

**PUBLIC PROTECTION AND COMMUNITIES
 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
 31 MAY 2022**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR N H PEPPER (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors Mrs J Brockway, M R Clarke, Mrs N F Clarke, A Dani, W H Gray, A M Key, K E Lee and E J Sneath.

Councillors: R D Butroid (Executive Councillor People Management, Legal and Corporate Property), , S P Roe (Executive Support Councillor Children's Services, Community Safety and Procurement), Mrs S Woolley , (Executive Councillor NHS Liaison, Community Engagement, Registration and Coroners)

Councillors C Matthews , (Executive Support Councillor NHS Liaison, Community Engagement, Registration and Coroners), D McNally (Executive Councillor Waste and Trading Standards) and Councillor J L King observed the meeting remotely, via Teams.

Jenny Barnett (Chief Officer Citizens Advice Lindsey) and Monica Stark, (Chair Citizens Advice Lincs) attended the meeting as invited guests.

Officers in attendance:-

Kiara Chatziioannou (Scrutiny Officer), Katrina Cope (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Glen Garrod (Executive Director - Adult Care and Community Wellbeing), Mark Keal (Trading Standards Manager - Safer Communities), Martyn Parker (Assistant Director Public Protection), Mandy Ramm (Funding and Investment Manager, Infrastructure Investment), Michelle Andrews (Assistant Director – ICS) and Vicky Salmon (Community Safety Strategy Co-ordinator).

The following officers joined the meeting remotely, via Teams:

Will Mason (Head of Culture) and Michelle Andrews (Assistant Director – ICS).

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J L King and A N Stokes.

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 T R Ashton to replace Cllr A N Stokes for this meeting only.

2 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

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

3 MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC PROTECTION AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON 19 APRIL 2022

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny meeting held on 19 April 2022 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND CHIEF
OFFICERS

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Executive Councillors, Executive Support Councillors and Senior Officers.

5 MULTIPLY ADULT NUMERACY PROGRAMME IN LINCOLNSHIRE

Consideration was given to a report from Mandy Ramm, Funding and Investment Manager, Infrastructure Investment, which invited the Committee to consider the Multiply Adult Numeracy Programme in Lincolnshire, which was due to be considered by the Executive Councillor for Economic Development, Environment and Planning between 13 and 17 June 2022.

The Chairman invited Mandy Ramm, Funding and Investment Manager, Infrastructure Investment, to present the item to the Committee.

In guiding the Committee through the Executive report detailed at Appendix A, reference was made to: the County Council's appointment as Lead Body for the Multiply Adult Numeracy Programme, and the requirement of the Council to submit an Investment Plan to the Department for Education by 30 June 2022, to outline how the £4m will be spent in the county; that the new numeracy provision would be targeted at residents aged 19 years and over who did not have grade C/level 4 or above in GCSE maths; the benefits of the programme as a key component of the Government's Levelling Up agenda to ensure that by 2030 a number of people would have successfully completed high quality skills training; numeracy in Lincolnshire, details of which were provided at paragraph 1.7 of the report; the intended benefits of the Multiply Programme in Lincolnshire; and details of the funding allocation spend.

In conclusion, the Committee noted that the £4m Multiply Programme provided an excellent investment opportunity to improve adult numeracy provision within Lincolnshire and provided a variety of benefits to drive wider skill provision in the county. It was noted that this was in line with the Council Plan objectives particularly around enhancing the skills of the county's communities and meeting the needs of businesses and the economy.

During discussion, the Committee raised some of the following comments:

- Officers clarified that every upper tier council across England had received an allocation for the programme based on need. Confirmation was given that officers had liaised with peers across East Midlands, and had participated in several webinars that the Department for Education had organised for Local Authorities to keep informed of developing and innovative activity and to share best practice;
- Members were pleased to hear that the plans took into consideration engaging individuals furthest from the labour market and those who were expected to be reluctant to step forward and engage, due to negative social perceptions relevant to the lack of numeracy skills. It was noted that this would be achieved in the first instance in collaboration with employers (particularly smaller ones) to address the lack of numeracy and literacy skills of employees, incorporated into activities undertaken as part of their work duties (e.g., money management, stock control, weighing and measuring, cookery etc). Officers reassured the Committee that all different ways of engaging and working with community organisations were being explored. It was highlighted that pilot activity funded through the Councils UK Community Renewal Funding award would be used to inform approaches to delivering the programme. This included Abbey Access Training, which led a consortium of eight charities who had come together to engage and support hard to reach groups and individuals to receive learning support;
- In relation to funding allocated over the three-year period, officers explained that funds unspent in the first year would be lost. However, there was a degree of flexibility for any funds unspent in years two and three of the programme. The Committee noted that year one was likely to focus heavily on marketing activity to get the message out to maximise engagement and take-up. This activity was due to commence in September 2022, as soon as the Investment Plan had been approved. It was acknowledged that getting the year one portion of funding spent was going to be a challenge, as the year one allocation would need to be spent by March 2023;
- Members asked about plans to engage with schools to identify students who lacked skills, to improve before reaching the age of 19. Officers agreed to explore ways to engage with practitioners and groups and organisations who were able to support this (noting that Multiply provision was for 19 years plus);
- Members enquired whether areas identified as performing the worst in the county (namely, East Lindsey, Boston and South Holland) would be prioritised within in the plans. Officers provided assurance that they were working with the Learning and Work Institute to identify pockets of deprivation and need but confirmed that the programme provided the opportunity for provision across the whole of the county, where investment would have the greatest impact. It was highlighted that learning was being provided from Abbey Access Training in Lincoln, with the view to replicating that and any other best practice in Lincolnshire. Furthermore, it was emphasised that engagement with businesses (e.g., factories and warehouses etc.) was aimed at providing them with the opportunity and incentives as well as support to address the lack of numeracy skills, but where appropriate in a holistic manner including language skills etc.;
- Members recommended looking into working with trade unions that already offered union funded learning opportunities and courses, and further working with union

representatives to promote the programme. Officers confirmed that they were keen to explore all opportunities; and

- Members raised a concern on engaging individuals who were neither in education nor in employment (NEET), or at risk of becoming NEET. Officers agreed that creative engagement methods were being considered, an example cited of this from a neighbouring authority was engaging with harder to reach youth groups through music to address lack of skills. It was also noted that further engagement was also being considered through Citizens Advice Bureau and other community organisations, as well as creative ways of reaching out to different groups and communities such as a bus (noting that this would involve a capital outlay which would not be covered by the Multiply funding – collaborative opportunities being explored). Officers also advised of the provision for programme delivery nation-wide through an online digital platform for maths and that was being delivered directly by the Department for Education as another component of the Multiply Programme.

The Chairman on behalf of the Committee extended his thanks to the presenter.

RESOLVED

1. That unanimous support be given to the recommendations in the Executive Councillor report, as detailed on pages 17 and 18 of the report pack.
2. That the above comments from the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee be forwarded on to the Executive Councillor for Economic Development, Environment and Planning in relation to this item.

6 CITIZENS ADVICE ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee considered a report, which provided the Committee with an update on the performance of Citizens Advice services across Lincolnshire during 2021/22. The information provided by Citizens Advice Lincolnshire provided members of the Committee with an understanding of demand levels across a range of services, and the impact achieved from the grant funding provided by the Council to Citizens Advice Lincolnshire.

The Chairman invited Monica Stark, Chair Citizens Advice South Lincolnshire, and Citizens Advice Lincolnshire (CAL) Liaison with the County Council and Jenny Barnett, Chief Executive Officer, CA Lindsey and cover for CA Lincoln and District to present the item to the Committee. Michelle Andrews, Assistant Director, Integrated Care System was also in attendance for this item.

In a presentation to the Committee, reference was made to:

- It was reported that AdviceLine had seen a significant increase in the number of calls it was dealing with, which was mainly due to cost of living enquiries. It was highlighted that demand for the service was unable to be met, due to a lack of resource. Details pertaining to AdviceLine were included on page 28 of the report. It

was highlighted that of the 42,224 calls made by Lincolnshire residents to Adviceline, only 15,428 (36%) calls were able to be answered;

- The Committee was advised that there had also been an increase in accessing the core service, and the number of clients supported with debt issues. Details of which were shown on pages 29 and 30 of the report. It was reported that there had also been some trends for increased support regarding Universal Credit, Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and Housing Benefit;
- The Committee was advised that CA worked in partnership with organisations in Lincolnshire, and that partnership working was key going forward, and that more needed to be done across Lincolnshire. Some of the CAL's current partnerships included: foodbanks locally and nationally through work with the Trussell Trust; membership of the Lincolnshire County Council Financial Inclusion Partnership; District Councils to distribute Housing Support Fund and support for refugees and asylum seekers. It was highlighted that the CAL was hoping to work with the NHS, to provide advice in health settings;
- The value of the service to society. It was highlighted that it was impossible to set out a financial value on everything, but where the service could it had used a treasury approved model to do this. The service was also able to separately consider the financial benefits to the people helped and the community;
- Research and Campaigns. The Committee noted that some of the campaigns for the year had focussed on Universal Credit, Scams, Pension Credit, access to free legal advice, big energy savings; domestic abuse; and housing; and
- Reference was also made to a case study; the help provided; and feedback received from clients about the service. Details of which were shown on page 44 of the report presented.

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

- Thanks were extended for the work being carried out by Citizens Advice Lincolnshire;
- A request was made for a copy of the presentation to be forwarded on to all members of Committee;
- A suggestion was put forward for the funding to CAL to be increased. Reassurance was given that the grant provided to CAL was reassessed to ensure that CAL had as much flexibility as possible. The Committee was also reminded that the item for discussion was to consider and scrutinise the annual report from CAL;
- Working with social housing providers. The Committee was advised that CAL worked with social providers, but were not directly funded by them;
- The transfer of Department of Works and Pensions to a telephone system. It was noted that there was a specific Universal Credit helpline. The Committee noted that the lines were free phone lines as long as individuals had access to a telephone;
- Paragraph 1.12 on page 36 of the report suggested talks with the Council regarding interventions to support council tenants. The Committee noted that this suggestion was about being able to work with providers in a more preventative way to help people with tenancies getting into arrears etc. It was noted that some work had been carried out with East Lindsey regarding Council Tax Benefit, which had been

successful. As housing services were provided by District Councils, it was felt that was the route that needed pursuing with regard to these matters;

- Clarification was given that the £20 a week Universal Credit uplift had been a time limited grant which had come to end;
- Concern was expressed to the 15,426 (36%) calls made by Lincolnshire residents to AdviceLine that were unable to be answered. The Committee was advised that as with other organisations, CAL were struggling to recover from the pandemic. The Committee noted that in the Lindsey and Lincoln areas currently there were 10 front line staff. It was noted further that this number would have been between 20/30 prior to the pandemic. The Committee was advised that both volunteers and paid staff needed to be very well trained to deal with a wide range of issues covered by the service, and that it had been difficult to fill the vacant positions following the pandemic. Further concern was raised concerning the lack of volunteers. The Committee was advised that this was a common problem across the charity sector. The Committee was advised that promotion was being done with schools, colleges, pre-retirement settings, graduates from Lincoln University and generally through social media. It was highlighted that training to be a volunteer or a paid members of staff was intensive and that it was difficult to find the right people;
- The cost of the translation service. This figure was not available to members at the meeting, but presenters advised the figure could be made available after the meeting; and
- Reassurance was given that staff/volunteers had access to wellbeing services.

The Chairman on behalf of the Committee extended his thanks to the presenters.

The Chairman welcomed Glen Garrod, Executive Director of Adults and Community Wellbeing and Martyn Parker, Assistant Director Adult Care and Community Wellbeing to the meeting.

RESOLVED

That the Citizens Advice Annual report be received and that the comments raised by the Committee be considered.

7 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 52 to 55 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.

The Committee was advised that the 19 July agenda would now be: Service Level Performance Reporting against Performance Framework for 2021/22 – Quarter Four; the Integrated Risk Management Plan for 2020 to 2024, Yearly Update; Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service, Proposed Changes to Duty Arrangements; Fire and Rescue Service Attendance at Flooding Incidents – Annual Report on Performance; Libraries Year 6 Update (2021/22,) Progress and Development, which would include an update on the Ermine Library Hub; and the Committee sitting as the Crime and Disorder Committee would also be receiving a report regarding the Re-Commissioning of Domestic Abuse Services, which was a pre-decision item.

It was also highlighted that for the 20 September 2022 meeting, the Committee would be receiving a further update report from the Fire and Rescue Service concerning Duty Arrangements; and that Serious and Organised Crime Fraud and Modern-Day Slavery had been removed from the September 2022 Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee agenda.

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

- The potential attendance of the Police Commissioner at a future meeting to discuss the concerns regarding public confidence in the police. The Committee was advised by the Executive Councillor for People Management, Legal and Corporate Property that he was the Council's representative on the Police and Crime Panel, and that he was happy to raise any concerns from the Committee.

RESOLVED

That the work programme presented be received subject to the inclusion/deletion of the items mentioned above.

The meeting of the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee ended at 11:44am.

8 A REVIEW OF WORK TO TACKLE FRAUD, INCLUDING ITS IMPACT ON VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS DURING THE PANDEMIC

SITTING AS THE CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Consideration was given to a report from Vicky Salmon, Community Safety Strategy Co-ordinator, which provided the Committee with an update on the work taking place within Lincolnshire County Council to reduce the impact of fraud, as a host and contributing partner to the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership Crime and Disorder Priority Group.

The Chairman invited Vicky Salmon, Community Safety Strategy Co-ordinator, to present the item to the Committee.

During the presentation, the Committee were made aware of:

- Fraud being a priority for the Council and the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership (SLP);
- Reference was made to the prevalence of fraud in Lincolnshire and to the fact there had been a 27% rise in fraud offences in the last year;
- The effect of fraud on vulnerable residents, reference was made to the Councils responsibilities under the Care Act to protect adults;
- Technology advances that were transforming fraud, examples given were romance fraud perpetrated on social media or through dating apps and investment fraud committed through fake websites and cloned websites;
- Prevention activity, it was noted that engagement had been made on social and traditional media, training had been provided to frontline staff, and officers had attended community events. It was noted further that another key part of the Councils prevention activity was the partnership working with Lincolnshire Police in forming a Safer Together Partnership, and as part of that Partnership, a Fraud Prevention Officer had been appointed within Lincolnshire Police, and their job was to focus on prevention activity across the County, and complement the post hosted within the Council of a Scams Prevention and Intervention Officer; and
- Partnership working arrangements in place to tackle fraud. It was highlighted that partnership working was key, and that no one organisation could tackle fraud alone. Reference was made to Lincolnshire being a founding partner in the pilot for the Home Office Multi-Agency approach to Fraud, which had led to the establishment of the SLP Fraud Core Priority Group, which comprised of a wide membership from a range of organisations. It was highlighted that it was essential to make sure that victims of fraud received centred support, to help avoid repeat victimisation, but to also help support their health and wellbeing. It was highlighted further that during the last year the Scams and Prevention Intervention Officer had supported 70 individuals who were considered the most vulnerable.

In conclusion, the Committee noted that the report demonstrated the Council's contribution to the fraud agenda within the County and the steps being taken to keep vulnerable people safe. Members of the Committee were encouraged to look at additional information on fraud and scams by completing the online learning course, and then 'Take a Stand Against Scams'.

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

- Clarification was given that the Fraud Prevention Officer within Lincolnshire Police, was responsible for delivering community based activity and training and that the figure for the number of training sessions provided could be made available to members of the Committee after the meeting. It was noted that referral to the officer would be via action fraud referrals, Citizens Advice, Consumer Service, Adult Social Care etc.;
- Circulation of the link for additional information concerning scams being circulated to members of the Committee;

- A request was made for officers to involve town and parish councils in getting the message out regarding scams;
- Personal experience regarding personal information being disclosed in a public setting. The Assistant Director of Public Protection and Communities agreed to look into the matter after the meeting;
- The need for legislation to stop personal data being sold;
- Phone spoofing. The Committee was advised that it was hard for organisations to legitimise themselves online and over phone calls. An example given relating to an advertisement which advised that my bank will never ask you for your PIN number or date of birth; and that it was a real challenge to get those messages out to the public. It was highlighted that the use of call blockers was needed to block those types of calls. It was also highlighted that more education was needed to get messages out and that Councillors could assist with the flow of information;
- Carelessness of organisations, which then enabled fraud to occur;
- The number of fraud offences reported to Action Fraud (as shown on page 58 of the report). The Committee was advised that there were multiple routes to reporting and that one of the things being looked at by officers was where people do report fraud and who they chose to report fraud to; and
- Whether there were still concerns relating to cold callers reference was made to Nottingham Knockers and alleged fresh fish sellers. The Committee was advised that there were still some sporadic reports, and that some action had been in the North East of the country.

The Chairman on behalf of the Committee extended his thanks to the presenters.

RESOLVED

That the report and presentation on tackling fraud, including its impact on vulnerable individuals be received and that the comments raised by the Committee be taken into consideration for continuing to effectively deliver the Partnership's duties.

The meeting closed at 12.09 pm