

**PUBLIC PROTECTION AND
COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE
28 JANUARY 2020**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR N H PEPPER (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors A N Stokes (Vice-Chairman), W J Aron, K J Clarke, Mrs K Cook, Mrs C J Lawton, C R Oxby, A H Turner MBE JP, L Wootten and R Wootten

Councillors: R D Butroid and L A Cawrey attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Mark Baxter, Les Britzman (Chief Fire Officer), Will Mason (Head of Culture), Keith Noyland, Ian Reed (Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Manager), Daniel Steel (Scrutiny Officer) and Emily Wilcox (Democratic Services Officer)

41 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

There were no apologies for absence.

42 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

43 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 10 DECEMBER 2019

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 December 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to a number of amendments.

44 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS
AND CHIEF OFFICERS

The Chairman welcomed the newly appointed Assistant Director – Public Protection to the meeting.

45 REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET PROPOSALS 2020/21

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Finance – Communities, which invited the Committee to consider the budget implications for the Council's public

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protection and communities services prior to consideration of the council's final budget proposals by the Executive at its meeting on 4 February 2020.

Members were advised that the budget proposals reflected the level of funding expected to be available to the Council from central government and an assumed increase in Council Tax in 2020/21 of 1.5% and an Adult Social Care 'precept' assumed to increase by 2% in 2020/21.

Members were referred to Table A, which detailed the total proposed revenue budget for the Council's public protection and communities service, at £33.414m.

It was noted that there were cost pressures of £1.737m relating to fire pension employer contributions and £0.056m for increased Business rates arising from revaluation of Fire premises.

For Cultural Services, a cost pressure of £0.284m in 2020/21 related to ICT provision and inflation on the Libraries contract.

Members were informed that the public protection and communities services were proposing to make savings totalling £0.316m in 2020/21, as a result of efficiencies in the Station cover model from reducing attendance to unwanted fire signals to commercial, non-life risk premises and savings in IT maintenance costs and from leasing smaller vehicles.

Members were then referred to table B, which set out the capital programme for 2020/21, plus future years. It was explained that the main changes to the capital programme that related to public protection and communities services were an addition of a further £2m in future years for the continuation of a rolling replacement of Fire and Rescue vehicles and associated equipment and £2.5m for the addition of a programme of development for the heritage service in each of 2020/21 and 2021/22..

The Committee supported the revenue and capital budget proposals 2020/21.

Members were invited to ask questions, in which the following points were noted:

- It was clarified that there had not been a reduction in business rates as a result of the merger of the emergency service premises as there had been a re-valuation on the south park property meaning that the business rates had increased rather than decreased as a result of the merger.
- Staffing efficiencies for the heritage service were not necessarily due to redundancies but rather efficiencies in how the service uses their existing staff.
- The Assistant Chief Fire Officer explained that there were a number of commercial properties which had alarm systems in place which would automatically default to an emergency response by Lincolnshire Fire Rescue (LFR). Many of these properties already had a sufficient fire protection system in place. Officers had engaged with commercial premises that were a non-life risk and extremely well protected with their own fire-precautions and explained that LFR would no longer immediately respond to calls as a default. Officers

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provided assurance that fire-fighters would always attend fire incidents when necessary. If there was any uncertainty as to the risk of the fire, LFR would always attend an incident.

- LFR had reviewed their existing station cover model and were looking to reinvest in a new station cover model to improve on call availability and make efficiency savings. The savings made would have no impact on on-call availability.
- The Head of Culture explained that the Cost Pressure of £0.284m in 2020/21 relating to ICT provision was a result of a significant refresh and upgrade of all computers across the county's library network which would significantly improve service to the public.
- The savings for the Library Services IT maintenance were due to savings in software efficiencies as a result of the implementation of multi-functional devices as part of the new software contract.
- Cost pressures of £1.737m relating to fire pension employer contributions had arisen as a result of a recent national increase in contribution rates. . It is expected that further increases in costs will continue over coming years due in part to recent tribunal cases which have ruled that age related transition arrangements implemented with the national 2015 scheme are discriminatory.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals 2020/21 be supported;
2. That a summary of the comments made above be passed to the Executive to be considered as part of its final budget proposals.

46 LINCOLNSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2020 - 2023 CONSULTATION

Consideration was given to a report by the Chief Fire Officer, which invited the Committee to consider the aspects contained in this report as part of the consultation period for LFR's Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) for 2020-2023.

Members were advised that the IRMP was a long term plan which outlined LFR assessment of key risks to both our communities and the organisation itself. The IRMP sought to engage with the public about LFR's priorities and achievements, as well as identifying an overview of community risks.

Members were referred to Appendix A to the report, which set out LFR's IRMP. The IRMP highlighted the community risks, corporate risks

Members were referred to Appendix B to the report, which detailed LFR community risk profile. The Community Risk Profile was a live document and was updated regularly to ensure the public understood the LFR's assessment of risk throughout Lincolnshire.

Members were invited to formally comment on the IRMP as part of the consultation process. Members discussed the report and the following points were noted:

- It was explained that the types of incidents that LFR responded to had expanded significantly, particularly with the introduction of the co-responder function. There were now significantly more flooding incidents responded to and an increase in collaboration work with partners which meant responding to events that would not have previously been responded to.
- It was clarified that the number of fires had reduced nationally which was mainly due to educating people on prevention; campaigns; improvements in home fire safety and changes in materials.
- Members were pleased to see that climate change was being acknowledged as it posed a significant amount of future challenges for Lincolnshire.
- In response to a question, the Chief Fire Officer explained that LFR had spent the last four months of 2019 dealing with flooding incidents in Lincolnshire. Flooding incidents were becoming much more regular and officers were investigating the most appropriate set up of teams to respond to incidents.
- It was confirmed that half of domestic fires were a result of cooking, but many of these were not large fires. Officers visited schools to educate children on the safety around smoke alarms.
- LFR had obtained funding to commission an evaluation study purely to determine the effectiveness of prevention activities.
- LFR would be consulting with the public on the IRMP via social media and the council's website. Officers would also be visiting communities in an attempt to engage them with the consultation.
- 70 responses had been received during the first week of the consultation, which was higher than usual.
- It was agreed that the Chief Fire Officer circulate details of the content of the FM Global Heritage Fire white paper.
- In response to a question, the Head of Emergency Planning and Business Continuity advised that the risk posed by the Coronavirus was being monitored by Local Health Authorities and the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum. Guidance was expected to be received in due course.
- LFR were working with other agencies to try to reduce the number of malicious calls received. It was noted that the prosecution rate was minimal.
- Officer agreed to circulate a breakdown of male and female employees at senior management level. Members were advised that there were female officers present in every operation level including strategic management. Compared to other Fire Services, Lincolnshire were performing well. However, the recruitment team were working hard to make improvements to attract more people to the service.
- There were currently no vacancies for full time fire-fighters as these had recently been filled.
- Community safety advocates worked with young people and schools to educate students on the time wasted by hoax calls. Call centre staff were also trained in call screening and challenging people on the validity of their call if they felt it was appropriate.

RESOLVED:

That the comments made by the Committee be considered as part of Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue's IRMP 2020-2023 consultation.

47 EMERGENCY PLANNING - SUMMER 2019 FLOODING RESPONSE

Consideration was given to a verbal report by the Head of Emergency Planning and Business Continuity which provided an update on the Emergency Planning response to the summer 2019 flooding incidents.

The Head of Emergency Planning and Business Continuity echoed comments that extreme rainfall and flooding incidents were becoming more regular and more large scale flooding incidents should be expected in the future. Lincolnshire's Risk Register detailed Coastal River and Flash Flooding as one of the top 10 risks to the county.

A timeline of events relating to the Emergency Planning Response was outlined:

- 4 June 2019 – The emergency planning team began responding to sporadic incidents of flooding and the service activated command procedures.
- 12 June 2019 – the Internal Drainage Board reported a breach in the river at Wainfleet. Full command support and command procedures were activated and the county emergency centre was opened. Coronation Hall in Wainfleet was also opened for use by the local community as a place where the public could receive help and information.
- 13 June – parts of Wainfleet began to be evacuated. Military support was requested.
- 15 June – a temporary repair was made to the breach.
- 16 June – water began to be pumped away from the affected areas.
- 24 June – Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) handed over to East Lindsey District Council as the recovery phase started.

Overall, the response to the incident had been positive. The Head of Emergency Planning and Business Continuity highlighted the following in relation to the emergency planning response:

- Over 29 different Lincolnshire Resilience Forum organisations had contributed to the response.
- LCC had a good relationship with the local media. However, the large amount of national media attention created an extra pressure on officers responding to the incidents and lessons had been learned that would now be considered for future incidents.
- LCC were unable to make claims under the Bellwin Scheme for this incident, which would have provided emergency financial assistance to local authorities.
- The emergency planning team worked 60-70 hours on top of their usual weekly contracted hours during the incident, which had been resource intensive. Officers acknowledged the importance of the welfare of their staff

members. Since the incident, rotas and improvements had been put in place to ensure that all staff members were getting an adequate amount of rest.

- Officers had recognised the importance of financial records and procurements procedures, especially when there are a large number of people wanting to make cash donations. Since the incident, governance had been put in place to manage these procedures.
- There were a large number of volunteers willing to help during the incident and it was important that volunteers were aware of the health and safety and response procedures that were in place. A policy and mutual aid agreement had now been agreed to ensure the safety of volunteers during emergencies.
- The volunteer groups that had already received training from LCC proved invaluable and officers were proud of the resilience programme, which was now being expanded.
- Officers were investigating ways to capture data and intelligence around the departments and vulnerable people and how they could share data in an emergency.
- Officers had recognised the longer term mental health issues that could arise as a result of the damage to agricultural land around Wainfleet. It was important to ensure that farmers and any other individuals suffering as a result of the flooding had access to the right support.
- LCC officers were asked to dial into cabinet office briefing meetings to ensure that the council had everything they needed and to provide assurance that the situation and recovery was being adequately dealt with.
- Business continuity plans had been activated in some departments to ensure that core business was still being operated.
- There were some issues with the security of the flooding sites. Officers tried to ensure that they had given local communities the right information to identify rogue traders.
- The incident had resulted in a number of people affected by the flooding being visited by a number of different partner organisations, many of them asking for overlapping information. As a result, the door knocking policy had been updated which had meant the design of 'one form that fits all' to ensure that multiple visits did not occur in future.
- An evacuation leaflet was being designed which would provide advice, contact numbers and further information in case of an emergency. All departments would be provided with the opportunity to have input into the leaflet.
- Officers had recognised the importance of ensuring that the whole organisation was briefed on the incident and all the necessary officers were adequately informed.
- The use of Business Support staff at the emergency centre had been invaluable during the incident.

Members were invited to ask questions, in which the following points were noted:

- Members echoed public feedback that LFR had responded excellently to the incident.

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- Officers advised that an LCC Compliance Officer attended all of the emergency planning services strategic meetings with a list of past debriefs and learning from national events to ensure that that mistakes were not repeated.
- It was hoped that the adequacy of the Bellwin formula was being considered at a national level as many organisations were unable to afford the financial burden that similar emergencies posed.
- Members were advised that the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum would usually recommend that developers did not build in floodplain areas. It was acknowledged that this was a district council issue.
- Residents of Wainfleet were advised that they were able to bring pets with them when evacuated.
- It was recognised that unless there was a threat of terrorism, authorities had no power to force people to evacuate.
- Officers confirmed that mental health support would be available for vulnerable people being requested to evacuate. There would also be support available at rest centres.
- The Chief Fire Officer thanked the Emergency Planning and Business Continuity team for their hard work during the incident.
- The Chairman acknowledged the high level of community spirit during the incident. It was noted that the Chairman of the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum had been asked to nominate people to attend the Royal Garden Party. Officers had tried to give local people in Wainfleet the opportunity to attend.

RESOLVED:

That the report and findings be noted.

48 PUBLIC PROTECTION AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report by the Scrutiny Officer, which presented the Committee's prospective work programme.

Members were advised that at their next meeting the Committee were scheduled to receive reports on the Fire and Rescue Integrated Risk Management Plan Consultation Update; the Heritages Services Update; the Blue Light Programme and a Review of the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership.

RESOVLED:

That the work programme be noted.

The meeting closed at 11.31 am