

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

**Statement from: Councillor B Young, Executive Councillor for Community Safety and People Management**

### **CRIME REDUCTION**

#### **Safer Communities**

##### **Community Safety**

Work continues to draw partners together to maintain Lincolnshire as one of the safest places to live and work in the country. Through the County Council working closely with the Police, health trusts and district councils, incidents of alcohol related crime have seen a 14% reduction from the same quarter last year. The most significant decrease occurred in Lincoln where police incidents involving alcohol are at a 6 year low. It is especially pleasing to see a reduction in violent crime against the person linked to alcohol. Unfortunately, sexual violence and rape figures continue on an upward trend but the County Council is playing a key role in identifying partners and activity to tackle this issue such as the very successful #NOMORE campaign that used the #AskforAngela approach to support people who didn't feel safe out on a date. This campaign created by the county partnership went worldwide on social media.

Hate crime, along with domestic abuse is an issue in which the individuals who have been affected do not readily report incidents to the police or seek support early. We are working with partners on both issues to give the knowledge and confidence to victims to report the matter. I am pleased to say that this activity is effective as reports increased in both areas in the second quarter of this year: hate crime reports were up by 16% and domestic abuse reports by 4.5%. These increased reports are driven by awareness raising activity and clear information on how to access help and support.

### **YOUTH OFFENDING**

In October 2016 Lincolnshire Youth Offending Service received notification from the Restorative Justice Council that it has been awarded the nationally recognised Restorative Service Quality Mark which evidences the commitment to Restorative Justice in Lincolnshire throughout all elements of the service. Only a small number of services nationally have met the required standards to receive this award and it represents an excellent reflection of the work of staff and community volunteers and their underlying commitment to restorative practice in the county.

Also in October, the service received an inspection by HMIP (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation) as part of a national programme of a wider multi-agency inspection with a specific focus on the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people. Whilst, at the time of writing, the formal report has still not been published, there was recognition by the inspectorate of the innovative work being undertaken by the service with young people to minimise the risk of violence through specific group based interventions.

The national Youth Justice Convention took place in Milton Keynes at the end of November 2016 and the publication of the long awaited Taylor Report, which was commissioned by the previous Justice Secretary to map out the future direction of youth justice services nationally for children, both within custody and the community, was expected around the same time. This is likely to be followed by a period of consultation with relevant stakeholders to determine how any specific recommendations are taken forward.

Finally, this month sees the formal integration of the Youth Offending Service within the wider Children's Services directorate. Communication and engagement with staff has already commenced to ensure a shared understanding of how both services can be co-ordinated, innovative and maximise resources to best meet the needs of children and young people in Lincolnshire.

## **TRADING STANDARDS**

Trading Standards Officers have continued to work closely with the Neighbourhood Policing Teams to deliver the "Break the Cycle" project. This aims to identify local residents at risk from scams and through education designed to help them identify and reduce interaction with scam mail in all of its guises, prevent them suffering further financial loss. Information from the National Scams Team and Action Fraud identifying over 2,000 Lincolnshire residents believed to be in regular contact with the scammers has been mapped and areas where there are multiple victims identified. Trading Standards is currently in the process of rolling out training to PCSOs in the areas identified so that those residents can be supported. Our officers continue to provide support to victims in the most complex cases.

Trading Standards have continued to work in partnership with other agencies including Lincolnshire Police, Licensing and HMRC in an effort to tackle the sale of illicit, unsafe, counterfeit and non-duty paid tobacco products. Over 2 days in September the service participated in an HMRC disruption exercise that saw 36 premises inspected in Lincoln, Spalding, Grantham and Boston. Over 130,000 cigarettes, 42 kilos of hand rolling tobacco and 3,570 litres of beers and spirits were seized from 20 premises that equated to a potential loss of £54,514 in excise duty and VAT. Several Trading Standards investigations have commenced following the days of action.

## **PEOPLE MANAGEMENT**

### **Apprenticeship Reforms – Update**

#### Background Information

As outlined in previous briefings this year to Council, in 2017, government funding of apprenticeships will vastly change, with the introduction of an Apprentice Levy due to be implemented from 6 April 2017. Organisations with an annual pay bill of more than £3 million will be subject to a levy payment of 0.5% of their total pay bill.

The levy payment will be required to be spent on the training and assessment of apprentices, and will be reported and collected through PAYE to HMRC. Alongside the introduction of the levy will be a 'levy allowance' of £15,000 per year. Based on

salary figures from 2015/16 the Council's estimated levy is just over £1.2 million (including Maintained schools).

Organisations will be able to recoup the levy if they meet the required performance in employing and training apprentices, which can be a mixture of existing staff and new recruits. This will be through the use of electronic vouchers via the introduction of a new digital apprenticeship service. The new service will facilitate the commissioning of training and development for apprenticeships, from accredited colleges, universities and private training providers. Levy paying organisations will be able to register for the new digital service in January 2017.

Levy paying organisations are also subject to the Government proposals of apprenticeship targets for the public sector, which have been set at 'starts per annum' of 2.3 % of the total workforce headcount.

A new national body, the Institute for Apprenticeships, will be established in April 2017. It will be its responsibility to oversee and approve all new apprenticeship standards and to 'ensure the quality of apprenticeships'.

#### Preparation for the introduction of the Apprenticeship Reforms by the County Council

The Apprenticeship Strategy Group with representatives from service areas in the Council is continuing to map existing and vacant roles against new apprenticeship standards and current frameworks. This is currently being used to input into the new government funding calculator to give an indicative levy spend. This will be an on-going process as new apprenticeship standards are produced. The final funding guidelines are due to be published by government at the end of December 2016.

It is planned that by end February 2017, Service Areas will be able to confirm definite numbers of apprenticeships for 2017-18, in line with their Workforce Plans. This will include both existing staff undertaking essential qualifications which are mapped to prescribed standards, as well as recruitment to apprenticeship vacancies.

There is a Project Team reporting to Debbie Barnes as the Project Sponsor to oversee the planning and implementation of the reforms in April 2017. The Project Lead is participating in networks with other authorities, so that learning can be shared and there is regular liaison with representatives from the LGA who are supporting authorities in the preparation stages.

A separate schools working group has been set up to focus on apprenticeship activity in schools.

A communication plan is being prepared which will include the timetable for the circulation of information on the reforms to appropriate parties within the Council and other stakeholders.

#### **LEGAL SERVICES**

Legal Services Lincolnshire continues to provide legal support to the work of the County Council and partners. Significant projects being supported include Pension Pooling, the Blue Light Collaboration and the development of appropriate legal documentation for the Better Care Fund for 2017/18.

In October, an advertisement was placed for the recruitment of two Trainee Solicitors.

This forms part of the service's approach to tackling ongoing recruitment difficulties. Training contracts offer an opportunity for the service to "grow its own" and in particular to help develop practitioners with an understanding of and interest in working as lawyers in local government and the wider public sector

The service also continues to work with Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service to develop a solution which will enable Judges and the parties to court proceedings to have electronic access to court papers. Possible portal-based solutions are being evaluated with the assistance of County Council IT and Serco.

The project has the potential to reduce the cost of proceedings for all parties but particularly for the County Council which is often responsible for providing copies of the court bundle which can run into many hundreds of pages. While Legal Services Lincolnshire has the capacity to produce and store the bundles electronically, the lack of a system by which bundles can be securely shared with third parties means that currently the service has to produce multiple hard copies of the same bundle.