

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 17 MAY 2019

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

CULTURE

Libraries

April saw the start of the fourth year of Greenwich Leisure Limited's (GLL) contract with the Council, for the delivery of the County's Library Service. The five year contract commenced on 1 April 2016 and has the option to be extended for a further five year period until 31 March 2026.

Libraries Performance

Overall performance remains strong; GLL recognises how important libraries are to their local communities and is committed to ensuring that services reflect the needs and interests of the communities they serve.

In 2018/19, a continued focus on improving library stock saw issues for core, mobile and e-services rise by 3%, breaking the two million issues mark and achieving 12% above the contract KPI target.

GLL has invested intensively in the training of members of library staff, so that they can help customers to expand their reading horizons and to get the most from their library visit. This training also enabled staff to encourage families to share their love of reading and books in GLL's 'Book Bingo Family Reading Challenge'. Nearly 400 families took part in this inter-generational reading scheme across the county, with book token prizes kindly donated by the LCC Family Services Directory.

The level of community use and the number of library events continued to grow, with the annual Summer Reading Challenge seeing a 10% increase in children starting the challenge in core and mobile libraries and an 11% increase in those completing. National Libraries Week was celebrated across the county with nearly 200 events and activities. Linked to the week's theme of 'Wellbeing', activities included drop-in surgeries from Wellbeing Lincs, talks on healthy eating (including a vegan cookery demonstration at Skegness), tai chi and 'stretch and flex' taster sessions, poetry readings, a human library and choirs at Boston, Lincoln and Sleaford, as well as a community wellbeing sing-a-long at Stamford.

GLL's annual customer survey in 2018 saw Lincolnshire libraries maintain their record of 100% of customers rating their overall satisfaction with the library service as good or very good, with staff helpfulness and knowledge rated at 99% and the choice of books at 97%.

GLL's main focus in Year Four is to build upon the successes of previous years, paying particular attention to exploring new IT developments. GLL and LCC are committed to working together; moving forwards to ensure a modern IT offer can be implemented in the near future, ensuring that customer needs are fully met.

Community Hubs

GLL continue to provide support to 36 community hubs through dedicated Library Development Officers. Of these, 34 hubs are community group run. A library provision is provided at Belton Lane Children's Centre and at all three Lincolnshire hospitals; these are managed by the staff at each location but supported by GLL.

Following Learning Communities' voluntary liquidation in May 2018, Ignite Church (Elim Trust) have commenced delivery of both the Birchwood and Boutham Community Hubs. This is proving to be a successful arrangement, with the group expanding upon activities and opportunities at each venue.

The Ermine hub continues to be managed via GLL, however discussions are ongoing with a potential provider to take over the management at this site.

Discussions are also ongoing with two further organisations about the potential of establishing two new Community Hubs in 2019.

Lincoln Castle

Lincoln Castle's season launch has taken inspiration from Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland and links into the City's broader event theme for 2019 – Victoriana. There are lots of events and activities planned including an Easter trail and an opportunity to have tea with the Mad Hatter.

The castle's first official 'late' event took place on the 5 and 6 April. The 'Topsy Tea Party;' took place in the Victorian Prison and was a sell-out event with visitors enjoying an evening of Wonderland inspired cocktails and sweet treats.

A highlight of the season launch has been the display of Alice Through the Looking Glass in the Magna Carta Vault. It is signed and dated from Lewis Carroll to Tennyson, with a date before the printed first edition publish date inside the book. The book forms part of the Tennyson Collection.

The Collection

Museum of the Moon - 2nd March – 28th April

Museum of the Moon is a new touring artwork by UK artist Luke Jerram. Measuring six metres in diameter, the moon features detailed NASA imagery of the lunar surface. The first six weeks of the exhibition has seen 29,475 visitors.

The Collection is trialling a 'Pay-What-You-Decide' approach, to enable as many people as possible to experience this phenomenal art work and has seen an increase in donations for March 2019 of over £11,000.

The exhibition is supported by a series of events and activities such as Museum of the Moon Late Nights at The Collection, Moonlight Yoga, and Lunchtime Lectures

Eclipse Chasers

Alongside Museum of the Moon, the Courtyard Gallery at The Collection is hosting 'Eclipse Chasers – The Great American Eclipse' a series of photographs by documentary photographer, Keith James.

Planetarium

The museum hosted an impressive inflatable dome where you can gaze at a projection of the night sky and navigate around the stars and planets in our solar system. The initial run of 400 tickets sold within a couple of weeks, so an additional 100 were added and due to the success of this profit generating activity we are hosting the planetarium again on 27 and 28 April.

Cover Art for the next Hello Lincoln What's On Guide

Talented students from University of Lincoln created the next front cover of the popular Hello Lincoln What's On Guide. Visitors had a chance to vote for their favourite work at an exhibition of the results of the students' efforts in The Courtyard Gallery from 5 - 22 February 2019.

Minecraft

In February, the MineVention weekend celebrated the game Minecraft through scheduled activities such as Build Battles, educational talks on Minecraft, tournaments, Q&A sessions, arts and crafts, and on-stage challenges. The event saw a surplus of nearly £3,000 and 1211 people visiting over the three days.

Learning Team

It has been an exciting few months researching the possibilities for our new Investigate Learning outreach offer.

The existing workshops have been extended to include creative arts workshops that link to our excellent exhibitions and events. In 2018, we became an Artsmark Partner at The Collection Museum with the aim to offer support and build a team to lead the arts sessions.

The Learning Team are also reviewing the extensive number of established loans boxes. These fifty plus boxes are hired out, mainly by schools and some community groups. The Learning Manager has consulted with teachers and other interested visitors to confirm that the availability of new 'outreach kits' would be something that they would be very interested in.

The Learning Team deliver workshops every day on site, however many schools and groups find it difficult to pay the transport costs to visit. Therefore, we are now considering how we may send outreach staff to deliver workshops too. In recent months, we have been researching what outreach is offered at other sites across the country and we also enlisted the help of a group of primary pupils on their Kids in Museums Takeover Day in November 2018 to share their ideas.

EMERGENCY PLANNING

Fire Response

The last year has been a busy one for Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue (LFR). In 2018, the service had to deal with "The Beast from the East" as well as one of the hottest and driest summers on record. These extremes put a great deal of pressure on our

teams and fire crews – especially when we consider that around 70% of our firefighters are on call staff and have other employment or businesses to run.

Our main activity statistics were:

- 22,752 emergency calls received
- 10,468 incidents broken down as :
 - 20% fires
 - 9% special services such as rescues from height or in water or assisting other agencies
 - 5% road traffic collisions
 - 24% false alarms
 - 42% medical response

The service has also seen some difficult incidents including incidents with multiple casualties in Collingham (LFR supporting Nottinghamshire for Fire Investigation) and Kirton which are still under investigation.

It has also been a difficult year on the roads with some very bad days for fatalities. The worst incident in March was a tragic road collision on Ermine Street, Welton Cliff, near Lincoln - six teenagers were involved in one vehicle which regrettably resulted in the sad loss of three lives. The service continues to reinforce the critical road safety messages across all stations and through an embedded safety advocate within the Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership.

Fire Station Chief Officer Group (COG) Inspections

LFR is starting this year's round of COG Inspections/audits. Local Divisional Commanders will be extending invites to their local county councillors who are most welcome to attend and observe the evening's activities. The Chief is keen to build closer links between local councillors and their community fire stations.

Fire Protection

Following the catastrophic fire in June 2017 at Grenfell Tower, Dame Judith Hackitt was asked by the Government, to conduct an independent review of building regulations and fire safety. The aim of the review was to make recommendations that will ensure there is a sufficiently robust regulatory system for the future and provide further assurance to residents that the buildings they live in are safe and will remain so.

In March, our protection team attended a national workshop to support the National Fire Chiefs Council, Building Safety Programme. The team have been set up to support the implementation of the recommendations made by the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety. LFR Protection team continue to support the findings of the review from a regional and national perspective.

Fire Prevention

In the last quarter, we have recruited two new Community Fire Safety (CFS) advocates to the team. They will support LFR and partners in a number of new initiatives we are carrying out. These include:

- Dementia and Scam Awareness training to WT crews.
- Reviewing the content of our Safe & Well checks. We are working with the Fire Brigades Union to develop an agreed process to support our crews in delivering these improved types of checks aimed at making people safe in their homes – from fire and other dangers in the home.
- Reviewing our safeguarding policy and agreed refresher training to be delivered later this year. All LFR staff are required to receive safeguarding training on an annual basis.

In addition to the initiatives above, we are also looking to increase our Fire Cadet Instructor cadre. There are vacancies at Boston, Lincoln and Spalding. The Fire Cadets at Spalding will see the introduction of a new section and our third team is due to be up and running by early June.

Blue Light Collaboration

Development of the new joint fire, police and ambulance station at the South Park site continues with visible progress currently being made on a weekly basis. Plans for fire and ambulance to occupy the site by July 2019, and police by October 2019, remain on target. Work on the wider estate also continues with the focus on working through opportunities with both police and EMAS to fully understand which sites provide improved value to the public whilst maintaining or improving service delivery.

Following on from the 2018 Blue Light Symposium reported last quarter, there has been key progress in relation to the broader integration activities include sharing of operational incident welfare facilities and potential for a joint fire and police command support capability.

Fire and Rescue Inspection

LFR was inspected during the summer by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) as part of a new independent inspection process.

LFR received a positive report being graded 'Good' for how effective it is at keeping people safe from fire and other risks and 'Good' for how efficiently it delivers the Service. However, LFR was graded as 'Requires Improvement' in how well it looks after its people. This primarily related to concerns over the effective recording and monitoring of training (getting the right people with the right skills). In addition, concerns were raised about our fire protection resources. Both of the items above had been identified prior to the inspection and action plans for resolving the issues were already underway.

Despite the areas identified for improvement for LFR, this was a strong report recognising the broad range of excellent work being carried out across the Service.

People

Following the retirement of Chief Fire Officer Nick Borrill in January 2019, Les Britzman was confirmed as Chief Fire Officer following a selection process.

The Service recruited twelve new wholetime firefighters in January 2019, with all successfully completing their initial ten week training and taking up their postings on station on 1 April 2019. We continue to recruit on-call firefighters (averaging 60 per year) with eleven being trained during January – March and another 17 commenced their initial training on 7 April 2019.

Emergency Planning

The Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Service continues to be instrumental in the implementation of the LRF's Command & Control review recommendations. A new training course was developed and over 120 strategic commanders from across the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum have received training alongside the development of a new command folder that each now has to assist during their response to emergencies. These folders have been held up by Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Cabinet Office as best practice and there is much interest from other LRF's in adopting this initiative. The next stage will be to implement and deliver training to tactical commanders.

During December 2018, the Service underwent an internal audit based upon the Emergency Planning Command Structure which concluded with a rating of "Substantial Assurance". It also received 100% Green status in the Combined Assurance Status report.

EU Exit has had a huge impact on service delivery. LCC and the LRF have both been undertaking contingency planning since October 2018 and are still actively engaged in the process temporarily necessitating some projects to be placed on hold. The Service are currently supporting an LRF task and finish group and Strategic Co-ordinating Group along with the requirement from Cabinet Office for daily reporting on risk and progress.

Other Key Projects

This year sees the rollout of 33 new Scania fire engines and equipment including Cobra Cold Cut firefighting technology – representing over £8million of investment in the county's fire service and arguably giving Lincolnshire the best equipment and vehicles in the country. Consultation has chosen a traditional fire appliance design but with modern messaging on the locker bays and increased visibility for Lincolnshire County Council.

Also, LFR have secured £100,000 from EMAS to continue to support Lincolnshire Joint Ambulance Conveyance project and also this year is 20 years of LFR undertaking medical response calls. This makes LFR unique and at the forefront of medical response among fire services.

Coroners Service

The new Senior Coroner for Lincolnshire, Mr Timothy Brennand, has now completed nearly six months in post. During that time he has taken the opportunity to meet many stakeholders across a wide range of networks, e.g. police, mortuary staff, pathologists, toxicology staff, general practitioners, funeral directors and healthcare professionals as well as corporate colleagues involved with suicide prevention and safeguarding. At a strategic level he has raised the profile of the Coroners Service and attended many public events.

There are also a number of changes to policy that are being developed and implemented following a review of working practices. Mr Brennand is keen to reduce timescales for families waiting for inquest and the new case management system is helping to support this. We also continue to look for appropriate accommodation for inquests, with facilities that provide both a judicial setting, but one that has a sensitive ambiance for those who are attending the inquest of a family or friend.

The Coroners Service would also like to acknowledge the long service of Richard (Dick) Marshall who will retire in May 2019 as an Assistant Coroner. Dick has worked as an Assistant (previously known as Deputy Coroner) for three decades. He has presided in hundreds, if not thousands, of inquests with skill, integrity, diligence and above all compassion for the bereaved. He has never been appealed and has been a steadfast and reliable coroner – often volunteering to assist in times of operational crisis and at short notice. His contribution to the provision of coronial service in Lincolnshire is considerable – not just in open court, but in the smooth running of the vast paperwork touching and concerning several thousand reported deaths that are the subject of coronial investigation that do not then result in an inquest. His quiet counsel and utter dependability, consistency, professionalism and skill will be difficult, if not impossible, to replace.

Registration Service

In November 2018 Lincolnshire was one of the first local authorities to pilot a European Union Settlement Scheme supported application service for those applying for settled and pre-settled status in the UK. The aim is for the Registration Service to help individuals with their applications, and provide a biometric 'chip checker' service. This has now been rolled out to over 50 sites across the country, with two locations in Lincolnshire – Lincoln and Boston.

New legislation has been passed in the House of Commons and the House of Lords – Civil Partnerships, Marriages and Deaths (Registration Etc.) Act 2019 with Royal Assent received 26 March 2019. This will make fundamental changes to the way marriages are registered with the formal addition of mother's names in the marriage register for the first time, and a move to a schedule system which will replace the historic green registers. Another aspect of this Act is the introduction of Civil Partnerships for opposite sex couples to provide equality in choice for their legal commitment to each other.

The Act will also consider whether the Coroner should investigate stillbirths and there is also consideration of early pregnancy loss and the impact that has on families and how these could be recognised or registered.

In April the Registration Service achieved a long time ambition to offer death appointments at the Swanpool Suite at Lincoln County Hospital. Whilst this is in its early days, it has been incredibly well received by families so far. These appointments allow the family to collect personal possessions, the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death and register the death all at the same time.

Once again I would like to acknowledge the hard work of Registration and Coroners staff over the winter months, when the focus on death investigation and registration can be all encompassing.