

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 18 DECEMBER 2015

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

FIRE AND RESCUE

New Chief Fire Officer/Deputy Chief

At the end of November, the Chief Fire Officer, Dave Ramscar, retired after serving nearly 32 years with Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue. Dave joined the service as a probationary Fire Fighter in April 1984, when George Moore was Chief Fire Officer for Lincolnshire. Following a series of promotions and varying roles within the service he was appointed as Chief Fire Officer in April 2011.

He has been based in Gainsborough, Boston and Lincoln during those years and was awarded his Good Conduct Medal in 2005. Dave has also been active at both national and international levels, most recently leading the UK Urban Search and Rescue team in Nepal during the earthquake disaster. At the recent Excellence in Fire and Emergency Awards 2015, his efforts were recognised with a Lifetime Achievement Award.

Dave has provided dedication, professionalism and good leadership to the Fire and Rescue Service, to the County Council and to the people of Lincolnshire over those years and on behalf of us all I would like to record formally our thanks to Dave and wish him well in his retirement.

Nick Borrill is now acting Chief Fire Officer and Mick Green acting Deputy Chief Fire Officer until a review of the senior management of the service has been undertaken and completed over the next few months. I welcome the experience they both already bring to Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue and wish them well in the new duties and responsibilities they will be undertaking.

Fire Ambulance Project

I mentioned in my last statement that our Fire Service and East Midlands Ambulance Service had been nominated for a prestigious Health Service Journal 'Value in Healthcare Award' for their work on the Joint Ambulance Conveyance Project (JACP). I am pleased to report that they were declared winners at the recent awards ceremony with the judges commenting that '*the project was very innovative and nationally significant*' and that '*it addresses a public sector efficiency challenge and acute service*'. In addition to this award, the JACP also won in the 'Innovation of the Year' category at the Excellence in Fire and Emergency Awards 2015.

The total number of conveyances to hospital by the three pilot fire stations now stands at over 300, with the fire ambulances continuing to make an effective contribution to reducing risk in our communities. Work is ongoing to assess the outcomes from the pilot, and will identify potential options for how the project could be taken forward.

Caythorpe Recycling Centre Exercise

An exercise was held at the Caythorpe Recycling Centre on 19 November 2015 to test the multi-agency response to a potential large fire. Key aims of the exercise included reviewing the effectiveness of joint working, assessing and mitigating the impact on the local community and testing communications. The exercise was well attended by both agency partners and local councils. The initial feedback indicated that the majority of objectives had been met. The exercise was conducted in response to the recycling fire at Barkston Heath in July and provided the opportunity for all partners to discuss and build on the lessons learned during that incident.

Long Service Awards

On 12 November 2015, the service held its annual Long Service Awards Ceremony at the Lincolnshire Showground. In addition to the seven recipients who received their Long Service and Good Conduct medals, recognising their 20 years of meritorious service and good conduct, three members of the service received their County Council long service 20 years' certificate, eight members their 30 years' certificate and Brian Walsingham, one of our retained firefighters from Corby Glen, his 50 years' service certificate.

EMERGENCY PLANNING

The exercise season continues with Exercise Barnes Wallis (a community exercise demonstrating a local response working alongside emergency responders and colleagues from the voluntary sector) and Exercise John Knight, (a test with neighbouring counties of our traffic management strategy for an east coast flood event). The team is grateful to those members who have shown an interest in observing these exercises.

The complete loss of Council premises in Oxfordshire due to an arson attack earlier this year has focussed attention on business continuity arrangements. Work is being undertaken to ensure we can quickly restore those services most critical to public safety and wellbeing, relocate staff or find alternative ways of working. All eight authorities in the County have undertaken a 'BC challenge' event run by the Head of Emergency Planning and Business Continuity identifying a number of areas where mutual aid and shared solutions can be strengthened.

The devastating floods of 2013 showed that coastal flooding still represents a serious risk to the east coast of Lincolnshire. Following this, the emergency services agreed that evacuation routes would help lead people to safety and allow them to focus on those in danger. Thirteen routes were identified to provide residents with a quick and safe route to higher-ground. The signs have an 'ER' logo in a red box and in the event of a serious flood local residents and tourists are advised to follow them.

TRADING STANDARDS

Since my last statement there have been further developments regarding the sale and supply of e-cigarettes. The Nicotine Inhaling Products (Age of Sale and Proxy Purchasing) Regulations 2015 came into force on 1 October 2015. These prohibit the sale of nicotine inhaling products to persons aged under 18. Trading Standards carried out a test purchasing operation to assess awareness of and compliance with the regulations.

Twenty test purchase attempts were made by our under 18 year old volunteer for e-liquids containing nicotine that resulted in eleven sales. The operation was based in Lincoln. All sellers were issued with a warning notice that will be followed by a warning letter containing guidance on the new legislation and a retest of all those that failed.

- Number of supermarkets visited – 3; all passed
- Number of dedicated Vape shops visited – 3; all failed.
- Number of petrol stations visited. – 3; two failed.
- Number of newsagents/Independent shops visited – 11; 6 Failed

As with underage sales of tobacco, a retailer found guilty of selling e-cigarettes to under 18s could be fined up to £2,500.

We will raise awareness in the retail sector that this is now a criminal offence and Trading Standards will be responding to any complaints that such products are being sold to children.

Additionally regarding e-cigarettes, a consumer was badly burnt when an e-cigarette battery he had in his pocket short circuited and overheated. The distributor of the batteries has been contacted and the design of battery has been taken off sale pending Trading Standards testing and further safety enquiries.

There have been a number of high value doorstep crime frauds, relating to building repairs, inflicted on vulnerable elderly residents in recent weeks. Trading Standards are working with the police to bring the offenders to justice and to safeguard the residents involved. It is disappointing that there has been an upsurge in such activity only weeks after the Trading Standards Crown Court case where Anthony and Jack Newbury pleaded guilty to a series of fraud offences relating to misdescriptions of, over pricing of and poor workmanship on driveways sold to elderly residents of Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire.

The matter has been adjourned to 1 December 2015 to allow pre-sentence reports to be prepared.

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