

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 15 MAY 2015

Statement from: Councillor P A Robinson, Executive Councillor for Fire & Rescue, Emergency Planning, Trading Standards, Equality and Diversity

The past year has been challenging across the range of community safety services. Financial cuts have meant reduced manpower across the board, demanded new ways of working and, where possible, a more commercial approach to some services. For instance, our Fire and Rescue Service annual funding was reduced by 5%. Savings were found by changing manning arrangements on fire appliances and fire stations, and 'Lincolnshire FRS Commercial' has been established to provide fire training and services to paying clients.

Lincolnshire Trading Standards have followed this same path, whilst achieving good results in fighting 'legal highs' and smuggled cigarettes.

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 has now passed into law. At East Midlands Council level a panel has been established, as an offshoot of the Regional Strategic Migration Board, to co-ordinate local authority and charitable bodies' activities to support the police-led campaign to counter trafficking and slavery, and provide a forum to share information on the rehabilitation of victims. Our county council staff have an important role to play in being alert to the signs of trafficking and slavery in the community, and passing their suspicions to the police.

Our Chief Fire Officer, Dave Ramscar, was deployed to Nepal on 27 April with the UK International Search and Rescue (ISAR) Team.

Fire and Rescue

Fire Ambulance Project

The joint project between Lincolnshire Fire Service and East Midlands Ambulance Service continues to draw interest from around the country as an innovative approach to delivering better and more effective outcomes for Lincolnshire communities.

To date, the three fire stations taking part in the pilot have attended more than 500 medical emergencies and transported over 130 people to hospital. Work is currently underway to evaluate the overall impact, both in terms of outcomes and the social value of the project.

New Fire Stations for Louth & Sleaford

Work is progressing well on the new fire station for Louth. The residential accommodation block for the whole-time firefighters has now been completed, and the crew is responding from there during night-time hours. The remainder of the station is expected to be completed towards the end of August.

In addition to Louth, the authority is planning to build a new fire station in Sleaford. A planning application has been submitted to develop the existing council site for a joint fire station and county council office accommodation. It is hoped that work on

the site will commence later in the year, with completion planned for the summer of 2016.

Fire Fleet and Maintenance Contract.

Following the termination of the previous arrangements for the provision and maintenance of the Fire Service Fleet, the future planning has been completed. The replacement fire vehicles and equipment have gone into service and our firefighters are now provided with some of the most modern vehicles and equipment in the country. A contract to maintain the fire engines and equipment has been awarded to a local company, Lindum Plant, who have been carrying out this service successfully for a number of years.

Emergency Planning

Lincolnshire Emergency Planning service(EP) won its 4th national resilience award for the 'Safe Haven' project - strengthening community resilience through education by working with pupils to develop plans to use their own schools as emergency evacuation ('rest') centres.

The Ebola outbreak, which is believed to have affected 24,000 victims (with over 10,000 cases resulting in death), involved our EP team in UK contingency planning, and resulted in the postponement of Exercise Cygnus - a planned UK national exercise based on a national pandemic. The exercise will be re-run as a local exercise 'Black Swan' in October 2015.

Following the fire at South Oxfordshire District Council, EP has run a series of business continuity 'challenge' events examining what would be done in Lincolnshire in the event of a similar loss of premises, and to draw up contingency plans. Our Council's capacity to deal with prolonged emergencies or business disruption has been enhanced by training all senior managers in the multi-agency coordination and response and recovery roles at strategic and tactical levels.

Trading Standards

The final quarter of 2014-15 has seen the culmination of several court cases brought by Trading Standards in their work to protect Lincolnshire from rogue traders. These include a case of Serious Safety breaches, associated with the sale of part worn tyres, and a case involving a father and two sons who were all charged with numerous Trade Mark offences.

Domestic Abuse

To resolve a gap in our multi agency guidance around domestic abuse, a draft protocol is being produced to provide practical guidance to staff on consistent best practice when working with individuals in abusive relationships. It also includes guidance for managers on the 10 standards in the Domestic Abuse Charter that all agencies are expected to meet. The document is due to be launched at an event aimed at practitioners and supervisors, with key speakers and workshops designed to develop understanding around some of the more complex issues related to domestic abuse.