

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING - 20 MAY 2011

Statement from: Councillor Mrs S Woolley, Executive Councillor for Health, Housing and Community

HEALTH

Substance Misuse

Lincolnshire Drug and Alcohol Action Team, a partnership of several local agencies managed by the Council, has made a number of strides forward recently. The partnership has significantly improved the quality and performance of services for local people, and has also launched a major reconfiguration of services to orientate them more towards securing independent substance misuse-free lives for people.

The recent successes have resulted in Lincolnshire being selected as one of only eight national sites to pilot new ways of commissioning services. Substance misuse is a major blight on communities and individuals, and I welcome the news that we are amongst the best performing partnerships in the country.

Seasonal Excessive Deaths

Of particular concern across my housing and health portfolios is the issue of 'seasonal excess deaths'. We have clear evidence that the death rates amongst vulnerable people increase by around 20% in both very hot and very cold weather, because they lack awareness of the risks they face and do not have strategies to cope. Many more people are admitted to hospital or care services during these periods, when weather and home conditions exacerbate long-standing health problems. We will soon be launching a county action plan to refine the problem, and put in place interventions to address this preventable problem.

Public Health Report

During April, the first Annual Public Health Report of our 'new' Joint Director of Public Health, Dr Tony Hill, was launched. The report is different in style to that of his predecessor and is an interesting and pacy read. It can be found on the NHS Lincolnshire website.

Excellent Ageing

At the event held on 4 February, a wide range of those involved in the programme shared the findings of the first stage of the project. These included a comprehensive picture of the landscape of support and services for older people in Lincolnshire, and over 50 ideas generated by the five working groups set up in September to deliver real improvements.

Building on the momentum generated at the event, and the clear commitment from stakeholders present to make the programme a strategic priority for the

county, Excellent Ageing has now moved into the next stage of activity. This involves turning the developed ideas into working projects with clear benefits and outcomes, as well as working with senior stakeholders to look at how we can embed the key principles of excellent ageing across the county, and start to target resources more effectively to deliver the priorities that older people have identified.

A new Steering Group, comprising a reduced number of council representatives and more representatives from the health sector, together with voluntary and community sector representatives, an older person's representative from the LINK, and a carers' representative, met for the first time on 5 May. They agreed the key milestones for the programme, the terms of reference for the group and the approach for the next 12 months of activity. It is anticipated that the programme will work closely with the new Health and Wellbeing Board.

Some significant progress has been made by the working groups as follows:

- Two business cases have been submitted to the Department for Work and Pensions to make the case for a greater local role around benefits and welfare
- A project is underway in partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions to establish a Local Advice Network for Lincolnshire to coordinate the provision of debt and benefit advice in the county
- Discussions are underway with Lincoln University to look at a Knowledge Transfer Partnership for developing a Community Transport Brokerage scheme
- Two schools in North Hykeham are already piloting the Hot Meals in Schools initiative, bringing vulnerable older people into schools to engage with young people and enjoy a nutritious meal
- Discussions are ongoing with the Co-op and the Chambers of Commerce to look at a scheme to support older people back into work
- Mapping work has been undertaken of all befriending services in the county to look at establishing a consistent and accessible service
- Contact The Elderly, a national charity, is now actively working with South Lincs CVS to set up a number of support groups in Lincolnshire
- Plans put forward by working group 3 looking at complex case management and focusing on the integration of health and social care have contributed to proposals being considered as part of the £9.1m NHS funding for social care.

There are now over 40 different organisations involved in Excellent Ageing. At a national level, the Excellent Ageing team was invited to address the Ageing Society Strategy Group in Whitehall to showcase the work we are doing locally. Cllr Martin Hill has also briefed Secretary of State Eric Pickles, and a number of Ministers about the programme, with very positive feedback.

HOUSING

In the recent period we have been considering with District Council partners how to maximise benefit to Lincolnshire of new central government strategies in housing. In particular, we are planning to make sure we get as much national resource into local housing needs as possible.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community Engagement, Community Development and the Big Society are significant themes in national policy at present. We are working towards the development of a single, corporate approach to a work programme that addresses these challenges under our new role as co-ordinators of this work. My officers and I continue to lead conversations across directorates to gain insight into how this can be achieved. Already some key themes are emerging around promoting and developing community leadership, developing capacity in communities for them to 'do it for themselves', and making sure that Council really listens to what people tell us about their needs.

Volunteer Awards Ceremony

Volunteers working in libraries and heritage sites were celebrated in a special ceremony held on 2 March at The Showroom in Lincoln. The event saw volunteers (who had given 20 and 30 years service) awarded certificates and given recognition for their contribution. The event also included a showing of the Access all Areas film, created by volunteers for Gainsborough Old Hall.

YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE

The outcome of the recent Green Paper Breaking the Cycle: Effective Punishment, Rehabilitation and Sentencing of Offenders will be published in May. Within the document there are several sections affecting Young People within the Criminal Justice System, including proposals around withholding future grant provision after 2012 unless certain performance measures were achieved (Payment by Results). There are also proposals to increase the use of restorative outcomes, a measure for which there is a strong commitment within Lincolnshire.

There are also proposals to devolve the centrally held custody budget to local authorities, to give incentives for local areas to provide services to divert young people away from custody wherever possible. In line with the Green Paper proposals, the priorities for 2011/12 for Lincolnshire Youth Offending Services are to Prevent Offending, Reduce Reoffending and to ensure only those young people whose risk cannot be managed in the community are sentenced to custody - recognising that for some young people custody is the only option.

A joint thematic inspection of Appropriate Adult Service provision in six Youth Offending Services, including Lincolnshire, was undertaken 3-6 May when inspectors visited Lincoln Police Station. The overall aim of the inspection was:

- To review the quality and effectiveness of appropriate adult provision for persons under 17 years in police custody and identify good practice; and
- To assess the extent to which persons under 17 years held in police custody after charge are being transferred to the care of the local authority and identify any enablers or barriers to appropriate transfer.

Lincolnshire Sports Partnership

Currently working on a number of projects that will leave Lincolnshire with a lasting legacy from the 2012 London Olympic Games, with focus around four key areas that will lead to an increase in participation in sport and physical activity.

Volunteering

Programmes encouraging people of all ages, 'SportsForce' is aimed at individuals to support events such as the Mablethorpe Marathon and the Lincoln 10k. 'Silver Spirit' is a programme focusing on older people who now have time on their hands to become community volunteers, supporting local people and clubs.

Events

'Quest for Gold' sets out to encourage people to have a go at a sport they may not have tried before. Community clubs are offering a chance to 'come and try' the 26 Olympic and 20 Paralympic sports. The hope is that having tried a new sport, individuals will want to join the club and continue to take part.

Facilities

'Behind the fence' is working to develop a local network of sporting and physical activities opportunities in local communities by trying to remove the barriers that stop local people getting access to facilities in their local area.