

**PUBLIC PROTECTION AND COMMUNITIES
 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
 20 JUNE 2023**

PRESENT:

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

Councillors: L A Cawrey, A P Maughan and Mrs S Woolley (Executive Councillor NHS Liaison, Integrated Care Systems, Registration and Coroners) attended the meeting as observers.

Officers in attendance:-

Mark Baxter (Chief Fire Officer), Kiara Chatziioannou (Scrutiny Officer), Katrina Cope (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Glen Garrod (Executive Director - Adult Care and Community Wellbeing), Nicole Hilton (Assistant Director - Communities), Will Mason (Head of Culture), Clare Newborn (Head of Community Safety), Ben Rollett (Chief Executive Voluntary Care Service), Lee Sirdifield (Assistant Director – Corporate), Zoe Walters (Community Strategy Co-Ordinator) and Karen Pentin (Community Safety Strategy Coordinator, Community Safety Service).

Officers in attendance via Microsoft Teams:

Nicole Hilton (Assistant Director - Communities) and Will Mason (Head of Culture).

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A M Key and N H Pepper.

2 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

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

3 MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC PROTECTION AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 9 MAY 2023

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 9 May 2023 be agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND CHIEF

OFFICERS

No announcements were received.

5 CULTURE, EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION WITHIN FIRE AND RESCUE

Consideration was given to a report from Mark Baxter, Chief Fire Officer, which outlined to the Committee the work that Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue (LFR) had done, and was committed to in ensuring there was continual improvement with Culture and Equality and Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) for LFR staff.

The Chairman invited Mark Baxter, Chief Fire Officer, to present the report to the Committee, which made reference to the background behind the local and national focus on culture within Fire and Rescue Services; the report released by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS) on 'values and culture in fire and rescue services' which summarised what had been identified across the Fire Sector during round two of the inspection (2021/2022); and the work carried out by LFR.

It was highlighted that LFR had placed culture and EDI as a high priority agenda for service improvement. It was noted that commitment by the service over the last few years had shown a positive direction of travel in these areas, which had been reflected within staff engagement. Reassurance was given that culture and EDI would continue to evolve and develop to ensure that the people of Lincolnshire received the highest standards for Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue.

The Committee was advised that LFR had just completed round three inspection by HMICFRS, and that at the time of the meeting feedback was still awaited. The report presented evidenced how culture and EDI was developing within LFR.

Appendix A to the report provided a copy of the LFR Culture booklet; Appendix B provided details of the Leadership Stocktake 2023; and Appendix C provided a copy of the EDI Action Plan for the Committee to consider.

Thanks were extended from the Executive Councillor for Fire and Rescue, and Cultural Services to the Chief Fire Officer and his team for their commitment and for the report presented.

During consideration of this item, some of the following comments were noted:

- Some members of the Committee extended their thanks for a well presented report;
- Availability of staff, the Committee noted that the leadership staff survey in 2021 as detailed on page 31 highlighted that there were gaps regarding staff availability. It was noted that this had been within the Covid-19 period. The Committee noted that progress had been made in this regard and would continue to be made;
- The positive impact of having external EDI face to face training, to ensure that staff truly understood why it was important to have on EDI;

- A request was made for data to show a breakdown of the number of males and females within the service, and the diversity of ethnic groups. The Committee was advised that the data was available and could be provided to members of the Committee. It was highlighted that regarding recruitment, the service continually reviewed how it could make itself more attractive to under representative groups; why people were dropping out of the service; and why some people were not being able progress. The Committee noted that active positive engagement sessions were held in all communities, and that focus was made on under represented groups to encourage them to think of fire and rescue as a career open to all;
- Confirmation was given that background checks were made using the DBS checking system. It was highlighted that all new recruits went through the standard checks, and that any staff working with vulnerable people had an enhanced DBS check;
- It was reported that language had not caused any barriers, advertisements were produced in as many different languages as possible and were continually reviewed. The service also provided courses for staff where English was not their first language, and that courses were tailored accordingly. It was also highlighted that a successful 'buddy system' was in place to support people where English was not their first language; and more time was given for completion of some written and verbal examinations;
- Support was extended to the easy to read 'Thrive' document and to the fact that the final document had been produced following engagement and input from staff;
- Confirmation was given that Appendix C, the Action Plan had put extra workload on staff, but the benefits from the plan would actually improve the way the service preformed on a daily basis. It was highlighted that it was a long-term commitment and officers and staff would be supported to continue with the work in progress;
- Confirmation was given that a range of support was available to firefighters who were exposed to traumatic events and incidents; and
- That data relating to the number of staff who had completed the staff survey would be made available to members of the Committee after the meeting.

The Chairman extended thanks on behalf of the Committee to the Chief Fire Officer for his report.

RESOLVED

1. That the Culture, Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion report presented be received.
2. That comments and suggestions made in relation to the report be taken into consideration by relevant officers and portfolio holders.
3. That the Committee's satisfaction of the service's overall efforts be recorded and that updates on the progression of actions against the recommendations within HMICFRS report be reported to the Committee in or after March 2024.

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The Committee considered a report which provided an update from Voluntary Centre Services and Lincolnshire Community Voluntary Services about the work that had been completed during the year to support the voluntary sector.

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

The report provided an insight into several ongoing initiatives and expanded on performance information previously considered by the Committee.

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

- Thanks were extended to officers for the comprehensive report;
- Some concern was expressed to employer supported volunteering. The Committee noted that lots of organisations had policies in place which allowed staff to volunteer during their work time. A question was asked as to whether this was actually volunteering, as this was not completed in the person's own time. The Committee noted that from experience, this type of volunteering had proven to provide experience to individual's and help with their personal development;
- That monthly themed volunteering bulletins had been introduced to highlight and raise awareness of volunteering opportunities. It was noted that there was a regular distribution list for the bulletin, and that steps were being taken to expand this, to include the use of social media. A suggestion was made for bulletins to be shared with elected members;
- That all volunteers in Lincolnshire needed to be congratulated for the invaluable contribution they were making within communities in Lincolnshire; and
- The importance of making sure that volunteers felt supported and valued.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman extended thanks to the presenters.

RESOLVED

1. That the Voluntary Sector – Annual Position Report as presented be received.
2. That the Committee's personal thanks be extended to every volunteer and every local group and organisation for their valued efforts in supporting their local communities.
3. That the comments raised in relation to the report be received and be taken into consideration by officers and portfolio holders.

7 FIRE AND RESCUE STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2022-2023

Consideration was given to a report from Mark Baxter, Chief Fire Officer, which invited the Committee to review and comment on the contents of Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue (LFR) Authority's Statement of Assurance 2022/23.

The Chairman invited Mark Baxter, Chief Fire Officer to present the item.

The Committee was advised that Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue was satisfied that the systems and measures it had in place in respect of financial, governance and operational matters for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 were fit for purpose and were effective.

It was reported that the service was satisfied that its business was conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards and that public money was properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently, and effectively. It was also noted that the service was satisfied that where appropriate, the National Framework requirements had been met.

Appendix A to the report provided a copy of the LFR Statement of Assurance for 2022/23 for the Committee to consider.

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

- The collaboration with LFR, the East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS) and Lincolnshire Integrated Voluntary Emergency Service (LIVES) to provide emergency response to cardiac and respiratory arrest and similar life-threatening emergencies via the co-responder scheme. One member enquired whether EMAS had the opportunity to get involved in LFR services. The Committee was advised that EMAS did get involved in training at the Waddington training facility i.e. road traffic collisions. It was noted that the outcome of the joint training events was quicker intervention for the person involved. The Committee noted that the service also worked with the police, as Waddington was a fantastic training environment for the police to use and practice their new skills; as well as other national and international fire and rescue services; and
- The increase in secondary fires (58% on the previous year) which had been directly attributed to the prolonged hot and dry summer of 2022. The Committee was advised that this had been the busiest period in the history of LFR over such a short period of time. It was noted that LFR teams had responded impeccably during that period.

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

RESOLVED

1. That the Annual Statement of Assurance Report for 2022/23 be endorsed for publication on the County Council's website.
2. That the comments raised in relation to this item be received and taken into consideration by relevant officers and portfolio holders.

Consideration was given to a report from Kiara Chatziioannou, Scrutiny Officer, which invited the Committee to review the work programme, as detailed on pages 86 to 89 of the report pack and to highlight any additional scrutiny activity which could be included for consideration in the work programme.

The Scrutiny Officer briefed the Committee on the items scheduled to be considered at the 25 July 2023 meeting.

The Committee noted that a request had been received for an update from trading standards on vapes, and vaping in younger people.

RESOLVED

That the Public Protection and Communities Work Programme report be received as detailed on pages 86 to 89 of the report pack, subject to the addition of an update from trading standards on vapes and vaping in younger people.

The meeting of the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee finished at 11.50 am.

9 THE WORK OF SAFER LINCOLNSHIRE PARTNERSHIP'S LINCOLNSHIRE WOMEN'S STRATEGY: PREVENTING WOMEN AND GIRLS AT RISK OF ENTERING THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

SITTING AS THE CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTNY COMMITTEE

(Note: Cllr K E Lee left the meeting at 11:53)

Consideration was given to a report from Zoe Walters, Business Manager (Interim) Safer Lincolnshire Partnership, which provided the Committee with an overview of the actions undertaken by the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership to support women and girls at risk from entering the criminal justice system.

Appendix A to the report provided details of the Women's and Girls Strategic Delivery Group for the Committee to consider.

The Committee were advised of the background to the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership; the Lincolnshire Women's Strategy; the Women and Girls Strategic Delivery Group; the Delivery Plan; Funding and Sustainability; and the key deliverables to be achieved within the next 12 months.

During consideration of this item, the following comments were noted:

- The success of the conference held entitled 'Support that changes women's lives' held on 23 May 2023;

- The vital need for trauma training. The Committee noted that this was currently being scoped to see what was needed. There was recognition that everybody should be trauma informed at all points of contact. The Committee noted that the training would recognise all different elements such as housing accommodation, previous experiences, childhood trauma, and domestic abuse. It was noted that the training could be made via the Enable Platform that was also used by wider partnerships. The scoping would also consider the ability for Councilors and others to utilise the training;
- The importance that the first point of contact was a positive contact;
- The voices of women and girls and the experiences they had encountered. The committee noted that the University of Lincoln had mapped the journey of females from pre-criminal justice through to contact with the criminal justice and that the experiences received as shown on page 94 of the report seemed to mirror a national picture, in terms of accessing the support they needed. It was highlighted that women and girls only got the support that met their needs once they were in the criminal justice system, and that there was therefore a need to change this approach;
- The possibility of providing mobile support for women and young girls. The Committee noted that the training would not just be Lincoln centric and would be provided in a variety of locations owned by Lincolnshire agencies, including the council i.e. children’s centres;
- Any insight into what was causing peak age offending (15 year old girls). The Committee was advised that this was an area currently being looked at, and that the strategic delivery group would be working to make sure that the local judiciary was involved in this work stream, including mechanisms to ensure they were fully aware of the implications when they imposed a short sentence, or when someone was remained in custody. It was also highlighted that an evidence base was being generated for Lincolnshire around the pathways for 15-year-old girls, and that there would also be links with the Joint Diversionary Panel run by the Youth Offending Service; and the Serious Violence Core Priority Group; and
- A request was made for the Crime and Disorder Committee part of the meeting to be considered earlier on the agenda.

RESOLVED

1. That the report on the work of the Safe Lincolnshire Partnership’s Lincolnshire Women’s Strategy: Preventing Women and Girls at Risk of Entering the Criminal Justice System presented be received and that the Committee’s satisfaction on the activities undertaken to date to demonstrate the efforts of the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership to produce a strategy in support of women and girls that experience adverse situations and exhibit complex need be recorded.
2. That the comments made in relation to the report be received and be taken into consideration by relevant officers and Portfolio holders.

The Committee considered a report from Clare Newborn, Head of Community Safety, which provided the Committee with a summary of Prevent activity in Lincolnshire during 2022/23, and the intentions for the coming year, to ensure that members were sighted on Prevent as a statutory duty.

The Chairman invited Richard Clare, Strategic Prevent Lead, Safer Communities and Clare Newborn, Head of Community Safety to present the item.

The report summarised the background behind the UK's continuing threat of terrorism; Lincolnshire Prevent and its effective leadership and governance and the work it was doing with its partners, to deter people away from terrorism and extremism, and meet its Prevent Duty, which included on-line resilience; community engagement and awareness raising; learning and development; communications; Channel; and national developments.

The Committee was advised that national developments were likely to result from the Independent Review of Prevent throughout 2023, and reassurance was given that the Council's strong Prevent partnership arrangements locally and regionally would ensure Lincolnshire was in a strong position to respond.

During consideration of this item, the following comments were noted:

- Clarification was given that the figures shown on page 105 of the report pack relating to Prevent courses related to individuals, who could be members of staff, parents, or members of council staff. The Committee noted that schools were offered the awareness training from the Council. It was noted that the commitment was that every secondary school in the County would have training delivered face to face to suit their diary needs.
- Confirmation was given that Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) training was only delivered to LCC staff and commissioned services. The Committee noted that Universities and Colleges did not fall into this remit. It was however highlighted that the service did work closely with them in this regard. It was noted that in the last 12 months training had been delivered twice to students at the university undertaking health and social care, as it was thought that it was important that those particular students understood Prevent;
- The importance of a development day available for all elected members in Lincolnshire. Officers agreed to take the suggestion to the Prevent Steering Group; and
- The Committee was advised that the Prevent Officer was part of the Sub-Group around the Community cohesion relating to RAF Scampton and that the sub-group were aware of some far-right groups that had already come to Lincolnshire in as a result of this.

The Chairman extended his thanks to the presenters.

RESOLVED

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1. That the Annual Review of Prevent report presented be received and that the Committees satisfaction on the activities undertaken to mitigate the continuing treat from terrorism and to raise awareness across a variety of third sector organisations, schools and local communities be recorded.
2. That the comments and suggestions made during debate be taken into consideration by relevant officers and portfolio holders.

The meeting closed at 12.56 pm