

**PUBLIC PROTECTION AND COMMUNITIES  
 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
 27 JULY 2021**

**PRESENT: COUNCILLOR N H PEPPER (CHAIRMAN)**

Councillors A N Stokes (Vice-Chairman), Mrs J Brockway, Mrs N F Clarke, A Dani, W H Gray, A M Key, J L King and K E Lee.

Councillors: L A Cawrey, (Executive Councillor Fire & Rescue and Cultural Services), C Matthews (Executive Support Councillor NHS Liaison, Community Engagement, Registration and Coroners), A P Maughan (Executive Support Councillor Fire & Rescue and Cultural Services) attended the meeting as observers.

Councillor Mrs S Woolley (Executive Councillor NHS Liaison, Community Engagement, Registration and Coroners) attended the meeting as an observer via Teams.

Officers in attendance:-

Kiara Chatziioannou (Scrutiny Officer) and Katrina Cope (Senior Democratic Services Officer).

The following officers attended the meeting via Teams:

Steven Batchelor (Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership Senior Manager), Mark Baxter (Chief Fire Officer), Kiara Chatziioannou (Scrutiny Officer), Diane Coulson (Assistant Director - Public Protection), Louise Egan (Library and Heritage Client Lead), Nicole Hilton (Assistant Director - Communities), Will Mason (Head of Culture), Lee Sirdifield (Assistant Director – Corporate), Paul Smith (Acting Senior Coroner), Ryan Stacey (Assistant Chief Fire Officer), Jade Sullivan (LSCB Audit and Policy Officer), Katrina Cope (Senior Democratic Services Officer) and Nicola Rogers (Lincolnshire Libraries Partnership Manager).

**60 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M R Clarke and E J Sneath.

**61 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

No declarations of members' interest were made at this stage of the proceedings.

**62 MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC PROTECTION AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 16 MARCH 2021**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 16 March 2021 be agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

63 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND CHIEF OFFICERS

The Chairman confirmed to the Committee that agenda Item 8 - Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue – Technical Response Unit Refresh had been deferred to the next meeting of the Committee on 21 September 2021.

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Councillors L Cawrey (Executive Councillor Fire & Rescue and Cultural Services), Mrs S Woolley (Executive Councillor NHS Liaison, Community Engagement, Registration and Coroners) C Matthews (Executive Support Councillor NHS Liaison, Community Engagement, Registration and Coroners) and A P Maughan (Executive Support Councillor Fire & Rescue and Cultural Services).

64 SERVICE LEVEL PERFORMANCE REPORTING AGAINST THE PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK 2020-2021 – QUARTER 4

Consideration was given to a report from Diane Coulson Assistant Director - Public Protection, Nicole Hilton Assistant Director - Communities, Lee Sirdifield Assistant Director – Corporate, Mark Baxter Chief Fire Officer and Steven Batchelor Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership Senior Manager, which set out the performance of Tier Two Service Level Performance Measures for 2020/21 Quarter 4 that were within the remit of the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee.

The Chairman invited officers to remotely present the report to the Committee, the report detailed performance measures for: Community Safety, Fire Safety, Libraries and Heritage, Road Safety, Trading Standards and Volunteering. Other officers who participated in the presentation were: William Mason Head of Culture and Ryan Stacey Assistant Chief Fire Officer.

During consideration of the report and during discussion the following comments were noted:-

- The complexities surrounding Domestic Abuse; and the powers of the police to be able to press charges for public disorder in cases where the victim was not prepared to press charges against the offender. The Committee requested further information concerning domestic abuse against men. Officers agreed to provide further details for the Committee;
- The arrangements that were in place when the initial library agreements came fruition. It was reported that there was no intent to stop the £5,000 revenue support amount, as libraries were an important community asset;
- The effect Covid-19 and recovery measures were having on Gainsborough Old Hall. It was noted that there had been a reduction in the number of physical visits; but

there had been an optimistic direction of travel, so it was hoped that the level of engagement would increase.

- A request was made for an update on visitor numbers since restrictions had been eased. The Committee noted that now restrictions were easing and the confidence of people going out was returning, visitor numbers were increasing in larger public buildings and outdoor spaces. It was highlighted that libraries had seen a positive steps with numbers increasing to those visiting pre-Covid-19. Indoor heritage sites had seen a return of between 60/70% of visitors; and outdoor sites such as Lincoln Castle had seen 88% return of visitor numbers. It was noted that the Lincolnshire Life Museum had seen a 98% return of visitors numbers. The overall picture for Lincolnshire was very positive;
- Information was sought relating to the mental health and wellbeing of communities. It was reported that lots of work and initiatives were being undertaken and that this would be made available to the Committee in future reporting;
- Some concern was raised relating to the number of flooding incidents; and to the fact that Fire and Rescue did not receive any funding for flooding incidents. It was agreed that further information relating to flooding incidents should be included in future reports. Also, further information was requested regarding educational activities provided by Fire & Rescue and the impact these had on the recipients. It was highlighted that some case study examples could be provided for the Committee for their consideration;
- Whether messaging advising of a red route had made a difference in the number of incidents occurred. It was reported that the effects of educational activities was difficult to report. It was reported further that when input had been made on a particular route, some improvement may be seen, however, this would also be backed up by other interventions;
- The impact road conditions had and whether this was a contributing fact in the number of accidents that occurred. The Committee noted with any accident, driver error was nearly always a contributory factor, as drivers did not always drive to road conditions. When roads were of a better standard for example a motorway, the safer the road would be; and
- The use of average speed data as a measure of actual speed, for example through a rural village. The Committee was advised of the methodology used in such instances; and that when villages received notification of the average speed, that additional information should be made available in the letter. Confirmation was given that additional information was currently supplied to parish councils in the form of a PDF report attached to notification letter. Officers agreed to look into making the information more readily available.

#### RESOLVED

That the Service Level Performance Reporting against the Performance Framework 2020/2021 for Quarter Four be received and that the comments raised by the Committee be noted.

The Chairman advised that this item invited the Committee to consider and comment on the Stronger Communities: Lincolnshire's Community Strategy, prior to a decision being taken by the Executive on 7 September 2021.

The Chairman invited Lee Sirdifield, Assistant Director Corporate, to remotely present the item to the Committee.

The Committee noted that the Strategy enabled the Council to build on work that had taken place over recent years and enhanced the level of independence and cross-organisation working within the County.

In guiding the Committee through the report, reference was made to: the background behind the Strategy; the Themes and Objectives of the Strategy; Community Networks; Volunteering; Funding for Communities; Tools and Data; and Consultation and Engagement.

The following Appendices were attached to the report for the Committee to consider:

- Appendix A – a copy of the Draft Community Strategy;
- Appendix B – a copy of the Draft Community Strategy Action Plan;
- Appendix C – Engagement report; and
- Appendix D – a copy of the Equality Impact Assessment.

During consideration of the report, members of the Committee made the following comments:-

- Concerns were raised in relation to lack of responses (39 in total) and that it appeared that the community had not been fully engaged in the development of the Community Strategy. It was acknowledged that there had been a lack of response, but there had been on-going additional engagement activity with voluntary groups, representative bodies, and organisations as part of the strategy development prior to the formal engagement commencing. The need for obtaining more representative views in future activity was acknowledged and that this was part of the Strategy. Limitations and constraints included: that the activity took place over a three-week period and whilst restrictions were in place due to the Covid-19 pandemic; and the pandemic-imposed restrictions forced all engagement activity to take place online, which had an impact on demand and response levels. Despite alternative means for completing the survey being offered, the responses received were only submitted electronically. The Strategy aimed at building a greater level of awareness of networks in communities, promoting more activity and participation and identifying ways of being more proactive including collaboration with other organisations and groups to achieve wider participation and access to resources;
- The use of case studies as examples would be more appropriate to showcase to participants how topics related to their communities. Assurance was provided that the Strategy would look at a wide range of engagement methods to allow for more

interactive surveys and consultations to be carried out in the future including different models of scenarios to be provided to participants;

- Concerns were raised about particularly challenging areas in the County that had few voluntary community groups who received very limited support. In relation to how Lincolnshire County Council engaged with these areas and whether these challenges would be reflected in the Strategy, it was confirmed that the Strategy aimed to identify needs that were not being met across the County and needed addressing. Work would then be done within these areas highlighted to ensure that any gaps in provision were bridged and that community needs were met, especially in areas where communities were without any provision. Existing data on gaps in provision were used as part of this engagement activity. An example was given on how the Council was currently working with some organisations exploring ways of growing community provision within challenging areas from a Public Health and a Community Strategy point of view through a set of standard terms and conditions and a standard governance model. Furthermore, good practice would be communicated through particular case studies that would showcase benefits and how expertise could be transferred across the County. Throughout the consultation, eighteen plus groups had been identified as wanting to work with the Council on developing and shaping the Community Strategy. Reassurance was provided that the Strategy was a live document aimed at being developed with the support of communities and that work would continue through the work plan. The Committee noted that work would continue with communities to understand the challenges they faced, the provisions in place, the actions to be considered and that any gaps in provision identified would be reported back to the Committee going forward in addition to updates on the Community Strategy;
- Concerns were raised about the consultation being a targeted engagement, and why the targeted audience had not responded. It was confirmed that some of the questions were answered by as little as four (4) individuals which was a considerably low figure to base any decisions upon, for a population of over 751,000. This was in comparison to a previous consultation in 2016 for which there were thousands of responses collated;
- The consultation exercise had been promoted through publicising on social media, through targeting of organisations which aimed to provide representative views, and through the Town and Parish Council Newsletters. It was highlighted that the subject matter was not one that necessarily appealed to the community which may have also hindered engagement. It was also clarified that the four responses quoted were the number of businesses that had participated in the survey. Better tailored engagement would need to be carried out with the public in the future;
- In relation to the low response rates, it was suggested that the methods of engagement employed for different nationalities were looked at as other organisations who had conducted surveys during the pandemic had received a greater volume of responses due to being more target specific, had undertaken intensive local work and research to understand the communities as well as improved publicising of the services provided for participation (i.e., survey being available in different languages);

- There was a need to tailor engagement activities to integrate and accommodate diverse communities. It was highlighted that in Boston more than 30% of the population had migrated from Europe and that more than 32 nationalities were residing in this area. Reassurance was provided that the Council worked in partnership with other organisations and an example of a project led by YMCA had seen the introduction of the Good Neighbour Schemes which recognised the need for greater integration of cosmopolitan communities and increased cohesion through identifying shared purpose and ambitions. The Council had sought to access additional funding and would continue to look at system wide changes to test and improve better outcomes for Lincolnshire residents. This aligned with work of the Integrated Care System which was working on integrating the needs for health services within communities;
- The role of Parish Councils and the role of Elected Members in understanding the needs within their communities, developing these and providing key messages to communicate solutions was also considered as part of this Strategy. It was acknowledged that the role of Parish Councils was important as they could pass on information and engage with their local groups and communities directly and assurance was sought that consultation would continue in light of the abolishment of Covid-19 restrictions as would the development of the Community Strategy living document. Assurance was provided that these comments would be taken on board as part of this on-going journey towards the development of the Strategy;
- The Equality Impact Assessment carried out as part of this consultation was an exceptional, detailed and excellent document that was informative in its own right; and
- In relation to Citizens Advice Hubs operating across Lincolnshire, the funding from LCC was provided to Citizens Advice Lincolnshire (umbrella body); with four Citizens Advice Bureaus operating as independent bodies covering different geographical areas. The service has operated predominantly through a telephony-based service; and the Hubs were located in Lincoln and in market towns. Further information would be provided to the Committee on locations and opening times of different venues as these operated in varying patterns and not always on a full-time basis. The free telephony system acted as the initial entry point that triaged and managed demand and operated Monday to Friday. Performance information in relation to calls answered was fed back and would continue being brought back to this Committee for Scrutiny in the future.

#### RESOLVED

1. That the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee supported the proposed recommendation to the Executive as set out on page 55 of the report.
2. That the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee agreed that the comments listed above be forwarded on to the Executive in relation to this item.

The Chairman invited Louise Egan, Library and Heritage Client Lead for Culture and Nicola Rogers, Lincolnshire Libraries Partnership Manager, to remotely present the item to the Committee.

The report provided the Committee with an update on the contract performance information for the fifth year of the out-sourced Library contract to Greenwich Leisure Ltd (GLL).

In guiding the Committee through the report, reference was made to: the background behind the decision to outsource the Council's statutory library service; Review of Year Five; Performance Review, KPI's; Service Transformation/Innovation; and Community Hubs and their performance;

Detailed at Appendix A to the report was a copy of the Library Service Year Five KPI Data; and Appendix B provided examples of library service feedback for 2020/21.

In conclusion, the Committee noted that GLL would continue to focus on the recovery of the service during Year Six, which included: reinstating events and activities; returning to normal pre-Covid-19 hours once all restrictions were lifted; and continuing to support communities and small businesses.

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

- Some concern was expressed that the Ermine Hub was still yet to open. The Committee noted that steps were being taken with a new provider to take over the Hub. It was agreed that a further update would be provided to the Committee with regard to this matter; and
- The Executive Councillor for Fire and Rescue and Cultural Services acknowledged the importance of libraries to communities and extended thanks to everyone involved in maintaining library services.

#### RESOLVED

1. That the Performance of the Library Service Contract – Year Five Review report be received and support be given to the on-going proposed Year Six developments highlighted in the report.
2. That the comments raised during discussion be taken into consideration.

This item had been deferred to the next meeting of the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee on 21 September 2021.

68 CORONERS SERVICE TRANSFORMATION PROJECT

The Chairman invited Paul Smith, Acting Senior Coroner, to remotely present the item to the Committee.

It was reported that over the last 10 months the Coroners Service had transformed its working practices, making them more consistent across the County, with the help of information technology, whilst still maintaining an excellent service for bereaved families. It was noted that an important part of the project had been to find suitable accommodation for a Coroners Court within Lincoln. It was reported that facilities at Mile Cross had become available as a solution from 18 October 2021.

In conclusion, the Committee was advised that the transformation was now formally closed, but going forward there would be a continual improvement of the service by the management team of the service and the Senior Coroner.

RESOLVED

That the report on the Coroners Service Transformation Project be received.

The meeting adjourned from 12:13 to 12:25.

69 PROPOSED SUBMISSION TO THE CHIEF CORONER FOR THE MERGER OF THE LINCOLNSHIRE AND GRIMSBY AND NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE CORONERS AREAS

The Chairman advised that this item invited the Committee to consider and comment on the proposed submission to the Chief Coroner for the merger of the Lincolnshire and Grimsby and North Lincolnshire Coroners Areas, prior to a decision being taken by Councillor Mrs S Woolley, Executive Councillor NHS Liaison, Community Engagement, Registration and Coroners on 30 July 2021.

The report had been circulated separately to members of the Committee on 22 July 2021 for their consideration.

The Chairman invited Paul Smith, Acting Chief Coroner and Diane Coulson, Assistant Director – Public Protection, to remotely present the item.

The report made reference to: the background behind the proposal. It was highlighted that there were currently 88 coroner areas in England and Wales, and that the Chief Coroner and the Ministry of Justice had a long-term plan to reduce this number to 75. Appendix 1 to the Executive Councillor report provided a Step by Step Guide to Coroners Area mergers.



The Committee noted that the proposed merger had been developed in a collaborative manner, details of the underpinning principles for the proposal were set out in paragraph 1.5 of the report. It was reported that Lincolnshire County Council would become the "relevant authority" for the revised area and as such would take the lead in the appointment of the Senior Coroner, Area Coroner and Assistant Coroners for the revised area; that staff employed by North East Lincolnshire Council would be transferring to Lincolnshire County Council, but would retain their current work base in Cleethorpes; and that services would share a software system, and extend current operating procedures across the larger area. Appendix 2 to the Executive Councillor report provided details of the proposed Staffing Structure.

Appendix 3 to the Executive Councillor report provided the Coroner Business Case document for the Committee to consider.

It was noted that a small saving would be made by combining the coronial team. Further information relating to the phased approach to cost sharing was set out at paragraph 1.8 of the Executive Councillor report. The Committee noted that oversight and governance of the arrangements would be the responsibility of the Greater Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Oversight Committee supported by an Operational Board.

During consideration of the item, the Committee highlighted the following comments to be noted:

- Members sought assurance that following the merger, post-mortems would be carried out in the closest area to the deceased and their families as the relocation of a deceased person caused distress to families and delayed funerals. The stress caused was recognised and assurance was provided, that post-mortems would continue to be carried out at appropriate facilities locally (to the deceased and their families); however, Lincoln had not been able to service requirements and therefore the potential for a public mortuary was being explored to resolve present issues;
- Concern was raised in relation to transference costs incurred moving the deceased for post-mortems to be carried out, members asked for assurance that the new arrangements would not be more expensive in comparison to those currently in place. It was confirmed that the costs of transferring the deceased outside and then back into the County was part of the contract cost and that the issue around not retaining the deceased within the County was due to limited availability of pathologists and insufficient facility capabilities within Lincoln to carry out post-mortems. These issues would be mitigated by a potential public mortuary;
- Post-mortem contracts were being retendered for the medium and long term, however in the short term the only option was to move the deceased out of the County for those services;
- Lincolnshire had a Post-mortem rate of 38% of all reported deaths (2020), which was on a par with the national average;
- The proposed merger would not increase problems for the Police with it cutting across two different policing authorities. In terms of referrals, there were set processes to be followed and the coroner's service worked very closely with the

Police on these. The merger would require Humberside Police to report into two different authorities, however, it was recognised that Humberside Police was already reporting into different authorities, namely North and North-East Lincolnshire and Hull and East Riding. Assurance was provided that generating that relationship and developing processes moving forward with Humberside Police was not viewed as a further challenge; and

- Confirmation was given that the Humberside and Lincolnshire Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC) had been consulted following on from the Greater Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Oversight Committee meeting in June, which agreed on an informal consultation via letter which was worded in order to not suggest a predetermined outcome. The letter was sent to Humberside Police and Lincolnshire Police and the PCC requesting early observations and concerns to be reported. The Committee was advised that no concerns had been reported to date through this activity.

#### RESOLVED

1. That the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee unanimously supported the recommendations to the Executive Councillor NHS Liaison, Community Engagement, Registration and Coroners as set out on page three the report pack.
2. That the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee agreed that the comments listed above be forwarded on to the Executive Councillor NHS Liaison, Community Engagement, Registration and Coroners in relation to this item.

#### 70 PROPOSALS FOR SCRUTINY REVIEWS

The Chairman invited Kiara Chatziioannou, Scrutiny Officer, to present the report, which invited the Committee to consider a request by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board to suggest potential topics for in-depth scrutiny review, which would be undertaken by the two Scrutiny Panels.

Appendix A to the report provided the Committee with a copy of the Scrutiny Prioritisation Toolkit which would be used by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board to identify a suitable topic.

During consideration of the report, and as a result of previous items on the agenda and the concerns raised thereon, the Committee put forward the following two items for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board:-

- Domestic Abuse as a result of the increased numbers of Domestic Abuse cases (male and female victims, as well as children); for an in-depth analysis of how the increased figures were captured and reported and that issues raised were addressed effectively during the pandemic and beyond; and

- The Community Strategy – How the Council engaged with communities in the Community Strategy Consultation; and the lessons learned to improve engagement in the future.

## RESOLVED

That the following two items be put forward as suggested items for in-depth scrutiny topics from Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee: Domestic Abuse and The Community Strategy for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board at its meeting on 30 September 2021.

71 PUBLIC PROTECTION AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman invited Kiara Chatziioannou Scrutiny Officer, to present the report, which invited the Committee to review the work programme as detailed on pages 150 – 153 of the report pack and to highlight any additional scrutiny activity to be included for consideration in the work programme.

## RESOLVED

That the work programme as set out on pages 150 to 153 of the report pack be received.

The meeting of the Public Protection Scrutiny Committee ended at 12:36.

72 UPDATE ON THE RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC ABUSE IN LINCOLNSHIRE**SITTING AS THE CRIME & DISORDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Committee received a report, which provided an update on the response to domestic abuse in Lincolnshire, in light of the introduction of the new Domestic Abuse Act 2021, and advised of future developments that were likely to have an impact for the County's response to domestic abuse.

The Chairman invited Jade Sullivan, Community Safety Strategy Co-ordinator – Domestic Abuse Lead, to remotely present the item.

It was reported that the latest available estimates from the Crime Survey for England and Wales suggested that 5.5% of adults aged 16-74 would have experienced domestic in the year ending March 2020. This national figure would equate to roughly 30,200 adults 16-24 suffering domestic abuse in Lincolnshire, (assuming a similar prevalence in Lincolnshire compared to the England and Wales average).

The Committee noted the true number of victims of domestic abuse was likely to be higher when children were included.

In Lincolnshire in the last five years, on average there had been over 10,000 domestic abuse incidents reported to Lincolnshire Police each year. Given the prevalence of domestic abuse and the very serious effects it can have on individuals and families, the Council had considered this as a priority area of business; committing resource and leading the domestic abuse agenda with partners in Lincolnshire.

The report made reference to: The Domestic Abuse Act 2021, and the changes the new Act would deliver. These were set out on pages 156 to 158 of the report pack; the actions taken by Lincolnshire to the Act; what the next steps and further developments were; Domestic Abuse Commissioned Services; and the Domestic Abuse Related funding opportunities.

In conclusion, it was noted that work being carried out in Lincolnshire, as well as the commissioned domestic abuse service complimented each other to provide a holistic response to victims, perpetrators and children affected by domestic abuse.

During consideration of the report, the following comments were noted:-

- The impact of domestic abuse on children and young people. The Committee was advised that there was additional support available for children and young people experiencing domestic abuse;
- Some questions were raised pertaining to who defined who a victim was; and how easy was it for a victim of domestic abuse to report abuse; and how victims got their support. The Committee was advised that there was more than one route to report domestic abuse. The contract for specialist domestic abuse services in Lincolnshire was delivered by Ending Domestic Abuse in Lincolnshire (EDAN Lincs), which now meant that residents could now access the same support provision from the same provider, wherever they resided in Lincolnshire. Access could be made to the service by telephone, video consultation; helpline; as well as national helplines. It was noted that all agencies in Lincolnshire had received domestic abuse training and that there was a set of questions to help agencies identify domestic abuse; and
- Help available for Council staff. The Committee was advised that a number of Council policies had been refreshed to include domestic abuse; and that mandatory training was available for staff and managers to undertake. It was noted that the service was looking at doing a newsletter, which would be available for all staff. One member recommended the use of a sticker campaign. The Committee was advised that a sticker campaign had been undertaken externally and that further consideration would be given to a campaign for staff.

#### RESOLVED

That the update report on the response to domestic abuse in Lincolnshire be received.

The meeting closed at 1.40 pm