

**PUBLIC PROTECTION AND COMMUNITIES
 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
 19 SEPTEMBER 2023**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR N H PEPPER (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors P A Skinner (Vice-Chairman), Mrs J Brockway, A Dani, K E Lee, E J Sneath, T R Ashton and N Sear.

Councillors: L A Cawrey (Executive Councillor Fire and Rescue and Cultural Services), C Matthews (Executive Support Councillor MHS Liaison, Integrated Care System, Registration and Coroners), A P Maughan (Executive Support Councillor Fire and Rescue and Cultural Services) attended the meeting as observers remotely, via Teams.

D McNally (Executive Councillor Waste and Trading Standards), S P Roe (Executive Support Councillor Children's Services, Community Safety, Procurement and Migration) and Mrs S Woolley (Executive Councillor NHS Liaison, Integrated Care System, Registration and Coroners) attended the meeting as observers.

Officers in attendance:-

Steven Batchelor (Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership Senior Manager), Mark Baxter (Chief Fire Officer), James Chapple (Head of Registration, Celebratory and Coroners Services), Katrina Cope (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Glen Garrod (Executive Director - Adult Care and Community Wellbeing), Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer), Mark Keal (Head of Trading Standards), Clare Newborn (Head of Community Safety), Martyn Parker (Assistant Director Public Protection), Lee Sirdifield (Assistant Director – Corporate), Kathryn Smith (Stay Safe Coordinator) and Eleanor Baumber (Public Engagement Manager).

23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M R Clarke, N F Clarke, W H Gray, A M Key and Mrs A M Austin.

It was reported that, under Regulation 13 of the Local Government (Committee and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, Councillors N Sear and T R Ashton had been appointed as replacement members for Councillors M R Clarke and N F Clarke respectively, for this meeting only.

24 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations of members' interest were received.

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25 MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC PROTECTION AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON 25 JULY 2023

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 25 July 2023 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

26 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND CHIEF OFFICERS

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman extended thanks to Councillor A N Stokes for all his support and commitment as the Committee's Vice-Chairman for the past six years and wished him well in his new role as the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

The Executive Councillor for Fire and Rescue Services and Cultural Services advised the Committee that a United Kingdom Rescue Organisations Festival of Rescue event had taken place at venues across Lincoln and Newark. It was highlighted that 31 teams (700 firefighters) had taken part and the event had been a fantastic showcase for Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue and for the wider county.

No Chief Officer announcements were received.

27 REGISTRATION AND CELEBRATORY SERVICES REPORT

Consideration was given to a report from James Chapple, Head of Registration, Celebratory and Coroners Services, which invited the Committee to review and comment on the progress and performance of the Registration and Celebratory Service.

It was highlighted that the Registration Service had made significant progress in service delivery, modernisation, and digitisation during 2022/23. Reference was made to the new IT system which allowed for online customer appointment bookings of birth, death, and notice appointments. It was highlighted that this had been well received by the public.

Reference was also made to: the online bookings for weddings and civil partnerships being introduced later in the year; the introduction of a new feedback mechanism via the Council's Let's Talk Lincolnshire platform; and that the Medical Examiner roll out continued across the county, which would provide greater scrutiny of the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death. It was noted that this was due to become statutory in 2024; that the number of birth registrations had increased, and confirmation was given that appointment availability across the county remained very good and that there was no backlogs relating to birth registration; there had been an increase in demand for bookings for weddings and civil partnerships; and that legislation to allow for telephone birth and death registration had been delayed.

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

- Confirmation was given that a hybrid model was operated for all the services which allowed for online and telephone contact. It was highlighted that a lot of customers preferred the online option;
- One member expressed concern regarding the registering of a death via the telephone and the implications of fraud. The Committee was advised that the process was to be implemented by the Home Office and would meet public protection and fraud measures. Reassurance was given that with the National Medical Examiner Scheme there would be even greater scrutiny of the cause of deaths;
- It was noted that a Baby Naming Ceremony allowed parents who did not choose to have their baby christened to have a non-statutory ceremony. It was noted that these were becoming more popular and that was one of the reasons Lincolnshire wanted to introduce them;
- An explanation was provided as to the role of the Medical Examiner;
- That the target for death registrations was not being met. It was noted that registration was currently within five days, and that nationally the target was going to be reviewed as part of the National Medical Examiner Scheme. The Committee was advised that the service was doing everything they could to meet the target;
- It was felt that staff would welcome telephone registration. The Committee noted that the same number of staff were still needed to complete the volume of registrations received. It was highlighted that telephone registration provided better access for members of the public who were unable to access a registration office.

The Chairman on behalf of the Committee extended thanks to the Head of Registration, Celebratory and Coroners Services for his presentation.

RESOLVED

1. That the comments highlighted by the Committee on the progress and performance of the service be received.
2. That satisfaction be recorded with the performance of the Registration and Celebratory Service.
3. That a progress update on the Registration and Celebratory Service be received in 12 months' time.

28 INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2020 - 2024 - YEARLY UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report from Mark Baxter, Chief Fire Officer, which provided the Committee with details of the annual progress on the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) for 2020/2024.

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The Committee was reminded of the background to the report; the challenges encountered by the service over the last year; and the performance made against each of the highlighted objectives detailed in the report.

The Committee noted that work was now underway in the development of the new IRMP, which was to be rebranded as the Community Risk Management Plan.

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

- The Committee was advised that a blended approach of reactive and proactive visits had been adopted, which had resulted in an increase in the number of home safety visits carried out by community safety advocates and operational crews. It was noted that the Sherman concept was adopted. It was noted further that the service worked with partners through sheltered accommodation and the Council to identify the most vulnerable, and that information sharing agreements were in place with partner agencies to be able to let the service know where vulnerable people had been identified. It was also highlighted that local teams also had their links in to local communities, and that they were encouraged to deliver open day sessions. There was recognition that there was more to be done to increase the number of vulnerable individuals supported throughout 2023/2024;
- The Committee was advised of the arrangement the fire service had with the National Farmers Union concerning accessing water at rural farms. It was highlighted the service had been able to secure dedicated adapters for all fire appliances which provided the service access to water bowsers many farmers already had on their farms. It was highlighted that this was also alongside a fire safety message on how to help themselves in the event of a fire and how to prevent fires happening in the first place;

Note: Councillor K E Lee left the meeting.

- Praise was extended to the Saxilby fire station crew for being invested with improvements, and having a strong healthy working relationship;
- That following the Grenfell Tower inquiry, the main recommendation taken on board by the service was about operational response and being prepared for such a large-scale complex incident. It was highlighted that the service had been tested by a live exercise, where it had been able to use the technology of a real incident at one of the high-rise flats in Lincoln, which had been a successful exercise;
- The Committee noted that the consultation to introduce an on-call element to the Fire Safety Inspector role was at the closing stage, and that an implementation plan to have people in place was likely to be from 1 January 2024 to the middle of July 2024;
- Confirmation was given that the 'Biker Down' programme was in the process of being rolled out in the county, and that officer training would be programmed into that training. It was however noted that the 'Biker Down' programme was more predominantly focused on members of the public; and

- The Committee was advised that following a review of the co-responder scheme, the scheme had been adapted for the service to attend only the most serious category 1 incidents.

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

RESOLVED

1. That the comments raised by the Committee in respect of this item be received.
2. That assurance be received on the information contained in the end of year Integrated Risk Management Plan performance update.

29 TRADING STANDARDS IMPACTS AND OUTCOMES ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

The Committee considered a report from Mark Keal, Head of Trading Standards, which provided details of work undertaken by the Trading Standards Service during the financial year 2022/2023, and included data submitted in the Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers annual Impacts and Outcomes return.

The Committee was advised of the background to the report; the strategic priorities for 2022/2023; the outcomes and activity against the strategic priorities in 2022/2023; supporting the local economy; promoting health and wellbeing; officer development; managing intelligence and data; and balancing the budget.

In conclusion, it was noted that the Trading Standards Service had effectively balanced competing demands on its resources to deliver positive outcomes across its strategic priorities.

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

- Thanks were extended to officers for a very detailed report;
- The Committee was advised that a closure order was a temporary measure, but the order closed the premises and prevented the premises from trading for three months. It was noted further that if the lease was reassigned during that period, the premises would not automatically reopen, as that would require an application to the court to get the order removed. It was highlighted that if trading standards felt that the lease was being passed on to someone who was going to carry on in the same line of trade, then further objections could be made at the end of the three-month period.
- The Committee was advised that the National Association of Trading Standards Officers had done some work around licensing for vapes and tobacco as it was felt that they should be licensed together;
- There was recognition that the 30% failure rate pertaining to the purchasing of vapes from 40 individual premises was disappointing. It was felt that the reason for this

was due to lack of education amongst businesses. The Committee noted that over a hundred business advice packs had been sent to potential sellers. It was noted further that where an underage individual case was identified, the individual business would be targeted;

- An explanation was provided as to how the optimity calculator worked. The Committee noted that information was provided from the national trading standards team relating to people who had been victimised by scams. This information was then passed on to local authorities as part of their monitoring. The council was then able to take information gathered from victims it visited to add into the calculation, which then worked out an overall calculation;
- Confirmation was provided that mobile units who were selling fireworks were licensed and that those licenses were provided by local district councils in whose area the seller was operating. It was noted that the license covered the health and safety aspects associated with this particular product;
- The importance of partnership working to the trading standards service, and the gathering of data from people experiencing difficulties. It was highlighted that the Committee would be receiving a report at its 31 October 2023 meeting relating to scams and fraud, which would also be detailing the collective efforts of the trading standards team, Lincolnshire Police and the Community Safety team in this regard; and
- With regard to scams in Lincolnshire, it was felt that Lincolnshire was probably not too different to other areas. It was however highlighted that isolation and loneliness did play a part in scams, as sometimes this contact was the only contact older people received. It was noted that work was being done to educate carers and other organisations who met those who were isolated, so that visits could be made, and some face-to-face advice provided. The Committee noted further that 30% of the population of Lincolnshire were over the age of 65 and were therefore likely to be scammed. The Committee was advised that from a public health perspective that older people who had been the victims of scams were 2.4 times more likely to enter residential care as a result.

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

RESOLVED

1. That the comments raised in relation to this item be received.
2. That assurance be received on the performance and delivery of the Trading Standards Service in 2022/23.

30 SERVICE LEVEL REPORTING AGAINST THE SUCCESS FRAMEWORK 2023-24 - QUARTER 1

The Committee considered a report from Martyn Parker, Assistant Director – Public Protection, Mark Baxter, Chief Fire Officer, Nicole Hilton, Assistant Director – Communities, Steven Batchelor, Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership Senior Manager and Lee Sirdifield,

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Assistant Director - Corporate, which summarised the Service Level Performance against the Success Framework 2023/2024 for Quarter 1 for Community Safety, Trading Standards, Fire Safety, Libraries and Heritage, Road Safety and Volunteers.

Mark Keal, Head of Trading Standards and Eleanor Baumber, Public Engagement Manager were also in attendance for this item.

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

Community Safety

- How success was being measured with regards to domestic abuse cases. It was noted that the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) was supporting 198 new cases and 85 repeat clients. It was highlighted that MARAC was currently operating virtually and that regular monitoring of data and process was in place. The Committee was advised that reporting metrics would be available by the end of the calendar year and that a further report would be presented to the Committee in this regard.

Trading Standards

- Some concerns were raised regarding the effectiveness of three month closure orders. The Committee was advised that having a closure order was maybe not ideal, but it was an improvement, as previously, some traders would restock and start trading the day after. However, with the closure order the premises were closed for three months which prevented anyone trading from the premises for that period. It was also highlighted that further closure orders could be applied for, following the initial three months when it could be proven that further illegal activity was taking place. Some praise was extended to the recent presence of large signs which advised the public that the premises had been closed by the county council. Officers confirmed that the feedback regarding the signs from other local business and members of the public had been very positive. It was also reported that work was being done with landlords with regard to who they were renting their premises to and where there were repeat offenders. It was also highlighted that the team were currently investigating 20 cases and that there were a further 13 cases waiting to go to court regarding illicit tobacco; and
- One member's personal experience of a member of the public buying a large quantity of vapes. The member agreed to speak to officers after the meeting.

Fire Safety

- The Committee was advised (in response to a recent article which ranked Lincolnshire as being 34th) that the response times for Lincolnshire had been improving over the last two years, and that when aligning with like for like services, Lincolnshire was faster than the national average. It was highlighted that the tolerances within the times were very minimal, just a matter of seconds;

- Percentage of building regulation applications responded to within 15 days. This target indicator was behind target at 88.89. It was reported that the reasons for this shortfall were because several staff from the protection team had left the organisation and it would take a while for the newly recruited staff to be trained to take on the role. The Committee noted that it was hoped that the trend would not continue into the next quarter;
- The increase in the number of dwelling fires. The Committee noted that the service was currently trying to address behavioural change i.e. moving away from deep fat fryers, and also focussing on learning from national campaigns and social media campaigns to try and educate people on the dangers of cooking in the home. It was noted further that local crews also highlighted this when completing their home safety visits; and
- Confirmation was given that the fire service did not link directly with letting agencies regarding the provision of fire-alarms. It was however noted that the service had targeted campaigns in certain areas and community groups highlighting fire safety issues. Officers agreed to look into the matter further.

Road Safety

- The Committee was advised that speeding was affecting a lot of communities in Lincolnshire. It was highlighted that this was one of the biggest issues the Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership had complaints about, and the Partnership was doing all it could to try and improve the situation. The first thing to be done would be a seven day survey of the traffic; this provided details of the speeds of all vehicles travelling through a particular location, which then allowed the Partnership to decide the type of intervention required. The range of options available included: fixed cameras; mobile speed cameras; liaising with Lincolnshire Police; and undertaking activity with local communities to join the Community Speed Watch Scheme; and
- It was reported that data for the lower figure in quarter one for people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions did not indicate any clear commonality or pattern. It was however noted that there were seasonal variations in the data. The Committee was advised that at a recent Road Safety Summit meeting hosted by the Lincolnshire Police and Crime Commissioner regarding best practices, it was evident that Lincolnshire was one of the leaders for road safety. There was however recognition that numbers still remained high due to the specific challenges in the county.

Volunteering

- The Committee noted that the sector was now seeing a general increase in the number of people accessing volunteering opportunities. There was however still some hard to recruit volunteer areas, particularly around the provision of advice; and
- That the annual volunteering report had highlighted that there was a fatigue element of volunteering, and that survey work being undertaken with volunteers would help to understand their ambition and commitment. It was highlighted through the

survey, that cost pressures and time commitment were having an impact on volunteering.

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

RESOLVED

1. That the comments raised in relation to this item be received.
2. That satisfaction be recorded with Public Protection and Communities Service Level Performance for Quarter 1 of 2023/24.

31 PUBLIC PROTECTION AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report from Tracy Johnson, Senior Scrutiny Officer, which invited the Committee to review the work programme, as detailed on pages 70 to 75 of the report pack and to highlight any additional scrutiny activity which could be included for consideration in the work programme.

The Senior Scrutiny Officer briefed the Committee on the items scheduled to be considered at the 31 October meeting.

RESOLVED

That the work programme as detailed on pages 70 to 75 of the report pack be approved.

32 STAY SAFE PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL UPDATE

SITTING AS THE CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Consideration was given to a report from Clare Newborn, Head of Community Safety and Kathryn Smith, Stay Safe Coordinator, which provided the Committee with an update on the achievements of the Stay Safe Partnership during the course of the 2022/2023 academic year and the plans for the coming year.

Reference was made to the background of the Stay Safe Partnership; the offer available to schools; the reach of the Stay Safe Preventative Education; increased capacity to do more; parental engagement; impact and effectiveness and evidence led intervention.

In conclusion, the Committee noted that the Stay Safe Partnership continued to evolve to meet need, and that it was considered to be the primary vehicle for preventative education in Lincolnshire, combining the efforts of a range of organisations and services for the benefit of the county's children and young people.

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

- The Committee was advised that the Partnership was very responsive to the needs of young people and that need changed year on year. It was highlighted that since Covid-19, learning was now back in the classroom and the sessions were interactive, with different scenarios and topics, along with questions that needed to be answered. It was highlighted that prior to the end of each session, there was a recap of what had been covered to ensure that all learning points were taken on board;
- It was noted that all the survey responses were taken on the day of the session. It was felt that was probably why responses were higher. It was highlighted that the responses would be analysed and that any information highlighted would be shared with the Education Sub-Group. An invitation was extended to all members of the Committee to attend a session at a school in their locality to observe the team;
- The Committee noted that from the surveys, young people had highlighted they were worried about older groups of teenagers in a park; they did not like litter or walking down a street where there was lots of pubs with people outside drinking and smoking, or dark spaces. It was highlighted that issues raised from the surveys were fed back into local neighbourhood policing teams, which then showed to the young people that their voices could make a difference;
- Thanks were extended to officers for an excellent report;
- The need for communication, mutual respect and trust between parents and children. It was highlighted that the parent workshops provided tips on how to handle different scenarios, having early conversations with children regarding for instances on-line usage, and putting rules in place at the onset to prevent bad habits;

Note: Councillor E J Sneath left the meeting at 12.16pm.

- That the drug and alcohol awareness workshops, not only advised of the effects of alcohol and drugs, it also provides guidance to the young people on how to safeguard themselves. It was highlighted that the team did get disclosure information around families which was then passed on to safeguarding teams who were able to then provide support to the family and signpost them for further support if required;
- Reassurance was provided that young people were being educated as to how to safeguard themselves in life;
- The Committee noted that most phones and IT devices had Apps that were available for parents to put limits on screen time and limit access to social media sites; and
- The additional areas students would like to learn about as highlighted on page 82 of the report pack. It was noted that concerning sexual education, this had been referred to public health, who were looking at the Lincolnshire Integrated Sexual Health Services at the moment. The Stay Safe Partnership would consider the other areas highlighted and include in their directory.

Note: Councillor A Danni left the meeting at 12.22pm.

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

RESOLVED

1. That the comments raised by the Committee in relation to this item be received.
2. That support be extended to the continued delivery of the Stay Safe Partnership project in the proposed format.

The meeting closed at 12.24 pm