



**COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC SAFETY
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
13 JANUARY 2016**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR C J T H BREWIS (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors L Wootten (Vice-Chairman), K J Clarke, D C Morgan, C R Oxby, S L W Palmer, N H Pepper, Mrs A E Reynolds, Mrs N J Smith and R Wootten

Officers in attendance:-

Sara Barry (Safer Communities Manager), Nick Borrill, Michelle Grady (Head of Finance (Communities)), Dr Tony Hill (Executive Director of Community Wellbeing and Public Health), Mark Housley (County Officer Public Protection), Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer), Pete Moore (Executive Director of Finance and Public Protection) and Daniel Steel (Scrutiny Officer) and Catherine Willman (Democratic Services Officer)

49 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor R J Phillips.

50 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor R Wootten declared an interest in item 9 (minute 57 refers) as the Vice Chair of the Lincolnshire Police and Crime Panel.

51 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC SAFETY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 25 NOVEMBER 2015

RESOLVED

That the minutes from the meeting held on 25 November 2015 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

52 LINCOLN PRISON UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report which provided an update for members on progress at HMP Lincoln. The Governor of the prison, Peter Wright, was present to discuss the report with the Committee.

HMP Lincoln was a 19th century local prison holding adult males. It received prisoners direct from court and also held sentenced prisoners awaiting transfer to training prisons or who were serving short sentences. The prison received from Lincolnshire courts and also received overcrowding drafts from HMP Nottingham and

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HMP Leicester as well as court diversions from those establishments' catchment areas and elsewhere.

The prison's uncrowded capacity was 408. However, it was significantly overcrowded and its operational capacity was now 729.

Peter Wright spoke to the Committee about the prison and the following points were noted:

1. Central Government felt that 19th century prisons might not be an appropriate place to hold prisoners anymore. However, the Governor felt that holding prisoners within communities was important;
2. The long term view for the Government was to build mega-prisons with fewer staff and lower building costs;
3. Lincoln prison was overcrowded. However, each prisoner was the subject of a risk assessment to see whether they could be housed in a cell with another prisoner. Some were too dangerous to share a cell;
4. The main reason for violence was retaliation, which the prison would attempt to tackle within the next financial year and the use of substances was coming back under control;
5. The main risk to prisoners was self-harm. There were 47 reported incidents of self-harm in November 2015 and 41 incidents in December 2015. It was likely that there were further incidents which would go unreported;
6. Re-settlement services were sub-contracted out to Shelter;
7. Attendance at workshops aimed at getting prisoners involved in activities had risen. This was an attempt to get more prisoners into part time work on release;
8. Lincolnshire County Council had a good relationship with the prison.

Questions from Members were invited and, in answering, the following information was confirmed:

1. Childhood neglect often led the victim to prison, by a route of school exclusion, personality disorder, self-medicating/substance misuse and crime;
2. Work was done with the British Legion to help those veterans who became incarcerated. For some, joining the armed forces provided much needed discipline and structure, which civilian life lacked. Post-traumatic Stress Disorder could also be a route to crime;
3. Troubled male adults were difficult to connect to in order to provide medical treatment;
4. Preventing entry into the criminal justice system, at a young age, was very effective and the work of the Youth Offending Service was commended;
5. Training and qualifications of staff was important. New prison officers received eight weeks of training. If prisons were to transform inmates, the staff needed to be equipped to do so;
6. There was no access to bank staff to cover staff sickness. Some work could be managed flexibly to cover staff absence;
7. Self-harmers could have constant supervision if they were likely to attempt suicide;
8. Nottinghamshire NHS Trust provided a good team of community psychiatrists for the prison;

9. In relation to two suicides within the prison (within the last 5 years), it was confirmed that care maps had not been adequately followed up in both cases. The system had been devised before current low staff levels, and communication was difficult during these times as staff were required to be on duty in particular areas of the prison, thus making meetings difficult to achieve. Care maps had to involve the prisoners' families;

10. Although armed forces veterans' charities provided support for prisoners, it was more for resettlement than during their sentence;

11. The interface between housing and resettlement services had to work harder for offenders, as homeless ex-offenders were much more likely to reoffend;

12. Sex offenders and prisoners who had asked for protection were placed in E-Wing or the Care of Separation Unit. Once identified, the prison worked with the Council to support vulnerable prisoners. However, there was concern that those who did not present as vulnerable, could be easily overlooked;

13. It was the responsibility of each prisoner to disclose their history upon commencement of a sentence. The prison service did not have the manpower or authority to delve into each person's records to discover it for themselves.

The Committee thanked Peter Wright for attending and the progress made at Lincoln Prison.

RESOLVED

That the report, and comments made, be noted.

53 BUDGET PROPOSALS 2016/17

The Committee considered a report which described the budget proposals arising from the Local Government Finance Settlement, issued on 17 December 2015 and its implications on certain commissioning strategies.

The budget proposals were now open to consultation and members of the Committee had this opportunity to scrutinise them and make comment prior to the Executive making its final budget proposals on 2 February 2016.

Community Resilience and Assets

Savings of £3.031m would have to be made in 2016/17 from this strategy. The savings reflected that a number of the activities within this strategy were discretionary and therefore it was proposed to reduce the funding to zero for the following:

- Community Grants;
- Big Society Fund;
- The Local Welfare Support Scheme (would run until existing funding ran out);
- Chance to Share (would run until existing Lottery funding ran out).

Instead of funding the above services, the Council would try to support volunteers to run similar services in their own communities.

Members sought clarification on the further efficiencies listed in respect of the procurement process of the library provision. Officers confirmed that expected

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savings of £1 million would be achieved and that greater savings of an additional £0.4 million were also expected and would be built into the 2017/18 budget.

Members highlighted that it was positive that some efficiencies had already been achieved under the provision of libraries due to a better than expected procurement process.

Members highlighted concerns with regard to the Local Welfare Support Scheme as this responsibility transferred from the Department for Work and Pensions. Officers confirmed that significant savings had been made in how the scheme had been administered and confirmed that the grant had now ceased. It was proposed that the scheme would be reduced to operate on the residual grant reserved from previous underspends. It was requested that a report on the Local Welfare Support Scheme be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

Wellbeing

Savings of £6.045m for 2016/17 had been proposed from the Wellbeing Strategy. The decision on which services to keep was based on whether they were mandatory or discretionary. The savings would see the discontinuation of the following services;

- Health improvement programmes (adult weight management, health trainer, food and health, walking, master gardener and health support for probation supervised offenders);
- Reduced support for smoking cessation.

Both the sexual health and substance misuse programmes had recently been recommissioned and would provide a better value service.

Members highlighted that Health Services such as those under health improvement, prevention and self-management that were no longer proposed to be commissioned would have an impact on people's health. However, this would not be immediate and it was important to consider that personal responsibility sat with individuals. It was noted that adequate assessments on all of the services that were being withdrawn or reduced should be undertaken to reduce the impact on other services.

Protecting the Public

Community Safety would continue to fund domestic abuse services with the Police and Crime Commissioner and the NHS supporting also.

Funding for the Vulnerable Victims Service and the Sexual Violence service would cease. However, the Council was looking to transfer these services to another provider, for example, the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Road Safety had a proposed budget reduction of £0.119m. However, the Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership would become totally self-funded through the CAMRA Partnership.

Trading Standards had a proposed reduction of £0.254m. However, counterfeit goods, scams and rogue traders would continue.

The Youth Offending Service would not have any reduction in its funding for this year, due to funding from external sources already reduced. However, the Council funding beyond 2016/17 may reduce.

In response to questions from Members, the following was confirmed:

1. There were no further options available to save wellbeing services, as the funding to support them was simply no longer there. All the Council could do now was to emphasise the need, through communications, for people to be responsible for their own health;
2. Some services might well be able to continue, but without the Council's portion of their funding. It did not necessarily mean that those services would totally cease.

The next reset of funding was due to be in 2020 when Councils had been promised extra funding of approximately £20 million.

Members raised concerns in respect of the proposed budget reduction of £0.850 million to Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue and it was suggested that consideration be given to ring fencing this budget. Officers confirmed that the potential options being considered to meet proposed budget reductions would impact on service delivery although the aim would be to minimise this as far as possible. It was confirmed that ring fencing the budget was not under consideration.

Members highlighted the funding currently being received as part of the Better Care Fund (£0.150m) used towards the costs of Co-Responding. Officers confirmed that work was being undertaken with EMAS (East Midlands Ambulance Service) to review whether any additional funding was available to support this capability moving forward.

Members highlighted the need for the Council's Executive, local MP's and elected members to continue to put pressure on Central Government in relation to the Local Government Finance Settlement, issued on 17 December 2015. The Committee acknowledged the work already undertaken in challenging the settlement for rural counties and supported continued effort to achieve a fairer settlement for Lincolnshire.

RESOLVED

1. That the report and comments made be noted;
2. That the comments made be passed on to the Executive prior to its meeting on 2 February 2016.

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A report was considered on the Bespoke Business Advice provided by Trading Standards on a chargeable basis which was due to be considered by the Executive Councillor for Fire and Rescue, Emergency Planning, Trading Standards, Equality and Diversity on 2 February 2016.

The Committee unanimously supported the recommendations contained in the report. In addition, Committee Members made the following comments:

1. Members queried how businesses entitled to their first enquiry free for up to an hour would be managed by Trading Standards as part of the proposals. The main concerns related to whether the free hour would be stringently managed and how this would be communicated to potential users of the service. Officers confirmed that signposting would be in place via an updated website and that the free hour would primarily be used to explain what advice and support could be offered; given that there had previously been a misconception of what support and advice Trading Standards could provide as a service;
2. Members highlighted concerns as to whether advice provided through this service constituted a legal agreement between Lincolnshire County Council Trading Standards and the company or individual paying for the service; and, if this could result in legal liability to Lincolnshire County Council. Officers confirmed that staff providing the advice were trained to a chartered level and that there would be a robust checking process in place where advice would be checked off by another officer before being confirmed in writing to the client. Officers also confirmed that Trading Standards often had a legal liability whether the client was charged for the advice or not;
3. Members queried whether this service could become a legal sounding board for businesses who could then seek advice or support through other means. Officers confirmed that while this was a possibility it was more likely that information provided through this service could be provided more cost effectively to businesses than, for example, using a solicitor;
4. Members raised concerns regarding the survey 'Charging for Business Advice' which was live on the Lincolnshire County Council website for eight weeks from 1st June to 27th July 2015 and had attracted only nine responses and that more feedback was needed to make an informed decision. Questions were also raised around how requests for feedback had been targeted to potential users of the service and the possibility of looking at other ways to get feedback in the future. Officers confirmed that work was currently underway with Lincolnshire Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses to gain more feedback and look at more bespoke packages that could be offered. It was confirmed that the current focus was to get the primary offer up and running before looking at 'pay as you go' options in the future;
5. A suggestion was made by Members for officers to consider dealing with clients on a collective basis rather than targeting businesses individually. It was suggested that a nominal charge be implemented to charge and deal with businesses on a group basis;

6. Members questioned if the free hour included as part of the proposals would be per business or per enquiry and how this would be managed. Officers confirmed that it would be looked at per enquiry at launch until a better understanding of demand could be ascertained and could be reviewed in the future;

7. A question was asked by Members regarding how much income would be generated by this service over a year and whether these funds would remain within the Trading Standards service. Officers confirmed that over the past 6-8 months around sixty five businesses had been dealt with and that although this was not a large number, the funding generated would stay within the service and be used to fund a gap in the budget and allow other savings to be made;

8. Concerns were raised by Members regarding the whole of the first hour being offered for free and whether this could reduce the level of potential income for the service. An example of a similar service was highlighted where a flat rate fee could be in place for each initial contact; after which the hourly rate was charged. It was suggested whether a similar option could be considered for Lincolnshire;

9. Members queried whether officers had considered introducing a premium rate phone line as one option for this service. However, it was agreed by Members and officers that this should be avoided due to the perception around premium rate phone services.

RESOLVED

1. That the report and comments made be noted;
2. That the comments made be passed to the Executive Councillor for consideration on 2 February 2016.

55 JOINT AMBULANCE CONVEYANCE PROJECT

The Committee received a verbal update from Nick Borrill (Acting Chief Fire Officer), on the Joint Ambulance Conveyance project which involved Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue and East Midlands Ambulance Service working together to respond to 999 medical emergencies.

The pilot for this project was now working from three sites and firefighters had undertaken medical training.

The outcomes from the final report of the project were summarised as follows:

1. Over the last 12 month period, there had been 1100 callouts. Of those, 278 had resulted in transporting the patient to hospital;
2. Firefighters spent, on average, 27 minutes at hospital during patient handover;
3. The average time spent away from fire stations, while dealing with calls was 2 hours and 20 minutes;
4. There had been no fire specific calls missed during the time firefighters were away from stations.

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Improved patient care provided through the project had reduced the amount of time spent at the scene by the paramedic.

The project had already won two innovation awards and 95% of users had rated the service as excellent or good.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that Long Sutton was the busiest retained fire station in Lincolnshire. A recruitment campaign had been run in the area to attract more staff. Staff at the station were content with the situation regarding the pilot and contingency plans were in place should they become too busy.

The numbers of calls received were monitored closely and co-responding was balanced at stations to enable them to cope with the load.

RESOLVED

That the verbal report be noted.

56 COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC SAFETY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered its work programme for the coming year.

It was noted that the item on Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils (LALC) would be moved from the agenda on 9 March 2016 to the agenda on 13 April 2016.

An item on the Coroners' Service would be added to the agenda on 9 March in time for the Executive meeting on 5 April.

The Committee agreed that an update on domestic abuse should be scheduled to be considered biannually.

RESOLVED

That the work programme and the changes made therein be noted.

57 NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING

The Committee considered a report which briefed the Committee in respect of planned changes to Neighbourhood Policing across the county. This was an early briefing and a more detailed briefing would follow later in 2017, at which point all decisions in respect of this restructure would have been finalised.

Following considerable financial challenge and the need to respond to a number of significant emerging issues, the force had revisited how it utilised its limited resources. The review had considered some of the significant threats and more resources would be provided for these areas, namely: Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Cyber Crime and Missing persons.

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Decisions had been made on the coverage provided by Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) who would be managed by Community Beat Managers. However as the Council had just reduced the budget for PCSOs, it might cause problems.

The Committee felt there was a risk that Community Beat Managers could be taken away from the neighbourhood role to do other work. However, Members were assured that the role would sit in a hierarchical arrangement where they would be supported by higher ranks.

Discussion took place regarding how Community Beat Managers would travel, whilst on duty, as the Police Authority had recently reduced their fleet of vehicles. However, it was felt that travelling on foot would enable officers to meet more people within their area.

RESOLVED

That the report and comments made be noted.

The meeting closed at 1.15 pm

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