

## **COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 18 SEPTEMBER 2015**

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

### **Libraries Services**

On 28 July the High Court made a decision following a further Judicial Review of our decision to change library provision in Lincolnshire.

The three grounds proposed in the claim against the Council were all found to be without sound legal argument. As such they were dismissed by the Court without further action being required. At the time of writing, the detailed judgement has just been received and is now being studied. We will now be able to move forward with some certainty and support local people to use our new services effectively.

The Community Hub roll-out programme has commenced. At the time of writing six libraries have transferred across to the new service delivery model (Sutton on Sea, Caistor, Scotter, Birchwood, Ermine and Bracebridge Health) and a further twenty two will transfer in the coming months. Just three communities, Washingborough, Skellingthorpe and Coningsby/Tattershall, have decided not to pursue the Community Hub route and these communities will receive a mobile service from October onwards.

Successful Community Hub applications were received from six communities currently without a County Council static library (Barrowby, Heckington, Ingoldmells, Navenby, Sutton Bridge and Swineshead) and library colleagues will be working with communities to bring these to fruition in the autumn.

This has, of course, been a period of fundamental change for the library service with many greatly valued colleagues leaving the service after many years of dedicated service and I would like to take this opportunity to put on record my gratitude and appreciation for all their hard work and commitment to the County Council over the years.

### **Heritage & Culture**

#### **Lincoln Castle Revealed**

Lincoln Castle was officially opened by HRH Princess Anne on 8 June in one of the best Royal opening events that the county has seen for many a year. The castle has had a fantastic summer with record numbers of visitors passing through its doors and enjoying the experience – in excess of 161,000 to date.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the staff at the Castle who have worked tirelessly over recent months to deliver such a great programme of events with such positive feedback from visitors.

#### **Lincolnshire's Great Exhibition**

A few weeks after Princess Anne's visit, HRH the Duke of Gloucester toured the Castle, Cathedral libraries, Collection and Usher Gallery to open Lincolnshire's Great

Exhibition. Like all those who have visited the exhibition, he was very impressed by the fabulous contents and glorious catalogues which have been assembled by officers and the exhibition's guest curators Dr Alan Borg and Jeff James.

As with Lincoln Castle Revealed, considerable thanks must also be extended to Lord Cormack and the Historic Lincoln Trust for making the exhibition possible.

Both Lincoln Castle Revealed and Lincolnshire's Great Exhibition are a great basis to take forward the future of heritage in the county.

### **Registration, Celebratory and Coroner's Services**

The Registration Service has been particularly busy since the beginning of the year and in particular over the summer months with a large number of ceremonies. There are now over 100 venues licensed for civil ceremonies offering a wide choice of location, price and ambiance. Sadly, the volume of deaths this year has been higher than normal, however, additional appointments have been made available to meet this demand. To monitor its performance, the service has completed its annual customer satisfaction survey during the month of August and results should be available in September.

Lincolnshire County Council, in liaison with HM Senior Coroners for Central and South Lincolnshire, intend to award contracts for Mortuary and Post Mortem services in line with Coroners and Justice Act 2009 (c. 25) to empath (East Midlands Pathology Services). Empath is an organisation created jointly by Nottingham University Hospitals and the University Hospitals of Leicester NHS trusts to provide a standalone pathology service across both those NHS organisations and to the wider East Midlands.

In practice this means that mortuary services and post mortems will continue to be completed at Queen's Medical Centre Nottingham for Central Lincolnshire cases. In the south of the county there will be a change of provider from Peterborough and Stamford (P&S) Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust in Peterborough to empath at Leicester Royal Infirmary with effect from 01 September 2015.

A robust and competitive procurement exercise has been completed. P&S Hospitals have delivered a sensitive and dedicated service, however, they have been unsuccessful in their tender application on this occasion. We would like to thank them for the commitment and dedication over the last four years and recognise the very valuable and much appreciated service that they have provided.

We are looking to work with all agencies on a smooth transition of service.

The Coroner's Service continues to evolve with the further rollout of an e-form for referrals by hospital medical practitioners to the Coroner. This has been well received and will be rolled out to GP surgeries in the next month.