

## **COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 16 DECEMBER 2016**

**Statement from: Councillor C N Worth, Executive Councillor for Culture and Emergency Services**

### **HERITAGE SERVICES**

#### **BP Portrait Award at the Usher Gallery**

The Usher was the only non-national gallery to host this exhibition which is world renowned and is the most prestigious international portrait painting competition launching the careers of many renowned artists. Over 9,000 people have visited the exhibition, far exceeding expectations, and proving again that a provincial gallery can generate similar levels of interest to National venues.

#### **Victorian Days and Nights of Fear at Lincoln Castle**

In the days leading up to Halloween, Lincoln Castle hosted a series of activities and events, with costumed characters telling gruesome and funny tales. Creepy characters including a Victorian grave digger and a rat catcher were on hand to tell tales of witch trials and ghost stories. The programme of activities was a huge success with all events oversubscribed, including a number of evenings giving visitors the chance of experiencing the Castle after dark to witness a full Victorian funeral.

#### **The famous and infamous of Lincolnshire at the Archives**

In October, the Archives put on an exhibition using its own collections featuring Lincolnshire natives and people with Lincolnshire connections between the 12th century and the present day, including Isaac Newton, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Charles Dickens, and Laurel and Hardy. It was a rare chance for the public to see some of the pieces in the Archive about the famous lives and stories of Lincolnshire, for example, letters from Spilsby's famous explorer Sir John Franklin, and an original programme from a piano concert given by the young Margaret Thatcher, many years before her Prime Ministership.

### **LIBRARY SERVICES**

The contract with Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) was officially launched on 4 April 2016, with a seamless handover of operations.

GLL have continued to have a positive start to the new contract, delivering a number of events across the sites and encouraging community use within the service.

There are elements of delivery that still require some attention to ensure all targets are achieved, including work around number of visits to the sites, stock issues and the mobile service provision. However, the KPIs are bespoke to the GLL contract and therefore the service is not comparing like for like from previous years. The methodology for collating performance prior to April 2016 is not the same process that GLL are undertaking. This is to increase validity of the data and to ensure robust collection methods are utilised. Plans are in place to monitor performance in these KPIs over quarter 3.

Beyond this, GLL have already started to make an impact across Lincolnshire with updates to the garden and Children's area in Lincoln Central, a new look at Boston and improvements to Skegness, Sleaford, Gainsborough, with a new children's library planned for Stamford.

Book stock at each of the core library sites and across the community hubs is being reviewed to ensure available stock reflects customer needs. This is proving to be a positive step and is facilitating the development of relationships between the community groups and GLL. Efficiencies with the mobile service are also to be reviewed.

The activities that are available are also under review, with more creative sessions being planned, alongside 'jamming sessions', messy mornings for children, and mindfulness sessions for adults and digital drops-ins.

Discussions have been held with the University of Lincoln over their library catalogue, in order to expand Partnership working, although these conversations are still in their infancy.

GLL are reviewing the current opening hours for the core sites with the intention of extending, where possible, to ensure the provision matches the demand. For example, an additional hour at the end of the day is being proposed at Lincoln Central to give those who work during the day time to enjoy the library.

Operational staff feedback on their 6 months of working with GLL is all positive. However, we are still to receive agreement from the landlord at the Isaac Newton Shopping Centre in Grantham, to our sub-letting of the site to GLL. Grantham Library staff therefore remain LCC employees, although they are supported operationally by the GLL management team and LCC.

The Community Hub roll-out continues to progress with 35 hubs now operational. Wainfleet is scheduled to go live over the coming months, bringing the total number of Community Hubs to 36 (this includes Belton Lane Children's Centre and the 3 hospitals that operate as a hub).

This continues to be an exciting time for the service, making a further significant contribution to our financial challenge and a great outcome for everyone.

## **REGISTRATION AND CORONERS SERVICES**

### **Registration Service**

The Registration Service is delighted to announce that it has once again achieved 100% compliance with the Government's standards for Customer Service Excellence. This is a remarkable achievement which reflects the commitment and dedication of staff working in the service.

A new Bereavement Booklet has now been launched. This has been very well received and we are in the process of publicising and promoting this. An electronic version is also available on the Council's website.

Nationally legislative opportunities continue to move forward. In particular, with proposals in relation to death certification reform and the proposed introduction of Medical Examiners. This new service will provide scrutiny of Medical Certificates of Cause of Death for those who have died and where the death is not referred to the Coroner. Nationally it is anticipated that this will provide great comfort to families in allowing them to discuss the circumstances of their loved one's death with medically qualified personnel, improve clinical governance and provide greater assurance on death certification.

### **Lincolnshire Coroners Service**

2016 has seen a high level of activity in the Coroners Service. Referrals to the Coroner are up by 32% on the 2014 levels. This is inevitably putting a strain on resources and budget however the risks to service delivery are being mitigated by the employment of additional staffing and the continuing review of processes.

Alongside this, the Council continues to work positively and constructively with Lincolnshire Police to more clearly align service delivery with the Council's statutory responsibilities for the provision of adequate accommodation and staffing.

Following the Executive's decision on the 5th April 2016 to support the merger of the two coroner areas, we anticipate the Business Case for Merger will be formally launched by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) this month (November 2016). This will enable the MoJ to seek views on the proposed merger from a wider perspective of stakeholders.

We continue on the journey to transform the service and to try to ensure the BEST service – A Bereavement Experience which is Sensitive and Timely.

## **FIRE AND RESCUE / EMERGENCY PLANNING**

### **National Reform**

Change within the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) in support of national reform continues at pace with the creation of the National Fire Chiefs Council and supporting coordination committees. CFOA is also progressing specific changes particularly around collaborative working, the establishment of standards and an independent inspectorate. The intent of the standards work is to build on a number of areas where standards already exist and bring them all together to support the delivery of consistently good practice. Areas being considered under individual standards include; career progression and pathways, leadership, management and the Fire Professional Framework. Areas under organisational standards include Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP), assurance statements, governance statements and benchmarking/performance data. Operational Guidance standards are likely to remain under the existing National Operational Guidance programme.

Proposals on a model for the new inspectorate will be submitted to the Home Office for consideration by the end of the year. A number of options have been tabled all of which would see the inspection process starting in 2017/18.

## **IRMP**

More locally plans are now progressing to take forward the changes agreed as part of this year's IRMP consultation process. This includes changes to the wholetime duty systems to meet anticipated savings targets, the permanent relocation of an aerial ladder platform to Boston and the introduction of a cost recovery process for businesses which generate repeated unwanted fire signals from automatic fire alarm apparatus. Recommendations from a review to ensure the Service's Retained Duty System remains fit for purpose have also now been agreed. This review covered a broad spectrum of topics ranging from recruitment and selection through to training and payment systems. The recommendations will be implemented over the forthcoming months as appropriate.

## **Blue Light**

In terms of the Blue Light Collaboration project, the programme team remain busy driving the project forward and dealing with all the issues associated with such a complex task. Plans to move the fire and rescue HQ to Nettleham remain on target for Spring 2017 with the control room due to co-locate with police control by October 2017. Requirements for the tri-service campus on the South Park site are also been developed. In parallel, work is ongoing around the wider estates plan which is looking at the potential for the blue light services to share stations around the County. We are now expecting that EMAS will shortly sign off plans to share the existing fire station at Louth and to be part of the development of the joint fire station and county council office accommodation at Sleaford.

## **Long Service Awards**

On the 10 November, the Service held its annual Long Service awards ceremony at the Lincolnshire Showroom. In addition to the 6 recipients who received their Long Service and Good Conduct medals, recognising their 20 years of meritorious service and good conduct, 1 member of the Service received their County Council long service 20 years certificate, 4 members their 30 years certificate and 2 their 40 years' service certificate. Watch Manager Neil Johnson from Wragby also received a Chief Fire Officer's commendation for his role, while off duty, in providing life-saving medical support to a local resident.

## **Exercise Grey Seal**

Exercise Grey Seal, a Lincolnshire Resilience Forum (LRF) coastal pollution exercise, took place over the period 21-23 November. The exercise was run in conjunction with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency with the scenario based around a collision of a passenger ferry with an oil tanker resulting in oil coming ashore in Lincolnshire, North East Lincolnshire and Bridlington. Day one focussed on a demonstration of capabilities on Mablethorpe beach. Despite the inclement weather, shoreline clean-up and decontamination techniques were undertaken and beach masters and volunteers were also given the opportunity to train and develop their skills. The second two days focussed on exercising the coordination of such an emergency through the Strategic and Tactical Coordination Groups and included establishment of the County Emergency Centre. While the formal debrief has yet to be undertaken early indications suggest the key objectives of testing the co-ordination between national, sub-national and local levels, validating the Lincolnshire LRF Coastal Pollution Response plan and testing integration of local communities

and volunteer responses to an environmental emergency were achieved. Over two hundred people from a wide range of agencies took part in the exercise over the three days which allowed plans to be properly enacted and validated. The exercise received a substantial amount of positive media coverage and a large number of observers attended.

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