

**PUBLIC PROTECTION AND
COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE
24 JULY 2018**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR N H PEPPER (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors A N Stokes (Vice-Chairman), W J Aron, C J T H Brewis, K J Clarke, Mrs C J Lawton, M A Whittington, L Wootten, R Wootten and T R Ashton

Councillors: Mrs S Woolley, C N Worth and B Young attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Mark Baxter (Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue), Chief Superintendent Chris Davison (County Officer Public Protection), Michaela Finan, Nicole Hilton (Chief Community Engagement Officer), Daniel Steel (Scrutiny Officer) and Rachel Wilson (Democratic Services Officer) and Simon York (Area Manager – Planning, Protection and Prevention).

11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT COUNCILLORS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs P Cooper and C R Oxby.

The Chief Executive reported that having received a notice under Regulation 13 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, he had appointed Councillor T Ashton as a replacement member of the Committee in place of Councillor Mrs P Cooper for this meeting only.

12 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest at this point in the meeting.

13 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 JUNE 2018

During consideration of the minutes, it was clarified that in relation to minute number 5, whole time fire fighters were referred to as technicians and retained fire fighters were operators.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2018 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the above clarification.

14 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS

AND LEAD OFFICERS

There were no announcements from the Chairman, Executive Councillors or Senior Officers.

15 PERFORMANCE OF LIBRARY SERVICES CONTRACT - YEAR 2 REVIEW

Consideration was given to a report which provided an update of the contract performance information to enable the Committee to fulfil its role in scrutinising performance of the second year of the out-sourced Library Contract to Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL).

Members were informed that the decision to outsource LCC's statutory library service was taken to enable the delivery of a cost effective, high quality library service in an ongoing environment of constraint. It was noted that the key aims of the outsourcing was:

- To increase levels of service performance
- Improved customer's experience
- Service transformation

It was reported that the Library Service contract with GLL commenced in April 2016, and GLL had now entered Year 3 of a 5 year contract with an option to extend the contract by a further 5 years.

First year progress had been reported to the Committee the previous year, and it was felt that it would be beneficial if an annual report was brought to the Committee over the course of the contract. Members were informed that overall performance was very good, with KPI's being met. However, it was noted that there had been a couple of KPI's which were not met, but this had been due to the adverse weather experienced in the County in February and March 2018, as the larger library vehicles could not get out in the snow.

Conversations were taking place around how the IT model could be improved and what it may look like. Customer expectations in terms of IT were growing rapidly, and there was a need to balance that with what it was possible and cost effective to deliver. GLL continued to review the mobile service to make it as efficient as possible.

A query was raised regarding the removal of computers from Boutham library and members were advised that this was the result of an exceptional set of circumstances and the authority was working with GLL and a number of other community groups that were looking to supply an alternative community offer. It was noted that there were three libraries – Birchwood, Ermine and Boutham – which were the subject of discussions. Expressions of interest were currently being received to run all three of these libraries, and these would then undergo an evaluation process. It was acknowledged that the IT issues experienced in this library was a temporary situation, and it was hoped that a new provider would be announced in the early autumn and work would get underway quickly to restore the IT provision.

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The Committee was introduced to two representatives of GLL, Diana Edmonds (National Libraries Director) and Nicola Rogers (Partnership Manager for Lincolnshire Libraries) who were in attendance at the meeting provided updates on the work taking place within Lincolnshire libraries as part of the GLL contract.

Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- It was noted that Lincolnshire Libraries had 100% customer satisfaction, which was a first for GLL.
- In relation to Grantham library, it was commented that progress was not moving very quickly. Members were assured that officers continued to pursue this, and following legal advice had agreed a more risky approach as the ability to communicate with the owners was proving difficult as the building was owned by an offshore account. As many attempts to contact the owners had been made, it was thought that the authority was in a strong position to advise the owners of what the plans for the building were, and if there were any issues they should contact the authority.
- It was commented that the volunteer aspect was working very well and activities and footfall were increasing. It was also commented that the Library Development Officers had been a very good idea.
- It was commented that officers would welcome the opportunity to come back to the Committee with a report on the community hubs, as they were working very well in Lincolnshire, but they had not always worked in other parts of the country. It was commented that they may have succeeded in Lincolnshire as they were not all the same. It was suggested that some of the staff from the hubs may want to come and talk to the Committee to give first-hand experience.
- Members requested information on the background of GLL, and it was reported that GLL was a social enterprise and a not for profit organisation that had been running for 25 years. The organisation had initially formed as a leisure organisation in Greenwich when the Council had no longer been able to support the leisure centres in the area. The organisation now managed 14,000 staff throughout the country and ran 300 leisure facilities and 100 libraries.
- It was confirmed that GLL was still able to provide people with access to various publications for research purposes, through the use of either local academic libraries to loan the publication or if that was not possible, then it could be accessed from the British Library.
- In relation to the financial information presented, it was requested whether this could be presented in a format that was a little clearer to understand. It was also queried whether there could be consistency in the way KPI's were presented, i.e. numbers or percentages, as there was a combination of both used.
- It was noted that Lexicon House had been closed down, and it was queried whether there was a change in the way libraries were used, and what the strategic way forward for libraries was for the future.

- It was noted that the sales figures for e-books had fallen, whilst hard copy books had increased. GLL was aware that IT was now fundamental as a part of life, and other things being promoted in libraries included communication through technology, applying for jobs, and applying for universal credit. It was thought libraries in the future would be a hybrid of services. It was commented that GLL ran over 100 libraries across the country, and in some communities there was a real need for digital technology. It was noted that this was not just access to computers. Some people may have smart phones/tablets, but needed access to a printer.
- In terms of a strategic view, there were some fundamental facts which needed to be faced, such as that footfall was declining nationally across the entire culture sector. E-reader sales were slowing, although it may be because people only needed to buy one every 5 years or so.
- It was noted that libraries were adapting and flexible and in the future would not be just about books.
- It was queried whether the community hub programme was still open, and it was noted that there was originally capacity for 40 hubs, and there were currently 36 operating, with a further two where discussions were taking place. If the 40 was going to be exceeded there would need to be a further conversation with the Council's Executive about whether they wanted to expand the programme.
- It was noted that KPI-11 had achieved so far above target and it was queried why this was. It was noted that this was due to the libraries being opened up to communities and having a focus on community engagement.
- It was commented that this was a very encouraging report on how the service was developing.

The representatives of GLL thanked the officers that they worked with at the Council and commented that things worked much better when there was partnership working with officers.

RESOLVED

1. That the Committee endorse the ongoing development and proposed 'Year 3 Developments' highlighted in the report;
2. That annual performance updates on the Library Services Contract going forward be received by the Committee.

16 FINANCIAL INCLUSION

Consideration was given to a report which provided the Committee with information and an overview on financial inclusion activity, the financial inclusion challenges facing Lincolnshire as well as the local context, key drivers and priorities.

The Committee was guided through the report and received a brief presentation which provided further information in relation to the following areas:

- Financial exclusion – some of the impacts

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- Who is financially excluded
- Financial inclusion – information, advice and support
- Financial inclusion – challenges include:
- Next steps and future priorities.

Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report and presentation and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- It was highlighted that the adverts for pay day loans, some with interest rates of 1500% were contributing to issues around finance.
- It was commented that in libraries there were advice centres and surgeries which provided advice on applying for universal credit as well as access to computers. An additional pot of funding had also been allocated to Citizens Advice to help people having issues in applying for universal credit.
- In terms of tackling financial exclusion, it was acknowledged that there had been issues and problem, but the relevant organisations were now coming together to take a collaborative approach.
- It was queried whether this issue was around 10-20 years ago, and whether it had got worse, and if it would still get worse in the future. Members were advised that the issue of financial exclusion had always been there, but the recent financial crash had placed people in new territory financially, and the banking sector was only just starting to relax.
- In terms of numbers it was not thought that a significant improvement would be seen in the immediate future. However, the more work that could be carried out collaboratively, then there was a better chance of things improving.
- It was noted that this subject was getting more time and attention on the national agenda.
- It was suggested whether a lot of financial problems started at home, with the lack of emphasis placed on the importance of saving, and the need for instant gratification for people who wanted the latest gadget was another issue. however, it was acknowledged that this was not the cause for all people with financial issues, and there was an element of the population in dire poverty and they needed as much help as possible.
- It was clarified that the people being financially excluded were not those who were being reckless with credit cards etc. that was a different issue. However, it was agreed there was definitely a need for more education programmes in relation to finance.
- It was commented that one area where regulation was needed was those companies whose interest rates (whether loans or credit cards) were extortionate, and there was a lot of bad practice within this industry. It was queried what could be done to challenge this. Members were advised that work could be done to influence the national agenda, and the authority was leading on the Financial Inclusion Partnership and so had access to the knowledge and intelligence of people within those communities so that this could be added to the national debate.
- There was further support for education on finance matters in schools.
- Whilst it was important that these lenders were challenged, there was also a need to ensure that there was an alternative offer, and that was what time and

energy was going into developing. For example, Lincolnshire Credit Union offered affordable and reasonable loans. There were also charitable organisations who could offer reconditioned white goods.

- It was queried how people on benefits accessed their benefits, and it was reported that in order to receive benefits, people needed to have a bank account of some sort. However, some were not accounts that people would have by choice (e.g. may have poor interest rates and also may have charges associated with them). A lot of people with problems accessing bank accounts would have accounts at the post office with just a cash card facility.

RESOLVED

That the report and associated comments be noted.

17 VOLUNTEERING IN LINCOLNSHIRE

Consideration was given to a report which provided the Committee with an update on volunteering for Lincolnshire County Council and supporting volunteers across Lincolnshire. The report included information on the opportunities for volunteering and the value and impact of volunteering and how their invaluable contributions would have been recognised during Volunteers Week.

It was reported that the age range of volunteers was increasing, and people were starting young and kept going. It was also noted that there was a move away from people joining big organisations, but instead were creating smaller groups to tackle local issues which could be fairly short term. People were now having a different experience of volunteering.

The Committee was informed that there were between 1000 and 1500 volunteers within LCC in a variety of areas, with many in the heritage service. There was also an emergence of spontaneous volunteering, usually occurring in emergency situations, such as the severe snow which fell in early 2018, these volunteers would appear within the community and given assistance, and then disappear when things returned to normal.

Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- It was considered important to encourage people to go out and volunteer.
- In terms of safeguarding, it was queried whether there was an option for just one DBS check, as one member commented they had had to have DBS checks three times as they were involved in three different activities involving children. Members were advised that this had now been implemented, and the emphasis was now on the person to have a DBS check, rather than the organisation carrying them out.
- It was believed that there were a lot of people who would like to volunteer, and there was a need to let people what opportunities were available.

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- It was requested whether councillors could have a copy of the volunteers welcome pack, and officers agreed to circulate this.
- It was queried how appreciation was shown for those people who volunteered for LCC, and members were advised that a letter had been sent from the Leader of the Council thanking volunteers for the amount of work they did. According to feedback, this has been very well received. It was also noted that service areas held their own celebration as well. Members were advised that the Council had achieved the Investing in Volunteer Standards award which set a professional standard for volunteers.
- In terms of emergency planning, it was queried whether the authority worked with town and parish councils. Members were advised that within the community engagement team there were two officers that were dedicated to working with town and parish councils, and volunteering was included within the emergency plan.
- One member commented that she volunteered for several different things, and whilst there didn't seem to be a problem recruiting volunteers to be involved in a 'hands on' manner, where groups struggled was in finding people to look after the administration and paperwork side of the groups. It was acknowledged that the introduction of GDPR regulations had made this more difficult, and it had always been a difficult area to recruit volunteers for. There seemed to be a focus on a different style of volunteering which did not require this level of structure or framework. However, if the group was going to be handling money a minimum level of governance would be needed.

RESOLVED

That the report and comments made be noted.

18 FIRE AND RESCUE - PREVENTION AND PROTECTION STRATEGIES

Consideration was given to a report which aimed to inform councillors of the Prevention and Protection activities undertaken in support of the Prevention and Protection Strategies.

It was reported that Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue had a number of strategies for reducing the risk to the communities of Lincolnshire. Prevention and Protection were the two strategies which engaged with the community with the aim of preventing fires occurring. It was noted that these areas of service delivery rarely made the headlines and members of the community were not always well informed about the extent of the activities delivered to support the strategies.

The Local Government Association Peer Challenge had taken place in September the previous year, and one of the main observations was that councillors would benefit from a clearer understanding of the Prevention and Protection work carried out by the Service.

Members were advised that the Integrated Risk management Plan set out the Service Prevention and Protection Strategy, the Annual Service Plan and Service Policy identified how the strategy would be delivered and within that, the Community

Safety Framework set out the main activities undertaken.. key fire safety targets and activities were also set out in the Annual Service Plan.

Members were guided through the report and provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report, and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- It was noted that 47% of fires nationally were due to arson, and it was queried whether this figure was the same for Lincolnshire. Members were advised that the figure was slightly lower for Lincolnshire, but it was still a significant problem.
- It was noted that the success rate for prosecutions for arson was very low as the Service did not have the sufficient level of resources. Although if there was a high profile incident, officers would find out the details of the action taken by the Police.
- It was noted that trends were monitored and activities co-ordinated to catch perpetrators.
- It was queried whether something similar to 2fast 2soon could be developed in relation to arson, and members were informed that Fire and Rescue did deliver education to year 7 pupils about arson and the consequences of these types of fires.
- It was noted that arson was one issue that the Service did not focus on as much, as more people would die from accidental dwelling fires than any other type of fire.
- It was queried whether insurance premiums would go down for those organisations that signed up for the prevention scheme, and it was expected that insurance companies would require some form of assurance.
- It was queried whether chip pan fires were still an issue, and it was confirmed that they were, but they were not as prevalent as they used to be. It was noted that for the most vulnerable people, where they were still using things which could be hazardous, such as chip pans, the Service had a small budget which could be used to replace items with safer versions, such as deep fat fryers.
- Unattended cooking was still a problem, with 56% of dwelling fires being related to cooking. There was a need to educate people on the safest way to cook.
- It was noted that the Service had highly trained call handlers who could identify a malicious call. However, if there was any doubt resources would always be sent out.
- It was queried how much false fire signals cost the authority, and members were advised that this information was available but officers did not have it at the meeting and would circulate. It was noted that the average cost and the number of false alarms attended would be circulated to the committee.
- In terms of fire prevention equipment for non-domestic premises, it was queried whether Fire and Rescue had any control over the maintenance of the equipment, and it was noted that whilst Fire and Rescue could recommend the best equipment, it could not tell people what to buy.
- It was queried how Fire and Rescue reached the most vulnerable people who were living in very rural locations. Members were advised that work was

underway to reach those vulnerable people by working with doctors surgeries, and GP's would be able to refer people to Fire and Rescue. The Service would then work with a range of partners depending on the type of advice required and the appropriate agency would then provide the appropriate support. It was noted that this approach was already working well in some areas and still developing in others. Close working with the NHS was taking place to identify the best routes for this.

RESOLVED

That the reports and comments made be noted.

19 QUARTER 4 PERFORMANCE REPORT (1 JANUARY TO 31 MARCH 2018)

Consideration was given to a report which provided the opportunity to consider key performance information that was relevant to the work of the Committee.

Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- Anti-social behaviour incidents reported to the police – it was suggested that this needed to be focused to a local area.
- There had been a shift towards those shops with illicit stock not keeping it in the shop, but instead keeping it in the back, or ordering it in on request.
- It was commented it was better to look where large amounts of contraband were being kept or who the suppliers were. This change in behaviours could make it more difficult for trading standards.
- Members were informed that investigative processes were much slower for trading standards due to processes which were involved, and it was noted that discussions were in place regarding merging the Police Licensing team with the Trading Standards Licensing team.
- Anti-social behaviour incidents reported to the Police – it was noted that these figures did not include district housing providers. It was noted that a computer system had been jointly procured which would be used as a single database for anti-social behaviour reports. This should give a comprehensive review of where anti-social behaviour incidents were taking place, regardless of who reported them.
- It was noted that in relation to HMIC and the reporting of crime data the majority of missed crimes were held in 2 main records. One was around the DASH (Domestic Abuse Stalking and Harassment) pro-forma and may have made mention of past incidents. It was noted that although the police had not complied with HMIC FRS with the reporting of data, no safeguarding situations had been missed, and no one had been left less safe than they should have been. It was noted that Lincolnshire Police had been rated as good for helping people.
- Primary Fires – concerns were expressed regarding the increase in dwelling fires. Members were noted that the increase was mainly due to vehicle fires, which were mainly arson related as people were stealing cars and then setting

fire to them. 56% of these fires were due to cooking related incidents and in many cases the fire would have burned out before Fire and Rescue arrived and therefore no action would be taken.

- It was also noted that trends occurred nationally with numbers of fires going up or down. At the moment, nationally there was a downward trend. It was queried whether this could be due to homes being safer due to increased number of people having alarm systems. Members were advised that the increase in automated system was leading to more call outs on occasions when normally fire and rescue would not have been called as people had been able to put out the fire themselves. It was acknowledged that these systems were making people safer, but it was also creating more activity for the Service.
- It was requested whether Fire and Rescue could bring back further data on deliberate fires.

RESOLVED

That the performance information and associated commented be noted.

20 PUBLIC PROTECTION AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report which enabled the Committee to comment on the content of its work programme for the coming year to ensure that scrutiny activity was focused where it could be of greatest benefit.

During discussion of the work programme, the following was noted:

- An item on Community Hubs would be added to the work programme;
- In relation to the Street Lighting scrutiny review report, OSMB would consider the outcome report by Councillor Young, but there would be implications for this Committee's work programme in future.
- It was requested whether the performance data which would be received at the March 2019 could include up to date figures on anti-social behaviour incidents.

RESOLVED

1. That the work programme as set out in Appendix A to the report be noted.
2. That the additional items highlighted above be added to the Committee's work programme.

The meeting closed at 12.35 pm