

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 15 MAY 2015

**Statement from: Councillor C N Worth, Executive Councillor for
Libraries, Heritage, Culture, Registration and Coroners
Service**

Libraries

Future Delivery

Following the Council's Executive decision around the future of library services provision in Lincolnshire, all 40 eligible communities have been written to asking them to notify us of their intention to proceed with the community hub model. The response has been generally positive, with only three communities indicating there is currently no live hub initiative. For a community that has no intention of implementing the hub model, then mobile library provision will be made.

Several meetings have been carried out with community groups, and we continue to support them to take control of their community hubs. We have developed a three staged approach to the implementation of the community hub model - the three phases will take place between July and the end of September 2015.

Some changes to Tier 1 and 2 library opening times came into effect after Easter.

Following a successful market engagement day on 11 March, a Europe-wide procurement for a suitable partner to operate the service from April 2016 commenced on 16 April. Until a new partner is in place, the in-house service will ensure the services continue to be provided to a high quality for customers. In the meantime, the service continues to develop and on 1 April the Library Service took over the operation of the library at HMP Ranby from Nottinghamshire County Council.

Having worked through the findings of a judicial review of our 2013 decision, and begun the work necessary to deliver a new model through service changes and a new requirement to tender the service, we find ourselves subject to further challenge. The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport is minded not to intervene as he found no grounds to inquire into our new model of service – however, we have now received a further judicial review. This is incredibly frustrating, as it is causing uncertainty for staff and community groups who are clearly keen to press on to ensure the future of the libraries, and release the very real potential of vibrant, multi-purpose community hubs in our communities.

I will continue to address each barrier that is put in place to deliver the best library service the Council can afford, and hope to report full implementation of the new service model during the coming year.

Heritage & Culture

Lincoln Castle Revealed

Lincoln Castle was revealed as planned on 1 April 2015, and proved to be as popular as we anticipated, with over 17,000 visitors in its first two weeks of

operation. Although media coverage for this soft opening had a local and regional focus, the many media familiarisation visits we have hosted in recent months have enabled us to attract some national and international coverage, including the BBC News website, Rough Guides, The Times, Guardian, Financial Times, Independent, Daily Telegraph, Daily Mirror, Sunday Mirror, Mail on Sunday, Britain magazine, My Weekly, The Lady, Mature Times, The Times of India, St Paul Pioneer Press in Minnesota, Toronto Star, For the Love of Travel (New Zealand) and Visit Britain.

Since 1 April, the castle has taken £212,000 in ticket sales against our annual target of £883,000. The total number of tickets sold during the period is 33,941, against an annual target of 111,630 (30% of target).

The official opening of the castle, wall walks, prison and the David P J Ross Magna Carta Vault, which houses Lincoln Cathedral's copy of Magna Carta and the Charter of the Forest, is due to take place on 8 June. This is a week ahead of the national celebrations to commemorate the 800th Anniversary of the sealing of Magna Carta on 15 June 1215 at Runnymede. This will present a fantastic opportunity to thank the many funders, donors, sponsors and supporters, including the Heritage Lottery Fund, European Regional Development Fund and Historic Lincoln Trust for all their help and support with this £22 million project.

The excellent events programme includes a number of historical re-enactments, the Magna Party featuring Diversity on 13 June, Horrible Histories – Barmy Britain Part 2 on 14 June, 1000 Years of Traditional Crafts on 4-5 July, Jools Holland on 11 July, a number of outdoor theatre and film events and the Steampunk Festival over the August Bank Holiday weekend.

Resilience Fund

The County Council has been awarded £125,400 from Arts Council England's Resilience Fund to undertake creative consultation in relation to Heritage and Culture collections and assets in the county. The project will give local people the chance to share their views on the county's heritage, including which elements are most important to them, how they would like to engage with them, and what from the present and recent past should be preserved for future generations. The findings will be used to develop the County Council's approach to protecting and promoting local culture and heritage, using the information to inform our Collections Development Policy and Strategy and move away from an 'expert' led approach to these matters towards a more community-focused approach to deciding what is important. There will be two phases of consultation: an initial scoping phase, followed by a wider creative engagement with the people of Lincolnshire.

Museum of Lincolnshire Life shortlisted for the East Midlands Heritage – Innovation Award

This award recognises the successful implementation of innovative practice into a museum – to be shortlisted, the museum must demonstrate a high level of imagination, creativity that would be recognised as outstanding at a national level. The Museum of Lincolnshire Life has been shortlisted for its cutting edge, multi-layered digital interpretation to the Museum's traditional style displays, using augmented reality (AR), interactive projections and a hand-held multimedia guide.

The Museum worked with a cohort of children and young people to ensure the final product appealed to the younger 'techno savvy' generation.

The field of AR was still in its infancy and the project, in a regional and traditional museum context, carried a high level of risk. However the project was equally as much about the process of delivery as about the final product and it was seen as an opportunity to share our experience with the wider museum community. Funding came from ACE (£223,000), Lincolnshire County Council (£20,000) and the Royal Lincolnshire Regimental Trust (£10,000).

Registration, Celebratory and Coroners Services

The Registration Service has successfully implemented changes to legislation in response to the Immigration Act 2014. This came into force on 2 March 2015 and one of the primary changes is the extension of the notice period for marriages from 14 to 28 days. The service was proactive in contacting couples both in the UK and abroad to ensure these changes did not impact on their legal requirement to give notice of their marriage. All promotional material has been amended to reflect these changes. The service continues to report any concerns regarding potential sham marriages and in the first quarter of 2015, worked with the regional immigration team in relation to a few ceremonies.

The anniversary celebrations of the Magna Carta are being recognised with a special Citizenship Ceremony on 15 June. Over the course of the next few months new citizens will receive a replica of the Magna Carta as a celebratory gift.

In relation to the Coroners Service, work continues with the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguarding (DoLS) team. This is to ensure all deaths, where the deceased is subject to a DoLS order, are investigated in a timely manner. As part of continued partnership working with funeral directors, the service has facilitated training sessions for DoLS. Work has also been ongoing with the Council's funeral directors in completing a number of inspections on premises and vehicles as part of the contract management arrangements. This has been beneficial both for funeral directors and the Council in terms of quality assurance and partnership working. In addition, an Infection Prevention Control document has been drafted specifically aimed at funeral directors.

IT provision for the Coroners service is being reviewed, and a number of options are being developed to support both case management and access to information for the Coroner's Officers.

During April 2015, the contract for Mortuary and Post Mortem Services were re-tendered. The existing contracts established in 2011 have worked well and the service is looking to re-tender these arrangements to ensure a high quality, timely and sensitive service.

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