

**PUBLIC PROTECTION AND COMMUNITIES
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
19 APRIL 2022**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR N H PEPPER (CHAIRMAN)

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

Councillors: L A Cawrey (Executive Councillor Fire and Rescue), A P Maughan (Executive Support Councillor Fire and Rescue) and D McNally (Executive Councillor Waste and Trading Standards) attended the meeting as observers.

Councillor C Matthews (Executive Support Councillor NHS Liaison, Community Engagement, Registration and Coroners) attended the meeting as an observer remotely, via Teams.

Officers in attendance:-

Mark Baxter (Chief Fire Officer), Katrina Cope (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Simon Evans (Health Scrutiny Officer), Glen Garrod (Executive Director - Adult Care and Community Wellbeing), Mark Keal (Trading Standards Manager - Safer Communities), Lee Sirdifield (Assistant Director – Corporate), Barbara Ward (Principal Trading Standards Officer), and Ben Rollett (Chief Executive Voluntary Care Service).

The following officers joined the meeting remotely, via Teams:

Will Mason (Head of Culture), Samantha Neal (Assistant Director, Prevention and Early Intervention) and Martyn Parker (Assistant Director Public Protection).

116 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Dani and A M Key.

It was noted that the Chief Executive, having received notice under Regulation 13 of the Local Government (Committee and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, had appointed Councillor R Wootten to replace Councillor A M Key for this meeting only.

117 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

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

118 MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC PROTECTION AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 8 MARCH 2022

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 8 March 2022 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to a typographical error on page 3, bullet point six being amended to read specific instead of specify.

119 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND CHIEF OFFICERS

The Chairman reminded the Committee that as from 1 April 2022, leadership for Public Protection had been transferred to Glen Garrod, Executive Director for Adult Care and Community Wellbeing. On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman welcomed the Executive Director for Adult Care and Community Wellbeing and Martyn Parker the newly appointed Assistant Director of Public Protection to the meeting.

120 VOLUNTEERING IN LINCOLNSHIRE

Consideration was given to a report from Lee Sirdifield, Assistant Director – Corporate, which provided the Committee with an update from Voluntary Centre Services (VCS) and Lincolnshire Community and Voluntary Service (LCVS) about the role, impact, and future developments in volunteering across Lincolnshire.

The Chairman invited Lee Sirdifield, Assistant Director – Corporate, and Ben Rollett, Chief Executive at Voluntary Centre Services, to present the item to the Committee.

In guiding the Committee through the report, reference was made to some of the following:

- The impact of Covid-19 on volunteering. It was noted that over the last two years VCS/LCVS had supported over 3,000 people to volunteer locally in a variety of roles from the initial emergency response to the vaccination programme and traditional volunteering roles;
- The Lincolnshire legacy. It was reported that the VCS/LCVS were working alongside colleagues within the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum (LRF) and Voluntary Engagement Team (VET) to develop a long-term approach to supporting volunteers to help in emergency situations. It was highlighted that the Lincolnshire Volunteers programme would build upon and harness the momentum that had been developed around volunteering, creating a lasting legacy for Lincolnshire;
- It was highlighted that as Covid restrictions had eased the VCS/LCVS had seen an increase in the need for volunteers in the more traditional roles. It was noted that in comparison to two years previously, there were now over 300 active roles on VCS/LCVS systems;
- The findings of the Volunteering Annual Survey. The Committee was advised that the survey had been completed by 162 people, and it aimed to understand how the Covid-19 pandemic had impacted on volunteering habits across Lincolnshire and identify volunteer motivations, barriers to volunteering and any volunteer support

needs. The key finding of the survey was detailed on pages 17 to 20 of the report presented; and

- The priority areas for volunteer centres during 2022/23, these were shown on page 20 of the report.

In conclusion, the Committee noted that the survey had provided a useful insight into the view of those volunteering in Lincolnshire. It was noted further that the findings of the survey would help enhance services provided by VSC/LCVS and deliver the ambitions of the community strategy in terms of supporting access to different types of volunteering activity.

During consideration of this item, the Committee raised some of the following comments:

- Personal experience of some members in their volunteering roles. Particular thanks were also extended to South Kesteven District Council and Lincolnshire County Council for setting up the volunteering groups throughout the pandemic and also to the NHS and volunteers for their continued support;
- Response from NHS responders. The Committee was advised that the role of NHS volunteers during the last two years had made a huge difference. The Committee was advised further that VCS worked closely with NHS volunteers co-ordinators to promote volunteering opportunities;
- The massive amount of support given to foodbanks by volunteers, particular reference was made to the St Giles foodbank and the stress put on some volunteers. There was recognition that there were strains and stresses with volunteering and that was why work was being done to identify what support was needed and how best to provide that support;
- Areas volunteers were most attracted to. The Committee noted that volunteers were attracted to various roles, within the different groups for various different reasons;
- The need for better promotion of volunteering opportunities and for extending thanks to those who tirelessly volunteer. There was recognition that more needed to be done to publicise volunteering roles within the community;
- How training was delivered to volunteers. The Committee was advised that over 200 volunteers had received e-learning training, such as health and safety, induction, and safeguarding. It was reported that this provision was to be widened out to existing volunteers. Confirmation was also given that there had been no problems accessing DBS checks, prior to the pandemic the checks had been paper based, but the process was now all on-line. There was recognition that the on-line facilities were not always the preferred option for all and that CVS/LCVS had supported organisations with the process;
- Whether 'Help my Street' was a useful tool to help engage volunteers. It was reported that 'Help my Street' had worked well through the pandemic, as volunteers had been able to register and get involved. Going forward, it was felt the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) 'Good Neighbourhood Scheme' would provide a platform to assist traditional volunteering roles as well;

- What methods of engagement were being used to encourage volunteers to complete the survey, as only 162 volunteer out of 3,000 had completed the annual survey. The Committee was advised that the questions were now starting to being asked as part of everyday business, to build up a more effective data base of information; and
- That paragraph 1.13 first bullet point needed expanding to beyond three years, as it was felt that lots of volunteers volunteered for longer periods of time. Confirmation was given that this was the case, and that the category needed broadening.

The Chairman on behalf of the Committee extended his thanks to the presenters for an informative presentation.

RESOLVED

That the Volunteering in Lincolnshire report be received and that the comments raised by the Committee be noted.

121 AVIAN INFLUENZA OUTBREAKS IN LINCOLNSHIRE 2021-22

The Committee considered a report from Mark Keal Trading Standards Officer, which provided a review of the response to the Avian influenza outbreak in Lincolnshire during 2021/22 by the Safer Communities Trading Standards Service. Barbara Ward, Principal Trading Standards Officer, was also in attendance for this item.

The Committee also received a presentation on Trading Standards Animal Health and Welfare Enforcement in Lincolnshire, which provided the Committee with information relating to:

- Priority areas for Trading Standards which included disease control, animal by-products, high risk activities and animal welfare;
- The local authority's responsibilities in relation to the animal health and welfare framework, which included the animal health and welfare activity plan for 2021/22; details of inspections undertaken, which included 51 visits and revisits to 23 of the 25 premises identified in the activity plan and 44 visits in response to complaints or where officers were visiting for other matters;
- Some photographs were also shown of animals being kept in unsuitable/suitable conditions;
- Enforcement and Licensing. The Committee was advised for 2021/22 there had been 564 complaints, which were broken down into the following categories: 199 abattoir referrals – welfare and identification; 67 Avian influenza – loose birds and housing; 59 animal welfare; 17 animal by-products – deadstock; and 72 movement restrictions; and
- Other areas of animal health and welfare activity, which included intelligence gathering, emergency planning and working to national priorities.

During consideration of this item, the Committee raised some of the following comments:

- Training of Trading Standards officers dealing with welfare issues. The Committee was advised that training was given and that some of officers were ex-veterinary nurses;
- Avian flu, and the need for birds to be kept secure. The Committee was advised that trading standards had regularly issued communications through the media and social media promoting the requirement to keep birds inside and take measures to ensure biosecurity. It was noted that once owners were aware of the implications, measures were put into place. Officers confirmed that there had been no Avian flu prosecutions;
- Once clear of Avian flu, when could an owner introduce new stock. The Committee was advised that this matter was a matter for Animal Plant Health Agency. It was however highlighted that it was a long process, and that no-one had yet re-stocked following the Avian flu outbreak. It was reported that 1.2 million birds had been disposed of, at either rendering or incineration facilities approved for the disposal of diseased animals. Confirmation was also given that the culling of birds was overseen by the Animal Plant Health Agency;
- Confirmation was given that contingency plans were in place with partners to deal with such outbreaks;
- The implication of losing in the region of 210 officer days from frontline service delivery because of Avian flu. The Committee was advised that there had been delays to programmed inspection work and on-going investigations, which staff were working to recover;
- The potential of the Avian flu virus mutating to humans. It was reported that there were concerns as several strains had mutated and affected humans. The Committee noted that there had been one case of a transmission to a human, not in Lincolnshire. The Committee was advised that relevant controls were in place;
- Why Lincolnshire had experienced the highest number of cases of Avian flu (15 in total). It was noted that this was mainly due to poor virus biosecurity, i.e., access by wild birds, or by people transmitting the disease, as a result of biosecurity not being as robust as it could have been, causing cross contamination; and
- That further information was needed relating to animal health and welfare, to include the importing of cats and dogs from abroad, and the training and development of staff.

The Chairman on behalf of the Committee extended thanks to officers for their presentation.

RESOLVED

1. That the report concerning Avian Influenza outbreaks in Lincolnshire 2021/22 and the presentation on Animal Health and Welfare Enforcement in Lincolnshire 2021/22 be received and that the comments raised by the Committee be noted.
2. That a further update on Animal Health and Welfare Enforcement, be received by the Committee in six months' time.

122 HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE FOR CONSTABULARIES AND FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES (HMICFRS) REPORT FOR LINCOLNSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE (LFR)

Consideration was given to a report from Mark Baxter, Chief Fire Officer, which provided the Committee with a summary of Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) report on Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue (LFR) as part of the national inspection regime for all Fire Authorities in England.

The Chairman invited Mark Baxter, Chief Fire Officer, to remotely present the report to the Committee.

The Committee were advised of the background to the inspection regime. A summary of the LFR judgements for the inspection compared to 2018 were shown on page 52 of the report. It was noted that out of the 13 services that had received their report, seven of them had received the same grading as Lincolnshire, with one service receiving inadequate in 'how they prevent fires and risks'. It was noted further that only one service gained an 'outstanding' judgement and that was Merseyside Fire and Rescue.

The Committee were advised of the main areas of interest with regard to each pillar, these were detailed on pages 53 to 55 of the report; the actions to address recommendations from the inspection report – Cause of concern with regard to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and Protection. It was reported that LFR had produced dedicated action plans that identified areas and actions that needed to be focussed on to address the recommendations from the report in these areas. Details of the governance arrangements for the two plans were detailed on page 56 of the report.

It was highlighted that LFR had been updating HMICFRS on a monthly basis following the inspection, the inspectorate had produced a letter that accompanied the report which outlined that they were pleased with the progress against the action plans and the governance arrangements. A copy of the said letter was attached at Appendix A to the report; and copies of the two action plans relating to Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity and Protection were detailed at Appendices B and C for the Committee to consider.

The Committee was advised that a re-inspection had taken place between 29 February and 2 March 2022, and that the outcome of the re-inspection would result in a formal letter in April 2022. It was reported that the Chief Fire Officer, Assistant Chief Officer and the Executive Councillor had attended debrief on 7 March 2022, to receive feedback from the re-inspection, at which HMI had recognised the good progress being made in both areas of concern. Details of the 17 areas for improvement across the three pillars were shown on pages 57 to 59 of the report.

In conclusion, the Committee was advised that work had been undertaken to address the recommendations stated in the report that was released in December 2021; and that LFR's continued focus during 2022/23 as part of the services annual plan had stated that this improvement journey was a stated priority for the service and that progress would be

continued to be measured across all areas and would be reported to the LFR's Performance Management Board for scrutiny and assurance.

During consideration of this item, the Committee raised the following comments:

- That sometimes the cross-cutting Inspectorate findings took away the overall excellent work carried out by the LFR service;
- Unconscious bias training. The Committee was advised unconscious bias training was very important; and that it was applied in day-to-day activities; and that it enabled people to recognise any pre-conceived thinking. It was highlighted that once recognised, it would enable better decisions to be made to ensure that LFR had the most diverse workforce it could have. The Committee noted that the training was being delivered by an external company;
- Confirmation was given that LFR monitored EDI figures in the same way as the county council. It was highlighted that LFR currently employed fewer female employees than average, and that LFR was making every effort to encourage female employees into the service. It was noted further that the service did reflect the communities within Lincolnshire;
- Fire Prevention messages in other languages. It was reported that prevention literature was available in as many different languages as possible;
- Partnership working with Lincoln University with regard to prevention work. The Chief Fire Officer was happy to share the safe and well check report with the Committee. It was highlighted that for every £1 of investment, the service saved over £36 as a result; and that the initiative was making a positive impact;
- The importance of monitoring and managing LFR to ensure that the service was the best it could be, and to recognise that inspection work was vital to ensuring an improving service;
- The exceptional work being carried out at the Horncastle Fire Station;
- Whether the judgements for the inspection, as detailed on page 52 were expected, a surprise or a disappointment. The Committee was advised that LFR were disappointed at the judgements, but it had not been a surprise following conversations with HMI and other Chief Fire Officers around the country. It was highlighted that the inspection in December 2021 had been a deeper dive than the one carried out in 2018. The Committee noted that the service was doing a lot of the work but had not provided the evidence in support of what was being done. The service just needed to be smarter in its working and provide more evidence to support the service being the best it could for the people of Lincolnshire;
- Mobile data terminals (MDT's). The report had highlighted positive comments about the investment in mobile data terminals on appliances but noted that better systems were required to keep risk information timely and accurate. It was reported this had been a challenge, as Wi-Fi connections to MDT's were sometimes causing a delay in data being received. The Committee was advised that this had now been fixed and risk information was now being sent through immediately;
- Prevention activities needed to be increased to deliver to the most vulnerable and hardest to reach communities. There was recognition that there was more to be

done with partner agencies to increase intelligence in communities in this regard, particularly on the east coast. One member highlighted that in some cases the local fire fighters had local knowledge of their community;

- Some concern was expressed that some operational posts were temporary. The Committee was advised that LFR's establishment had been static for the last 2/3 years but was now seeing people moving away from the service. It was highlighted that the service was already ahead with its workforce planning being 18 months to two years ahead in its training programme, which would alleviate the situation regarding temporary positions;
- Availability of on call staff across the county. It was noted that 79% of staff were available for on call duty during the last year. There was recognition that on call was a challenge and that more emphasis would be focussed on high-risk areas. The Committee noted that the service was still recruiting on-call firefighters and that the training packages would enable them to be able to ride the appliances; and
- That a further update would be appropriate in six months' time.

The Chairman extended his thanks to the Chief Fire Officer for his report.

RESOLVED

1. That Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) report for Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue be received.
2. That progress made against the areas of concerns highlighted in the report and the action plans detailed at Appendices B and C to the report be received and noted.
3. That the additional 17 areas for improvement and the scrutiny and assurance structure to address all areas be noted.
4. That a further progress report be received by the Committee in six months' time.

(Councillor A N Stokes left the meeting at 12:53)

123 LINCOLNSHIRE'S UKRAINE RESPONSE

Pursuant to minute number 114, from the meeting held on 8 March 2022, the Committee considered a report from Mark Baxter, Chief Fire Officer, which provided assurance to the Committee on the arrangements established by Lincolnshire County Council, Lincolnshire District Councils, and multi-agency partners in delivering the government requirements in relation to the Ukraine humanitarian crisis.

The Chairman invited Mark Baxter, Chief Fire Officer and Semantha Neal, Assistant Director for Prevention and Early Intervention, to remotely present the item to the Committee.

Reassurance was given that all the necessary support was in place in Lincolnshire. Details of the Ukraine refugee co-ordination structure was shown at the top of page 85 of the report pack.

The Committee was advised that Lincolnshire's existing Refugee Resettlement Partnership, convened by North Kesteven District Council would be responding to the Ukrainian refugees being settled in Lincolnshire, as it had with the arrival of Syrian families, Afghan evacuees and the set-up of asylum seeker accommodation throughout the autumn.

The Committee was advised further that as of the 14 April 2022, there had been 279 hosts identified in Lincolnshire. Of the 279, 188 properties had been checked by District Councils; 240 DBS applications had been made to which 59 applications had been received. It was also noted that 23 sponsors had received their arrivals, although it was thought that this figure was slightly higher; and that Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue would be starting to do their safe and well checks.

In conclusion, the Committee was advised that the government requirements as they currently stood were being fully met in Lincolnshire.

During consideration of this item, the Committee enquired whether advice and guidance was being provided for the Ukrainian refugees. The Committee was advised that the County Council website provide the refugees with all the necessary information required and a national and local welcome in Ukrainian.

RESOLVED

1. That the Lincolnshire's Ukraine response report presented be received.
2. That a further update report be received by the Committee at its July meeting.

124 PUBLIC PROTECTION AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman invited Simon Evans, Health Scrutiny Officer, to present the report, which invited the Committee to review the work programme as detailed on pages 88 to 89 of the report pack and to highlight any additional scrutiny activity to be included for consideration in the work programme.

Appendix A to the report provided the Committee with an extract from the Executive Forward Plan relating to the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee.

During consideration of this item, the Committee put forward the following comments/suggestions:

- The inclusion of the Community Trigger Strategy from the list of items to be programme for the 19 July meeting;

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- Refugee update for the May meeting;
- An update on the opening of the Ermine Hub;
- Animal welfare update; and
- HMICFRS update.

RESOLVED

That the work programme presented be received subject to the inclusion of suggestions listed above and the items brought forward from minute numbers 121(2), 122(4) and 123(2).

The meeting closed at 1.08 pm