

**PUBLIC PROTECTION AND
COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE
26 JANUARY 2021**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR N H PEPPER (CHAIRMAN)

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

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

Officers in attendance:-

Sara Barry (Acting Assistant Director - Public Protection), Mark Baxter (Chief Fire Officer), James Dorrill (HMIC FRS Service Liaison Lead), Nick Harrison (Democratic Services Officer), Nicole Hilton (Assistant Director - Communities), Keith Noyland (Head of Finance - Communities), Nigel West (Head of Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Officer) and Diane Coulson (Assistant Director - Public Protection)

42 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs C Lawton, Councillor L Wootten and Councillor B Young, Executive Councillor for Community Safety and People Management.

43 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor Mrs K Cook declared an interest in Item 5 on the agenda (*Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals 2021/22*) and reported that she would be leaving the meeting and not taking part in discussion on that item because the projects she was working on in her role at Lincolnshire Partnership Foundation Trust were funded by Lincolnshire County Council.

44 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 8 DECEMBER 2020

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 December 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

45 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS
AND CHIEF OFFICERS

The Chairman reported that Mr Chris Haward had been appointed the new Chief Constable for Lincolnshire's police force in December. Mr Haward was previously

Deputy Chief Constable with the East Midlands Special Operation Unit. The Chairman reported that he would be taking agenda item 6 - *East Coast Inundation Plan* before Item 5, as the Chief Fire Officer needed to leave the meeting early due to service engagements.

The Chief Fire Officer reported that Mr Ryan Stacey had been appointed Assistant Chief Fire Officer and would take up his post on 1 February.

46 EAST COAST INUNDATION PLAN

Consideration was given to a report from Mark Baxter – Chief Fire Officer, Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue, on an East Coast Inundation Plan.

Following a meeting of the Executive on 6 October 2020, where Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue's (LFR) Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) document was presented with the support of the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee, it had been requested that a piece of 'scrutiny work' on coastal inundation and the management of it was carried out. Details were to include resources from a LFR perspective and how planning and preparations were carried out. This followed on from the decision by East Lindsey District Council (ELDC) to extend the caravan season into the winter/flood season.

It was noted that the Community Risk Profile (CRP) identified flooding and severe weather as one of the highest community risks within the County. Whilst there were a number of reasons for this as explained in the CRP, it was vitally important for LFR to ensure that appropriate measures to respond and mitigate the potential impact of the identified risk were taken.

The East Coast Inundation Plan had been written on the planning assumption that East Coast caravan sites were closed during winter months. Plans were being reviewed with the support of LRF partners and taking into account potential changes. Details covered in the plan included: Phase 1 – Response/Rescues; Phase 2 – Recovery; Command and Control; Multi-Agency Co-ordination; Areas of Focus – 'Sectors' along the length of the section of east coast in Lincolnshire; Locations identified for Strategic Holding Areas / Forward Command Points. The plan aimed to identify all areas to support early recognition of requirements and to effectively and efficiently establish an infrastructure to allow the management of an inundation type incident.

In light of East Lindsey District Council's decision to extend the caravan season into the winter/flood season from next winter season, further work would be required to gain a full understanding of the impacts that winter occupancy of caravan sites would have on existing planning assumptions. Where appropriate, additional processes and resource requirements may need to be put in place before assurance could be given that the additional risk was accounted for. A multi-agency approach to development was vital to ensuring robust plans were developed and exercised.

A 'table top' exercise of the East Coast Inundation plan would be taking place on 10th February 2021. The exercise was being facilitated by the Emergency Planning team

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and LRF partners would be involved. The exercise would take place via Teams to ensure all staff could be Covid Compliant. The aim was to test LFR's response to an east coast flooding event alongside the concurrent pandemic incident, and by doing so complete the annual exercise of the LFR East Coast Inundation Plan. Councillor attendance to observe and contribute was welcomed.

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

- The winter season was usually categorised as November to March, and the period most likely to experience adverse weather and or flooding, however the relevant emergency services and partners were agile and available to provide assistance at all times. A joint approach was likely if it was a significant incident.
- On call personnel/standby firefighters were a great asset especially for flooding incidents. They were able to rotate on call personnel and provide flexibility and had a huge commitment to the community and often resided in areas where incidents were likely to occur. They were provided with all the relevant equipment to undertake their roles.
- A member commented on the value of attending the 2019 training exercises and had been impressed with the diversity of situations trained for and the equipment used. It was also pointed out how resource intensive these incidents were. It was noted that information learnt was shared across agencies in order to continue to remain efficient and effective.
- It was suggested that there was a need to understand the impact of the East Lindsey economic development model on future resourcing and service requirements.
- The County Council had lead local flood powers and also responded as appropriate to planning applications which required fire and rescue input.
- The provision and use of sandbags was currently a District Council responsibility, however support would be provided by the Highways Department and also the Fire and Rescue Service if required.
- Long term structural flood defences were the responsibility of the Environment Agency and Local Lead Flood Authority.
- Proposed housing on flood plains was a matter for the planning function of District Councils.
- The process for dealing with calls to flooded houses was outlined as was the responsibility for sea rescue and fires on boats at sea.
- Councillor N Worth, Executive Councillor for Culture and Emergency Services, expressed his confidence in the service to be able to effectively deal with any flooding incidents.

RESOLVED: That the Committee was reassured by the work being undertaken by Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue to respond to any inundation event on the East Coast.

(Councillors Ms K Cook and Councillor N Worth, gave their apologies for the remainder of the meeting)

47 REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET PROPOSALS 2021/22

Consideration was given to a report from the Head of Finance – Communities, on Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals 2021/22, which was being presented to the Executive on 2 February 2021. The views of the Committee would be reported to the Executive as part of its consideration of this item.

This report outlined the budget proposals for the next financial year 2021/22. The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2021/22 had not been issued at the time of writing the report, and the budget proposals for 2021/22 were therefore estimated at this stage. This report specifically looked at the budget implications for the Council's Public Protection and Communities services. The coronavirus pandemic had impacted significantly in the 2020/21 financial year, on both Council services and the local economy, and central Government had provided grant funding to cover the Council's costs and losses arising directly from the pandemic. It was assumed that where direct impacts carry on into 2021/22 these would continue to be funded by Government grant.

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

- The additional funding for the Coroners Service was highlighted, as was the additional revenue expected from the Registration Services should weddings go ahead later in the year post Covid-19 lockdown.
- It was confirmed that the budget figures were not expected to change before submission to the Executive.

Following a vote with one dissention it was:-

RESOLVED:

1. That the budget proposals be noted;
2. That a summary of the above comments be passed on to the Executive as part of its consideration of the final budget proposals.

**48 PUBLIC PROTECTION AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee noted a report from the Head of Democratic Services and Statutory 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.

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme be approved.

The meeting closed at 11.10 am