

**PUBLIC PROTECTION AND
 COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY
 COMMITTEE
 8 DECEMBER 2020**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR N H PEPPER (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors A N Stokes (Vice-Chairman), W J Aron, K J Clarke, Mrs C J Lawton, C R Oxby, L Wootten and R Wootten

Councillors: C N Worth, B Young and L A Cawrey attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Sara Barry (Acting Assistant Director - Public Protection), Steven Batchelor (Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership Senior Manager), Mark Baxter (Chief Fire Officer), Diane Coulson (Assistant Director - Public Protection), Paul Drury (Prevent Officer), Nick Harrison (Democratic Services Officer), Clare Newborn (Interim Head of Service - Community Safety), Paul Smith (Acting Senior Coroner) and Nigel West (Head of Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Officer)

32 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Ms K Cook.

33 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were no declarations.

34 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 27 OCTOBER 2020

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 October 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

35 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND CHIEF OFFICERS

There were no announcements.

36 SERVICE LEVEL PERFORMANCE REPORTING AGAINST THE PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK 2020-2021 - QUARTERS 1 AND 2

Consideration was given to a report from the Acting Assistant Director - Public Protection and the Chief Fire Officer, on the Service Level Performance Reporting

against the Performance Framework 2020-2021 - Quarters 1 and 2. The Corporate Plan had been approved by the County Council on 11 December 2019 and the Executive approved the Corporate Plan Performance Framework 2020/21 on 6 October 2020. The Framework contained performance indicators and key activities against which performance and progress would be reported in order to demonstrate whether the Council was achieving the ambitions for Lincolnshire as set out in the Corporate Plan. The report highlighted the performance measures for the following services:- community safety, fire safety, libraries and heritage, road safety, trading standards and volunteering.

Members considered the report, and during the discussion the following comments were noted:-

- The impact of the Covid pandemic on some of the targets and services was noted.
- The seizure of illicit tobacco and alcohol target had not been achieved due to Covid restrictions and it was noted activity had increased recently. Products seized were a mixture of home-made and imported. Products had been seized from shops which had been targeted for inspection and also from homes. There had been a number of reports from A and E of cases of illness due to drinking illicit alcohol but no deaths recorded.
- Details were awaited following Brexit on any changes to trading standards.
- Incidents of domestic abuse as of March 2020 showed that 70% of reports had been recorded as crimes. Nationally this figure was 59%. It was noted that after the perpetrator was charged the victim sometimes withdrew their complaint. Victims were supported through the whole process and sometimes charges were proceeded with without the support of the victim where it was deemed in the public's interest and appropriate.

RESOLVED: That the report be received and the performance for Quarters 1 and 2 be noted.

37 ROAD SAFETY PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT

Consideration was given to a report from the Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership Senior Manager, on the Road Safety Partnership Annual Report and on the work being undertaken by the Road Safety Partnership to reduce the number of people killed and injured on county Roads. The report provided an update on fatal and serious injury (KSI) casualty figures for Lincolnshire, plus data on trends, comparisons and areas of priority.

The report highlighted:- national strategies, policies and guidance; an analysis of the data, Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership (LRSP) organisational structure, priorities, activities, services, projected Income/Expenditure 2019/20; delivery of education, training and publicity to schools/colleges; Coronavirus Impact. It was noted that the LRSP co-located forensic collision investigators and casualty reduction officers from Lincolnshire Police with LCC's Accident Investigation and Road Safety teams to form a multi-agency centralised road safety unit. Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue also had staff based with the LRSP who co-ordinated all fire and rescue road safety related activity. Additionally, the deployment and maintenance of safety

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cameras was managed within the LRSP. Consequently, the entire core functions of road safety, namely engineering, education and enforcement were co-ordinated from this centre.

Members considered the report, and during the discussion the following comments were noted:-

- The Committee welcomed the comprehensive and informative report.
- In 2019, 54 people had been killed and 480 seriously injured on the roads of Lincolnshire. 46 had been killed so far this year. It was noted that most accidents occurred on rural roads, casualties were most likely to be male, the vehicle type most likely to be involved were motorcycles and those involved were most likely to be the young or elderly.
- It was noted that during the Covid pandemic there had been less traffic on the roads with people taking fewer journeys and therefore less opportunities for accidents, however there had been evidence that vehicles had been driving faster.
- Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership was working with other agencies nationally to consider and review road safety strategies, including measures to curb speeding.
- Average speed cameras were seen as one of the most effective methods of decreasing speed and managing traffic flow. The cost of new cameras started at approximately £70k and there were currently 80 sites in operation in the County. LRSP also operated mobile camera enforcement systems. The Department of Transport set out guidance and criteria for the introduction of new cameras and this was primarily based on the number of collisions at specific sites. There were concerns expressed that there were a number of areas in the County where communities had expressed concern about speeding and potential danger but which had no history of collisions. It was also thought that not all collisions were reported and recorded. The Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership Senior Manager confirmed that a review was underway to see what further could be done in these circumstances. It was noted that a risk based approach would be taken and any action would need to be managed within existing resources.
- Members welcomed the tiered approach in looking at improvements to road safety. Particular mention was given to the High Dyke Lane area.
- It was noted that East Lindsey had a higher rate of accidents. It was thought that tourists who were unfamiliar roads may account for some of the accidents. The Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership Senior Manager undertook to look at the postcode data on accidents and forward the information to the Committee. He would also include, if feasible, whether street lights were on or off at the time of these accidents, and include data on cyclists and pedestrians.
- The impact of the Covid pandemic on speed awareness courses were noted as was the successful roll out of 12000 digital courses instead. Feedback had been positive to the digital courses to date. It was hoped that a blended approach of face to face and digital courses could be offered post pandemic. Educational delivery to schools had also been reduced due to the pandemic but it was hoped that normal service could be resumed in the near future.

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- There were over 250 parishes involved in Community Speed Watch and 50 active groups monitoring speed. Consideration was being given to obtaining volunteers in un-parished areas. It was noted that it was up to each parish council to request replacements for any faded signposting.

(Councillors N Worth and Mrs C Lawton gave their apologies and left the meeting)

RESOLVED: That the report be received, the comments noted and it be recorded that the Committee was reassured by the work being undertaken by the Road Safety Partnership to reduce the number of people killed and injured on county roads.

38 FIRE AND RESCUE STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2019-20

Consideration was given to a report from the Chief Fire Officer, on the Fire and Rescue Statement of Assurance. The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England set out the requirement for fire and rescue authorities to provide an annual Statement of Assurance on financial, governance and operational matters. The Statement would be used as a source of information on which to base the Secretary of State's biennial report under section 25 of the Fire and Rescue Service Act 2004.

The report summarised that Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue (LFR) Authority was satisfied that the systems and measures it had in place with respect of financial, governance and operational matters for the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 were fit for purpose and effective. It was satisfied that its business was conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards and that public money was properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. It was also satisfied that, where appropriate, the National Framework requirements had been met.

Members considered the report, and during the discussion the following comments were noted:-

- The Committee thanked the Chief Fire Officer for a comprehensive and detailed report and presentation.
- The financial statements were awaited and had been delayed due to the Covid pandemic.
- CIPFA data was used to compare costs and value for money with other fire departments across the country. In comparison, Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue (LFR) Authority were efficient and effective. It was noted that it was difficult to compare Authorities like for like as crew numbers varied as did fire appliances for example.
- Flooding wasn't a statutory responsibility, however Lincolnshire had the skills and equipment to deal with any call outs. Call outs to flooding incidents had an impact on the statistics measuring performance as these incidents often took a long time to resolve and often involved a large number of officers. It was recognised there needed to be common benchmarks across the country.
- The partnership arrangement with other Authorities was noted. These Authorities provided support if called upon to do so.
- The Authority had setup a dedicated and trained peer support team which was available 24 hours a day to support officers and signpost services to

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specialists. There had been a significant uptake in this service and it was suggested that this was due to a number of reasons including normal life stress under the Covid pandemic, work stress and also officers being more comfortable with seeking support and greater awareness of services available. Work was on going into looking at how stress could be reduced and prevented which was seen as a national as well as local priority. From January 2021 more virtual 'touch in times' would be launched for senior managers to meet officers. These would be in addition to face to face meetings but these engagement meetings would be separate from any formal inspection visits.

- Future plans included promoting wellbeing of the workforce, development of IT capabilities, reviewing prevention and protection capabilities and developing a more robust evaluation framework to look at the impact of the service.
- There had been minimal impact on crews during the first lockdown as a result of Covid-19. During the second lockdown increased testing had found a small number of cases but the impact on the service had been minimal as crews and resourcing had been redistributed in accordance with an immediate response plan.

RESOLVED: That the report be received, the comments noted and the Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Authority's Statement of Assurance for 2019-20 be supported.

39 CORONERS SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT

Consideration was given to a report from the Acting Senior Coroner and the Acting Assistant Director - Public Protection, on the Coroners Service Annual Report which had been produced in accordance with the requirement of HM Chief Coroner for England and Wales.

The report outlined:- the role of the Coroner; statutory duties; the Coronial jurisdiction for the county that was coterminous with the County Council and Police force area; Coroners statistics 2019; challenges and achievements 2019/2020; impact of Covid; the current review of the service; merger discussions with North and North East Lincolnshire. It was noted that despite the challenges as stated in the report the Coroners Service had improved the time taken for an Inquest to be heard and had received great feedback from families they had supported in finding closure of the sudden death of a loved one.

Members considered the report introduced by the Acting Senior Coroner, and during the discussion the following comments were noted:-

- The detailed and informative report was welcomed.
- The current challenges of providing the service were noted. These included the effect of Covid-19 restrictions on the service, an increase in the number of deaths, the on going lack of suitable court room accommodation, staff shortages and an inherited backlog of cases for the current post holder.
- It was noted that during the Covid19 lockdowns listing cases for Inquest had been problematic due to families and witnesses shielding. Statements during these periods had been submitted in written form to reduce the need for personal appearances.

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- There had been service improvements since 2017 and the number of Inquests outstanding had been reduced and staff numbers had increased which was welcomed by the Committee.
- The Transformation Project being undertaken by the Council was welcomed by the Acting Senior Coroner, as was the possible merger with North and North East Lincolnshire services to produce economies of scale. It was hoped that there could be a move to non invasive procedures in the future by using a CT scanner. This was one of the issues being reviewed as part of the Transformation Project.
- Members discussed the loss of post mortem facilities in Lincolnshire due to contractual provisions and the need for these to now be carried out in Hull, Leicester or Nottingham. This issue had a significant impact the service budget due to transportation costs. It was noted that the re tendering process for this service would be commencing shortly.
- Due to the pandemic, one GP had been required to complete a cremation form. It was hoped by members that the need for two GP's to sign would be introduced again to strengthen governance and oversight.

RESOLVED: That the report be received and the progress and performance of the Coroners Service be noted. A further report be submitted to the 27 July meeting with an update on the transformation project and the potential merger with North and North East Lincolnshire.

40 PUBLIC PROTECTION AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee noted a report from the Senior Scrutiny Officer, which provided the Committee with the opportunity to consider and comment on the content of its work programme for the coming year to ensure that scrutiny activity was focussed where it could be of greatest benefit.

(Councillor L Cawrey gave her apologies and left the meeting)

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme be approved.

41 SITTING AS THE CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE -
ANNUAL REVIEW OF PREVENT

Consideration was given to a report from the Prevent Officer and the Interim Head of Service - Community Safety, on an update on Prevent activity in Lincolnshire during 2019/20, to enable the Committee to keep a 'watching brief' of Prevent.

In respect of terrorism, Lincolnshire was assessed to be a low risk area, but it was important not to be complacent. This report was primarily concerned with the Council's role in delivering one element of the CONTEST strategy: Prevent' – aimed at reducing the threat to the UK from terrorism by stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. Prevent placed a statutory duty on certain specified authorities, including councils, to "have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism" as per the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

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Prevent had three objectives: tackle the causes of radicalisation and respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism; safeguard and support those most at risk of radicalisation through early intervention, identifying them and offering support; enable those who had already engaged in terrorism to disengage and rehabilitate.

The report outlined the framework for governance and leadership for undertaking this role; the multi-agency approach to provide support at an early stage to those identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into any form of terrorism or supporting terrorist organisations training and development of County Council staff; work being undertaken with local communities and civil society organisations; the impact of Covid.

RESOLVED: That the report be received and it be noted that the Committee was satisfied with the Prevent activity undertaken in 2019/20 to meet the Council's statutory responsibilities.

The meeting closed at 12.57 pm