

**PUBLIC PROTECTION AND COMMUNITIES
 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
 20 SEPTEMBER 2022**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR N H PEPPER (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors A N Stokes (Vice-Chairman), Mrs J Brockway, A Dani, W H Gray, K E Lee, E J Sneath and N Sear.

Councillors: Mrs P A Bradwell OBE, R D Butroid, L A Cawrey, A P Maughan, S P Roe and Mrs S Woolley attended the meeting as observers.

Officers in attendance:-

Sara Barry (Acting Assistant Director - Public Protection), Mark Baxter (Chief Fire Officer), James Chapple (Head of Registration, Celebratory and Coroners Services), Kiara Chatziioannou (Scrutiny Officer), Katrina Cope (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Glen Garrod (Executive Director - Adult Care and Community Wellbeing), Will Mason (Head of Culture), Emma Milligan (Trading Standards Operational Delivery Manager), Martyn Parker (Assistant Director Public Protection), Dave Pennington (Head of Property Development), Lee Sirdifield (Assistant Director – Corporate), Paul Smith (Acting Senior Coroner), Ryan Stacey (Assistant Chief Fire Officer), Neal Kathel (Property Team Leader, Property Development), Nicholas Matthews (Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership Education Supervisor) and Kathryn Smith (Stay Safe Coordinator).

Nicole Hilton, Assistant Director Communities attended the meeting remotely, via Teams.

Minutes Silence

The Chairman in his introductory address invited the Committee to observe a two minute silence as a mark of respect to the recent passing of Her Majesty the Queen.

20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M R Clarke, N F Clarke, A M Key and J L King.

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 Noi Sear to replace Councillor Mrs N F Clarke, for this meeting only.

It was noted further that Councillor J L King would be observing the meeting remotely, via Teams.

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21 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

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

22 MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC PROTECTION AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON 19 JULY 2022

RESOLVED

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

23 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND CHIEF
OFFICERS

The Committee observed a one minute silence as a mark of respect to the recent passing of former County Councillor Mrs A M Newton MBE.

The Chairman on behalf of the Committee extended thanks to Sara Barry, Head of Safer Communities for all her support to the Committee and wished her well in her retirement and for the future.

The Committee noted that the Safer Communities service was currently undergoing a process of re-organisation, which was currently at the consultation stage. It was highlighted that the intention was to remove the role of a single Head of Service, and replace it with two Heads of Service, one within Trading Standards and one within Community Safety.

The Chairman also reminded the members of the forthcoming visit by the Committee to the County Emergency Planning Centre on Friday 30 September 2022.

No Executive Councillor Announcements were received.

The Assistant Director Communities advised that a successful screening of the Queen's funeral had taken place at the castle, to which over 1000 residents had attended. The Committee noted that the whole event had been incredibly moving, respectful and had reflected the historic occasion.

24 LINCOLNSHIRE CORONERS SERVICE UPDATE REPORT

The Committee considered a report from Paul Smith, Senior Coroner for Lincolnshire, which provided an annual report on the Lincolnshire Coroners Service as required by HM Chief Coroner for England and Wales.

In guiding the Committee through the report, reference was made to the challenges and achievements during 2021, details of which were shown on pages 24 to 26 of the report.

It was noted that the Coroner Transformation Project had concluded in the summer and that many positive developments had resulted from it, which had included the identification of a permanent office and Court facility, improved methods of working across the County, a new electronic referral system, and improved communication with other stakeholders.

The Committee was advised that the merger of the Lincolnshire Coroner's Service with North Lincolnshire and Grimsby to create a Greater Lincolnshire Coroner Service was still awaiting a decision by the Lord Chancellor. It was highlighted that no timeframe had been given for a decision.

It was also highlighted that retirement of the Acting Senior Coroner for North Lincolnshire had resulted in extra workload being put on the Senior Coroner. It was noted that the current situation was one which could not continue indefinitely, as it was likely to generate delays in listing of more complex cases, particularly in North Lincs, which was unfair on the bereaved.

In conclusion, it was highlighted that despite its challenges the service had received positive feedback from families they had supported in finding closure of the sudden death of a loved one and it was hoped that the service would be moving forward with renewed optimism in the future

During consideration of the report, the Committee expressed concern to the time the merger of the Lincolnshire Coroner's Service with North Lincolnshire and Grimsby to create a Greater Lincolnshire Coroner was taking; and to the impact that was having on the service, with reference being made to the impact on the Senior Coroner. Reassurance was given that everything that could be done had been done and that the matter was still with the Lord Chancellor's Office.

The Committee also enquired about officer cover across the County. The Committee was advised that there were a number of officers based in Lincoln and Boston who dealt with matters which were not in-quest bound cases and were likely to be natural deaths, but enquiries might need to be made. In relation to cases that went to inquest, there was a dedicated inquest team based was based at Mile Cross, Lincoln, who provided cover across the County if required.

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

RESOLVED

1. That the progress and performance of the Lincolnshire Coroners Service as detailed in the annual report presented be received.

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2. That a further progress report be received in 12 months' time.

25 SERVICE LEVEL PERFORMANCE REPORTING AGAINST THE SUCCESS FRAMEWORK
2022-2023 - QUARTER 1

The Committee considered a report from Martyn Parker, Assistant Director – Public Protection, Nicole Hilton, Assistant Director – Communities, Lee Sirdified, Assistant Director Corporate, Mark Baxter, Chief Fire Officer and Steven Batchelor. Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership, which set out the performance of the Tier 2 Service Level Performance Measures for 2022/2023 – Quarter 1 that were within the remit of the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee.

Ryan Stacey, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Will Mason, Head of Culture and Nicholas Matthews, Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership Education Supervisor were also in attendance for this item.

During consideration of the report, some of the following comments were raised:

- Appreciation was extended to the fire service for their work during the very hot summer relating to the dangers of fires, with reference being made to fires on farms. The Committee noted that Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue (LFR) had been working with the National Farmers Union (NFU) for several years regarding farm fires. It was highlighted that this year, the service had implemented an initiative that involved having couplings available on farms that could be used by LFR in the event of a fire, this initiative enabled fire appliances to be able to connect to the water supply straight away;
- The importance of having libraries for communities, despite secondhand books being more readily available; and the importance of their role as community hubs and the positive impacts for residents; and the provision of warm rooms throughout the winter. It was highlighted that all libraries and heritage sites provided venues for communities to use, and that this would be continuing and would be monitored to see if the demand increased throughout the winter period;
- Thanks were extended to staff based at Lincoln Castle for all their hard work;
- One member enquired whether figures were available to show the number of books being taken, as opposed to the number of visits to a library. A request was also made for information regarding the category of library users. Officers confirmed that they were happy to provide this additional information;
- The shortage of volunteers and whether there was any link to employment opportunities. The Committee noted that there were some volunteering pathways that were intended purely to help people get back into employment. It was highlighted that the intention was to give people work experience, gain confidence, and then progress into employment. Officers advised that information about the success of the programme could be made available to members of the Committee;
- Further clarity was sought regarding efficient driving methods. Officers agreed to look into publishing further guidance information;

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- Thanks were extended to members of the LFR for keeping the residents of Lincolnshire safe;
- One member highlighted the problems Boston were having with the river Witham and sought advice as to who contact to resolve the situation. As the particular issue did not fall under the remit of the Public Protection and Communities Committee, the Chairman agreed to speak to the Chairman of the Flood and Water Management Scrutiny Committee;
- Clarity was sought regarding page 34 of the report as to whether reported domestic abuse had also increased in line with the amount of people supported. It was reported that the number of victims had been consistent and that the service was getting better at referring. In conclusion, the Committee was advised that the service was supporting more victims but was not receiving any more reports;
- Some concern was raised to the number of deliberate fires, and whether any analysis had been done to highlight any trends. The Committee was reminded that it had been a very hot summer and there had been several deliberate grass fires which had caused a spike in the figures. It was noted that Quarters 1 and 2 were always busier than other times of the year. Confirmation was given that there was no strong correlation to any particular age group;
- An explanation was given pertaining to the 15-day response time to Planning Applications; and
- One member enquired whether the Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership was on target to seeing a 20% reduction over 10 years. As this information was not on hand at the meeting, officers agreed to investigate the request. It was highlighted that to get figures down there was always more that could be done and that education, awareness was of the part of process in changing behaviours.

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

RESOLVED

That the Committee records its satisfaction with the performance achieved in Quarter 1 and that the comments raised by the Committee be taken into consideration by relevant officers and Portfolio Holders.

26 LINCOLNSHIRE REGISTRATION AND CELEBRATORY SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee considered a report from James Chapple, Head of Registration, which provided an update on the service delivered by the Registration and Celebratory Service.

It was highlighted that the Registration and Celebratory Service had faced a busy and challenging year. It was reported that throughout the year the service had responded rapidly to each government announcement; and that registration staff had exercised their duty professionally and had gone above and beyond to help customers throughout the year.

In guiding the Committee through the report reference was made to:

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- death registrations;
- birth registrations;
- Marriages, Civil Partnerships & Citizens Ceremonies;
- The introduction of a new registration system, which allowed residents to book their birth, death or notice of marriage or civil partnership online, via the Councils' website. Fuller details of the system were shown on page 73 of the report;
- Legislative changes, the Committee noted that the proposals outlined by the government would bring about the largest changes to Civil Registration since it had begun in 1837; and
- Next steps for the service.

In conclusion, it was noted that despite the challenges, the Registration and Celebratory Service had continued to deliver registration appointments throughout the year, meeting the new levels of demand and clearing pandemic backlogs. It was noted further that the service was committed to delivering digital improvements and improving accessibility for residents; and continued planning for future legislative changes.

During consideration of the item, the Committee was advised that the governing body for Civil Registration was collaborating with the Department for Digital, Culture Media & Sports to pass a Bill later in 2023 that would permanently enable families to be able to continue to registering births and deaths over the phone (as was done during Covid), or face to face.

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

RESOLVED

That the report on the Lincolnshire Registration and Celebratory Services as presented be received.

27 TRADING STANDARDS, IMPACTS AND OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK

Consideration was given to a report from Mark Keal, Trading Standards Manager, which provided a review of the delivery of Trading Standards in Lincolnshire for the year 2021/2022.

The Chairman invited Emma Milligan, Trading Standards Operational Manager, to present the report to the Committee. In guiding the Committee through the report, some slides were presented which provided a summary of the service.

Reference was made to:

- The background to the Trading Standards Service, reference was made to the Authority's statutory responsibilities to deliver consumer protection for the residents of Lincolnshire, and the Acts of Parliament and regulations the service had to adhere to;

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- The make-up of the Trading Standards team. It was reported that the service was delivered by 33 full time staff, 28.24 of which were operational staff;
- The number of business premises inspected (526);
- Animal health matters. Reference was made to the Avian Flu outbreak that affected 15 premises in the County, which had impacted emergency response. It was also highlighted that the team was also working towards tackling the top offenders around Bovine Tuberculosis testing, whilst raising awareness and campaigning with farmers;
- Tackling determinants and preventing harm stopping fraudulent, illegal and unfair trading. The Committee was advised that several prosecutions had been brought by Trading Standards for offences relating to the supply of illicit tobacco, which had resulted in a total of nine defendants having been sentenced; Operation Rogue Trader Week; the removal of counterfeit goods, it was noted that 21,312 counterfeit items had been removed from the marketplace in 2021/22; and partnership working with Lincolnshire Police to support Operation Vigilance;
- Tackling Detriment and Preventing Harm – Supporting Victims of Scams and Fraud. It was reported that the service had supported 388 victims of scams and fraud during 2021/21;
- In-house media support in getting consumer empowerment messages out via Facebook and Twitter;
- Supporting the local economy, by providing business advice on an ad hoc basis and through a detailed advice service bespoke to each business;
- Promoting health and wellbeing, which included promoting food labelling for allergens; removal of unsafe or no-compliant products from the marketplace. It was reported that 9,960 unsafe or non-compliant products had been removed from the marketplace;
- Developing officers, details of the achievement of staff were shown on page 82 of the report; and
- Managing intelligence and data.

In conclusion, the Committee was advised that the Trading Standards Service had implemented measures to ensure that resources were deployed effectively to meet the demands of Lincolnshire residents, businesses, and partners and to meet the training and development needs of the service.

During consideration of this item. Some of the following comments were raised:

- The shortage of vets in the south of the county and whether this was impacting on the service. Clarification was given that the service used qualified vets and at times the service had struggled;
- Thanks were extended to the Trading Standards services for all the work they were doing;
- Some concern was express to paragraph 3.3, which advised that the service had been successful in prosecuting an individual who sold cigarettes to an underage volunteer. Reassurance was sought as to the safety of the underage volunteer. The Committee

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was advised that any such action would have parental consent, would be risk assessed beforehand and assistance sought from Lincolnshire Police;

- That fines imposed at paragraph 3.2 were not a deterrent. The Committee noted that it was up to the court to decide on the penalties imposed; and
- An explanation was given as to what action would be done if a premises was found to be non-compliant. The Committee noted that the service supported businesses to make sure they were doing things right.

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

RESOLVED

1. That the Trading Standards Impact and Outcomes Framework report presented be received as an accurate snapshot of the achievements of Trading Standards for 2021/22 in supporting businesses and promoting health and wellbeing.
2. That the comments raised by the Committee be taken into consideration by officers and relevant Portfolio Holders.

28 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 88 to 90 of the report pack and to highlight any additional scrutiny activity to be included for consideration in the work programme.

Attached at Appendix A to the report was an extract of the Executive Forward Plan, which provided details of decisions relating to the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee.

During consideration of this item, the Chief Fire Officer highlighted for the 8 November 2022 meeting, that the item concerning Progress on Response to Inspection Outcomes from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services would need to be moved forward to the 13 December 2022 meeting.

RESOLVED

That the work programme presented be received subject to the item 'Progress on Response to Inspection Outcomes from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services' being moved forward to 13 December 2022 meeting.

The meeting of the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee ended at 11.44am.

29 STAY SAFE PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL UPDATE

SITTING AS THE CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Consideration was given to a report from Kathryn Smith, Stay Safe Coordinator, which provided the Committee with an update of the Stay Safe Partnership Project.

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

- The background to the Stay Safe Partnership Project. It was noted that the project was aimed at ensuring that every secondary school aged child in Lincolnshire received preventative education to enable them to make informed decision and keep them safe. It was highlighted that as the need to engage with a younger audience on relevant safety issues had become apparent, age-appropriate online resources and workshops had been developed for primary school children and teachers;
- The make-up of the Stay Safe Partnership and the offer available to schools, details of which were shown on pages 94 to 96 of the report pack;
- Programme Development. It was noted that for prevention to have an impact, a key ambition of the Stay Safe Partnership was to extend its reach to all primary age children. It was highlighted that the partnership had made some progress in realising its ambition during the year. Details of which were shown on pages 96 to 97 of the report pack;
- Impact and effectiveness of the project. Details of student and teacher feedback from the 2020/21 academic year were shown on pages 98 and 99 of the report pack;
- Future development opportunities. The Committee was advised that the Stay Safe Partnership continued to evolve to meet the demand, especially the need to offer preventative messaging at an earlier age. It was noted that expanding the curriculum within primary schools would ensure there was a programme of prevention interventions that followed student from Year 2 through to college.

In conclusion, the Committee noted that the Stay Safe Partnership had established itself as a primary deliverer of safety messages to children and young people and was a trusted source of preventative education for schools and academies in the county. It was noted that future investment and growth would ensure the partnership expanded to meet demand, as well as develop evidence led targeted response to address safety concerns.

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

- Confirmation was given that the offer was made to all secondary schools, which included independent schools;
- Areas of pupil's concern as detailed on page 99 of the report pack;
- The Committee noted that the number of sessions had increased, particularly domestic abuse; and
- Home Office Bid. Confirmation was given that the Home Office Bid had not been successful; and that the partnership was now looking to deliver the service in a different way.

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

RESOLVED

That the Stay Safe Annual Update report as presented be received.

30 SERIOUS VIOLENCE IN LINCOLNSHIRE - A PARTNERSHIP RESPONSE

Consideration was given to a report from Sara Barry, Head of Safer Communities, which provided the Committee with the opportunity to consider serious violence in Lincolnshire and the partnership response to the expected new statutory duty for County Councils and other public bodies being brought in by the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022.

The Chairman invited Martyn Parker, Assistant Director for Public Protection, to present the item to the Committee.

The Assistant Director for Public Protection extended his thanks to Sara Barry for all her work and support and extended his best wishes to her in her retirement. This message was echoed by all members of the Committee.

The Committee was advised of the background to the introduction of a new serious duty (the Duty) on public bodies to ensure relevant services worked together to share data and knowledge and to allow them to target interventions to prevent serious violence altogether. Details of the duty were shown on pages 103 and 104 of the report pack.

It was reported that the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Lincolnshire had set out a priority to establish a Violence Reduction Programme, with a £3m commitment. It was noted that work was currently ongoing with the Councils Public Health Service to develop a public health approach to violence reduction in Lincolnshire via a needs assessment, following which a strategy would be developed based upon local intelligence and evidence of 'what works' to prevent and tackle serious crime. Details of the strategic needs assessment were shown on page 106 of the report pack.

The Committee noted that following the publication of the Strategic Needs Assessment in April 2022, and the adoption of the Serious Violence as part of the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership, a Core Priority Group had been formed.

The Committee was advised, that since the publication of the agenda for the meeting, there had been additional collaborative arrangements made in that Councillor Patricia Bradwell OBE, Executive Councillor for Children's Services, Community Safety and Procurement would lead in partnership with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and would co-chair the Serious Violence Core Priority Group with the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, Phil Clark.

In conclusion, it was highlighted that working jointly with the PCC, Lincolnshire partners had been able to analyse serious violence in Lincolnshire and have mechanisms in place ahead of the expected statutory duty. It was noted that the next part of the exercise would be the development of the strategy to address any issues currently not addresses elsewhere in the partnership landscape.

During consideration of this item, reference was made to the availability of data on violence being more readily available from health services, police and other routine sources. It was highlighted that improvements to data sharing were required which would then result in a more effective targeted use of resources

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

RESOLVED

That the Serious Violence in Lincolnshire – A Partnership Response report presented be received; and that the proposal to respond to the expected statutory duty by addressing it through an expanded Safer Lincolnshire Partnership framework be endorsed.

31 CONSIDERATION OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

RESOLVED

That in accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that if they were present, they could be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Section 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

32 GRANTHAM FIRE STATION REFURBISHMENT

The Committee considered an exempt report from Dave Pennington, Head of Property, which provided details in relation to the Grantham Fire Station refurbishment.

After consideration of the exempt report.

RESOLVED

1. That the Committee unanimously supported the recommendations set out on page 112 of the Exempt Executive Councillors Report.
2. That the comments of the Committee from the exempt discussion be passed on to the Executive Councillors, to facilitate their decision-making taking place between 26 and 30 September 2022.

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The meeting closed at 12.35 pm