

## **COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 14 September 2012**

**Statement from: Councillor M J Hill OBE – Leader and Executive Councillor for Policy, Strategy and Communications**

### **Corporate Property Rationalisation Programme**

#### **Lincoln**

The recent successful closures and lease surrenders of Beech House, Units 12 and 14 Witham Park and Newporte House have reduced office space by 3,761 sq m and helped towards the Property Services core offer savings target of £1m per year.

The closures saw 228 staff relocated into existing office buildings, with 122 now considered agile workers. Service areas relocated include Business Support, Adult Social Care, Technical Services Partnership (TSP), and Economy and Culture. A survey showed that 63% of staff from the Beech House / TSP move found the change a positive experience.

Plans are now in place to close Units 11, 13 and 15 Witham Park and 8 The Avenue.

#### **Boston**

Plans are in place for County Hall to be fully vacated, with only the library remaining there after this month. The annexe will be closed by November. The closures will provide further revenue savings and reduce expenditure on repairs and maintenance. The reduction in office space is 3,339 sq m.

In total, 176 staff will be affected by the closures. They include 23 from Children's Services and Business Support who have moved to Boston Family Centre. Another 72 staff from Adult Social Care, Business Support, the Careers Service, Children's Services and the Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership have moved to Boston Borough Council's offices on West Street, with Registration due to follow at the end of September.

### **Registration and Celebratory Services**

The national "Tell Us Once" service has now been launched in Lincolnshire. It enables residents to notify local and central government of a birth or death just once rather than having to contact numerous different agencies. Over 1,200 bereaved families had access to the service in its first month in Lincolnshire, and it has been well received.

### **Coroners Service**

In April 2012, the new Central Lincolnshire jurisdiction was formed following the amalgamation of the West Lincolnshire and Spilsby & Louth jurisdictions, with Stuart Fisher as HM Coroner. On 1 June, Professor Alexander Robert Forrest was appointed HM Coroner for the newly formed South Lincolnshire jurisdiction, incorporating the historic Boston & Spalding and Stamford jurisdictions.

## **Members Services**

Access to information about decision-making will be greatly improved when Democratic Services implement a new system, “modern.gov”, in the autumn. This will replace the current outdated arrangements for publishing agendas, reports, minutes and decision notices, and be much more reliable and user-friendly. Other aspects of the new system will also improve the efficiency of the service.

## **Standards**

Regulations and guidance on the new regime for registering and declaring “disclosable pecuniary interests” were published in June. Guidance and training have been delivered for Members, and the new register was published on the council’s website on 1 September.

## **Strategic Communications**

I have reviewed strategic priorities for our use of the web, together with Cllrs Kelly Smith and Richard Davies and supported by senior managers. Officers will be bringing forward proposals to improve the focus, flexibility, user-friendliness and value for money of our websites over the next few months.

## **Citizens Panel**

I am pleased to report that LCC (via a research company called SMSR) have successfully recruited 500 members of the public to become our 'Citizens Panel'. The panel will be used to test the public perception of whether LCC is doing a good job, the public’s tolerance to changes, and overall satisfaction with LCC.

The Customer Service Centre are currently contacting the panel and the first report is due at the end of September 2012.