

## **COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 20 FEBRUARY 2015**

**Statement from: Councillor C N Worth, Executive Councillor for Libraries, Heritage, Culture, Registration and Coroners Service**

### **Libraries**

#### **Future Delivery**

Members will note the further consultation, detailed option appraisal of proposals received and decision about the future of library provision for Lincolnshire. I am pleased to announce that the proposal accepted will secure 15 libraries as an expression of the Council's statutory duty to local people as a comprehensive and efficient library service. The majority of people in Lincolnshire will be able to access these libraries within a 30 minute journey time.

The high degree of interest in the future of these services has been sustained and we have heard loud and clear the value people place on them.

For this reason, it is excellent that we have been able to adopt an overall approach that will see a wide range of services over and above the statutory ones being offered. These will include home library services, mobile libraries and up to 40 libraries delivered in partnership as part of community run hubs. All of these services will now be supported by an external partner, selected by tender, from April 2015 and work is already underway to start the process of selecting a suitable partner organisation. Until this time the in-house service will ensure the services are provided to the high quality customers have come to expect, including working with community groups to bring our shared proposals for community hubs to fruition.

These community hubs are a direct expression of the Executive's desire to enter into different relationships with communities to deliver services and activities – a relationship where we use our diminishing resources to work with communities, helping them to also bring forward assets in pursuit of their goals.

Our ability to deliver this new model will be dependent on our staff, who have continued to provide dedicated service to our customers despite significant changes to the service already and a period of uncertainty that has proven much longer than I would have wanted.

#### **Reading Well Books on Prescription**

The national launch date for Reading Well Books on Prescription for dementia was 28 January 2015. Locally, the Books on Prescription scheme was officially launched on 5 February. Over 120 books have been ordered and the promotional materials are being disseminated throughout the county. For those who were not able to attend the launch on 5 February, the team will be looking at holding some further briefing sessions.

### **Heritage & Culture**

We have received good news from Arts Council England who have informed us that they wish to fund our Aviation Heritage Lincolnshire Museums & Schools

Programme. This project has been funded for the past three years and we have been awarded £108k to extend for another 12 months.

### **Lincoln Castle Revealed**

Lincoln Castle closed at the end of December in order to enable staff and contractors to focus on the final push towards the reveal on 1 April 2015. The completion schedule remains tight, but the works that have been completed including the shop and café fit out, and work on the Magna Carta vault are of high quality. Works are now also underway outside the buildings on the roads, paths, landscaping and way-finding and a packed programme of events is shaping up nicely, including a VIP opening in June.

### **War Memorial Project**

The Lincolnshire Remembrance: Memories and Memorials project still goes from strength to strength. The project now has more than 270 volunteers signed up to help. The volunteers have recorded almost 3,000 memorials, more than 18,000 casualties from the Great War and around 4,500 casualties from the Second World War.

### **Registration, Celebratory and Coroners Services**

In the last few months both the Registration Service and Coroners Service have been proactively working to understand the impact of legislation in relation to Deprivation of Liberty Safeguarding Orders (DoLS). Where an individual dies and there is a DoLS in place, the death needs to be investigated by the Coroner. There has been an increase in workload to accommodate this, and processes are being developed to ensure these investigations are completed in a timely manner to minimise distress to bereaved families.

A new e-referral process has been developed and was piloted from December to allow medical practitioners to refer deaths to the Coroner electronically at all times of the day and night (24/7). This has been well received by medical practitioners, who can now make referrals out of hours. A number of amendments to the e-referral form have been made as the process continues to develop and is further piloted. We believe this is the first initiative of its kind in England.

December and January have seen a noticeable increase in deaths in the county. All agencies involved have demonstrated considerable flexibility and commitment to meet the needs of bereaved families, which is a tribute to them. The volumes have put some agencies under considerable pressure.

In line with national legislation, conversions of Civil Partnership to Marriage were introduced on 10 December 2014. A number of options regarding the arrangements were made available to offer choice to couples and these have been extremely well received.

The Registration Service is actively planning and preparing for changes to legislation in response to the Immigration Act 2014 which will come into force on 2 March 2015. This will see the extension of the notice period for marriages from 14 to 28 days and a possible further extension of the notice period to 75 days where there are any concerns about the immigration status of either party to the marriage.