43 rural sites across the county by March 2024 through Project Gigahubs. Supporting the wider Project Gigabit Programme rollout to ensure 85% coverage by 2025. Working with Openreach to gain community pledges from 25 rural villages to build full-fibre broadband infrastructure through Fibre Community Partnerships.

Skills

27. Investigating Skills Bootcamps to provide intensive training to help upskill the workforce. A new agreement with local universities to work to tackle economic growth. Progressing the £3m Multiply Programme to improve basic numeracy skills with hundreds of free courses over 3 years. The Kickstart Scheme with work placements for 16–24-year-olds. Work and Skills Leicestershire offering support and advice to anyone seeking paid employment, training and volunteering, with personalised work plans. Hundreds of part-time, evening and weekend courses through GoLearn and the Adult Learning Service. Continuing to support apprentices employed by the Council as well as other local employers. Participation in Adult Learning programmes increased by 5% over the academic year to 5930 enrolments. Over 1500 adults attended English, Maths and Digital skills programmes. The Adult Learning Service's Essential Digital Skills courses have continued to provide opportunities for adults to gain confidence and become more independent.

Transport

28. Major construction work commenced on the north and east Melton Mowbray distributor road to reduce congestion and support new homes and employment growth in the town. Progressing plans to deliver major road improvements to 8 junctions on the A511 between Ashby and Coalville to connect with housing developments which will deliver 3,500 new homes. A package of road improvements in Hinckley which will mean smoother and more efficient journeys. £19.3m invested in Highways Asset Maintenance including £14.2m on carriageways and £2m on footways and rights of way. In May 2023 the Council agreed an extra £3m for fixing and maintaining roads, cycle paths and pavements. A significant surface dressing programme over the summer.

29. Being awarded £1.78m to help support public transport, particularly in rural areas. Delivering an Enhanced Bus Partnership to improve services and passenger experience. The Council's Fox Connect 3 year mini-bus trial covering 18 villages in south-west Leicestershire has seen a positive start with 10,837 passenger journeys. Supporting work to electrify the Midland Mainline. Developing cycling and walking plans for North of Leicester, Melton Mowbray, Loughborough, South of Leicester and Oadby. Training sessions and vouchers for e-bikes.

Great Communities

30. Over 500 households supported to open their homes to over 1000 Ukrainian guests. Achieving £760,000 funding to support access to culture through a programme of activities to 2026. All heritage sites being rated excellent by Visit England with 3 sites receiving special accolades. A variety of exhibitions and displays of archaeological finds. Development and greater promotion of the County's tourism offer. A new green flag award for Watermead Country Park to go with retained ones for Beacon Hill and Snibston Colliery Park. New parkruns at Country parks to support community volunteering and physical activity. Planting Platinum Jubilee trees in honour of the late Queen as well as a service of thanksgiving and honouring the armed forces as well as re-signing the Armed Forces Covenant.

31. Supporting volunteers in a range of roles and activities and being awarded the Investing in Volunteers Award. The Community Fridges had 42,000kg of waste food donated and redistributed to 11,452 visitors. New volunteer-run wellbeing cafes supporting parents and children. A policy officer post established to develop volunteering and coordinate best practice. More than 900 volunteers have dedicated over 10,000 hours in 2022/23. The Friendly Communities of Leicestershire initiative, developed with the Council's Public Health Service, is also tackling loneliness and social isolation in communities.

32. A range of cultural projects and resources to support community cohesion and diversity. Being placed in the top 100 LGBTQ+ friendly employers in the UK and promoting a range of equalities positive action measures. A new senior policy officer for anti-racism developing an Anti-Racism Strategy and work with communities. Piloting a new on-line community engagement platform, Social Pinpoint. 31 library and heritage service projects co-created with communities. Work with communities on community resilience development with 59 active Community Response Plan holders and participating in national resilience exercises Flood Ex 2022 and Exercise Mighty Oak.

Improved Opportunities

33. £22m of support from the Government's Household Support Fund has been made available to help ease cost of living pressures including emergency food and fuel support and free school meal vouchers during the holidays. In addition, free holiday clubs, gym passes, and coaching sessions were offered for summer 2023 for those requiring extra support, the Council's biggest ever offering of free holiday clubs. Events and promotion around the importance of the first 1001 critical days in life. Opening 9 out of 25 Family Hubs across the County so far, a

one stop shop for parents and carers to support the Best Start for life and developing a Maternity and Early Years Strategy. Support for children not achieving milestones at age 2. Training on communication and language and a variety of resources to support child development such as Bookstart, story explorer bags and the summer reading challenge. Promotion of free childcare opportunities.

34. Expanding support for families experiencing domestic abuse through the Children and Family Wellbeing Service, which also provides targeted early help to families. Providing intensive keyworker support to families with more complex needs. An Early Help Partnership and Strategic Plan to develop the early help system. The Reducing Parental Conflict Programme. Ofsted praised the Council's Children's Services following a recent 'focused visit' inspection, for its support for children in its care. The Defining Children and Family Services for the Future programme is working to deliver outcomes alongside the Social Care Investment Programme (SCIP) in partnership with Barnardo's. The Authority has been successful in obtaining additional grant funding to invest in nine properties and up to 27 placements, with several units planned to be operational this financial year.

35. Supporting transformation of SEND services through securing £1m government funding and the Council's Transforming SEND in Leicestershire programme. Being selected to pilot the national SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan.   Developing an accelerated progress plan on the quality of Education Health and Care (EHC) Plans including service remodelling and work on the backlog of EHC needs assessments and Annual Reviews. Delivering 2,179 additional pupil places and 105 SEND places. School improvement work including activities to develop the quality of teaching and learning, particularly for under-performing groups to narrow the gap, with a 2-year Education Endowment Fund project. A model of high-quality peer reviews within school groups, collaborative school groups and 289 training opportunities. Creative Learning Services delivered 77,650 books and 900 project collections.

36. Through the Education, Employment and Training Strategy the Authority has invested in targeted careers advice and guidance for 16 to 18-year-olds. This year the focus is on vulnerable groups including Care Leavers. The use of Pupil Premium Plus allocated to support children in care's education and aspirations. The work of the Virtual School extended to support the post-16 cohort in education, employment and training and a new post created to focus on this cohort.

Safe and Well

37. A new Community Safety Strategy to 2026 tackling a range of crime and disorder priorities. Launch of a new Domestic Abuse Team offering early help to families and adults causing harm and to families affected by domestic abuse. Anti-Social Behaviour work to ensure perpetrators are managed and vulnerable victims are supported. Work to ensure compliance with statutory duties around Prevent (Counter Terrorism) such as the new venue hire policy "Martyn's Law". The Council's LLR Hate Reduction Strategy Statement updated and adopted to ensure vulnerable victims are supported. Providing an extra £100,000 to continue

rolling out community speed cameras. The pioneering School Streets initiative to create safer streets and improve air quality began new trials at Leicestershire schools. The Safeguarding Children Partnership continues work to respond to emerging risks, such as safeguarding babies and launched an evidenced-based programme focused on reducing abusive head trauma triggered by crying. In relation to adult safeguarding, the Council has progressed priorities for 2022/23 on Hidden Harm and Care Homes.

Public Health

38. Launching a new Healthy Workplaces Leicestershire programme to help businesses and organisations become healthier places to work. A Health in All Policies approach is being embedded across the Council. Examination of health inequalities in Leicestershire, identification of the populations and areas most at risk of the poorest outcomes and agreed actions for improvement. Recommissioned a health trainers service for adult offenders on community orders. Successfully recommissioned a substance misuse treatment service more tailored to the needs of Leicestershire residents and secured grant funding to enhance drug treatment and harm reduction services. The Authority's award-winning Good Food Leicestershire service continued work to tackle issues from food poverty to diet-related ill-health. A new healthy weight strategy and action plan was implemented, and the Council is working with health partners to pilot a Tier 3 weight management service. A free 12-week weight management course to help men get back in shape and lose weight was launched.

Adult Social Care

39. The Care Technology team has installed 3293 pieces of equipment with 1251 users of the service. 97% of customers said that the technology made them feel more safe and secure. The age of young people in transition worked with has reduced to 17, and positive work is delivered through the young adult disability team. The Hospital Discharge Grant for Carers has provided 154 people with £56,000 in grants to help people discharged home. Over 40 working-age adults moved out of residential settings into more independent settings and 100 fewer older adults were permanently placed in residential homes per year. Significant additional funding was allocated to support vulnerable people, to pay for more home and residential care and support people with physical disabilities, learning disabilities and mental health needs. The Council's Inspired to Care Team was a finalist for the Outstanding Contribution to Social Care Award in the East Midlands. A new 2-year Better Care Fund Plan worth £75.7m in 2023/24 agreed jointly with the NHS to deliver more integrated health and social care. The Joint LLR Carers Strategy was also refreshed.

40. The Transforming Care Partnership has worked to ensure services for those with Learning Disabilities including Autism join-up, and won an award for good working practices. A Complex Needs Accommodation Board has been established to work to support people with a primary mental health need. This is helping identify homes in the community and maintain existing tenancies. Working with the NHS the Council relaunched a Mental Health Wellbeing and Recovery Support Service which will see £1m a year invested over five years to

provide advice, guidance, and support for people's emotional and mental health. Pilot projects in 3 neighbourhoods aim to look at how the Council can build upon strengths within the individual with Mental Health Issues and how the local community can help meet their needs. The Authority also opened a new supported living scheme for people with mental health as a support need.

Performance Data Analysis

41. In late 2019 the Council was identified by the consulting firm IMPOWER as the **most productive council** using a range of performance and spend measures. The Council's own more detailed benchmarking shows that it was fifth best performing county in England on a wide range of performance measures in 2021/22, despite being the lowest funded. The final position for 2022/23 will be confirmed early next year. Initial analysis of the data suggests that the Council remains **the most efficient and productive County** in England.

42. Initial analysis of 2022/23 end-of-year data shows that of 191 outcome metrics, 80 improved, 37 showed no real change and 74 worsened. Direction of travel cannot be determined for 24 indicators, due to the absence of previous data or changes to indicator definitions. The impact of the pandemic and cost of living crisis, as well as service and funding pressures, has continued to be felt, affecting outcomes in a number of areas, and some of these issues are flagged in the associated dashboards. A summary of progress on the indicators is set out in the Performance Compendium along with the actual detailed data and dashboards.

Fair Funding

43. The report analysis identifies that low funding remains the Council's Achilles heel. Leicestershire remains the lowest-funded county council in the country with greater risks to service delivery as a result. If it was funded at the same level as London Borough of Camden it would be £601m better off. London Boroughs are particularly prevalent at the top of the funding league table.

44. The list of authorities with serious financial issues continues to grow, with some counties having moved towards providing services only at the statutory minimum level. The Council has in the past published a new simplified funding model based on factors that drive demand for local services. It allocates money fairly based on need and narrows the gap between the highest and lowest funded councils. If implemented, the model would unlock up to an extra £47m for Leicestershire.

45. The extent of service reductions made has already affected most areas of service delivery and some areas of performance, and further cuts will put other areas at risk. These pressures have been further exacerbated by the financial and service implications arising from the demand impact of Covid-19 as well as demands arising from the cost-of-living crisis and inflation.

46. The service risks section of the Compendium (Part 3) highlights a number of areas of risk which are subject to additional monitoring.

Areas for Continued Focus

47. Given the significant financial challenges, demand, and delivery pressures facing the Council, areas for focus include: -

- Continuing to implement the Strategic Plan and Outcomes Framework, Medium Term Financial Strategy and updated Strategic Change Programme, including more digital delivery and the Workplace Strategy.

- Continuing to maintain the Fair Funding Campaign, pursue savings initiatives and cost mitigation measures and seek more sustainable funding for local services.

- Progressing improvements to SEND services.

- Maintaining the good progress on health and care integration, implementing the Public Health and Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and public health preventative measures and pressing for an effective government solution to the challenges in Adult Social Care.

- Continuing to implement economic recovery, growth and skills plans and measures to support the economy and those impacted by the cost-of-living crisis.

- Taking forward actions arising from the Climate Emergency Declaration, the Environment Strategy and Net Zero commitment.

- Continuing partnership work with the Police and Crime Commissioner to pursue targeted crime areas such as domestic violence.

- Maintaining the focus on supporting workforce health and wellbeing and tackling recruitment and retention pressures.

Views of the Scrutiny Commission

48. The Scrutiny Commission considered the draft Annual Delivery Report and Performance Compendium at its meeting on 8 November 2023. The Commission the previous year had welcomed the shorter report format focusing on Council delivery and performance, and a similar approach was taken.

49. Members welcomed the Report and agreed that the data provided a useful picture of performance over the past year.

50. Arising from discussion, the following points arose:

- Whilst Leicestershire was the most efficient Council and continued to deliver good outcomes across many areas - despite being the lowest funded County in the country - it was now at a tipping point. Outcomes would likely reduce if the need for fair funding was not addressed by the Government.

- A larger proportion of indicators had deteriorated in 2022/23. Whilst that was in part due to the impact of the pandemic, other factors, including the Council's low-funded position, were affecting the levels of service it could provide.

- It was commented that the Council could no longer deliver some services provided by other, better funded authorities but provided core services very well and was an exemplar in some. Future reports might need to be adjusted in light of this, recognising that the Council could no longer deliver some services and demonstrating separately the effect of this on residents.

- Members noted that the Council's Strategic Plan would likely shortly be reviewed. The Authority would need to consider what it could realistically deliver going forward. This might affect the pledges, ambitions and timescales set out in the current Plan.

- Leicestershire's economy had performed reasonably well compared to other areas but the Council's residents' survey suggested that optimism about the local economy and job prospects had fallen. It was noted that the survey gave an overall picture of views on various issues that could be compared to previous years, and the results were triangulated against other sources. It was suggested that the survey methodology (by telephone, to a sample of the population randomly selected with quotas for age, gender, ethnicity, and geography) might benefit from review; for example, many younger people no longer used landlines.

- Delivery of affordable housing was largely a district council responsibility and some areas were better than others. Delivering new homes and affordable homes relied heavily on district council planning decisions.

- The Chief Executive undertook to confirm percentages in relation to physical activity (which had been omitted in the report). It was noted that more detail regarding outcomes and further work to improve performance of public health activities would be included in the Director of Public Health's Annual Report which would be available shortly.

- Average A-level results were below the average for counties in 2022 but it was commented that children's education had been severely disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic and this should be reflected in the commentary: those children had still done very well despite difficult circumstances.

- A Member queried the "red" rating for Adult Social Care (expenditure per head of population) and suggested that despite spending less than other authorities the Council still managed to deliver better outcomes for residents in respect of those services. However service user perception in the adult social care survey was below average for Leicestershire.

Equality Implications

51. There are no equality implications arising directly from this report. The draft Annual Delivery Report and draft Performance Compendium incorporate the progress of the County Council against key equalities outcomes and indicators.

Human Rights Implications

52. There are no human rights implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers

Report to the Scrutiny Commission – 8 November 2023 - Annual Delivery Report and Performance Compendium 2023
https://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/s179460/Annual%20Delivery%20Report%20And%20Performance%20Compendium%202023.pdf

Leicestershire County Council Strategic Plan 2022-26
https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/about-the-council/council-plans/the-strategic-plan

Local Government Association: LG Inform Benchmarking System
https://lginform.local.gov.uk/

CIPFA/Institute for Government Performance Tracker 2023 -
https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/publication/performance-tracker-2023/cross-service-analysis

Oflog Data Explorer - https://oflog.data.gov.uk/

Appendices

Appendix A - Draft Leicestershire County Council Annual Delivery Report 2023
Appendix B - Draft Performance Compendium 2023

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