

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 15 SEPTEMBER 2016

Statement from: Councillor B Young, Executive Councillor for Community Safety and People Management

CRIME REDUCTION

Safer Communities

The County Council continues to contribute to the multi-agency response to addressing community safety alongside the police, district councils and health organisations, in addition to many other partners including probation trust, community rehabilitation company, prisons and 3rd sector organisations.

I am pleased to report that the most recent data suggests an encouraging reduction in the adult reoffending rate within Lincolnshire. The work being undertaken within the Assisting Rehabilitation through Collaboration (ARC) project has shown a positive trajectory in addressing the needs of the most complex individuals who have a significant impact on the reoffending rate. In recent months we have seen an expansion of the ARC cohort and this will be further complemented with the collaboration and co-location with a new project to address the issue of homelessness.

The County Council continues to play a key role in tackling sexual violence and abuse. It was instrumental in running the second #NOMORE campaign which took place during Sexual Violence and Abuse Awareness week. This time the theme was 'not asking for it'. Designed to raise awareness about sexual consent it included messages to quash the misconception that what someone is wearing is a reason for sexual assault.

With our partners we remain committed to encouraging reporting on domestic abuse and hate crime; both areas where individuals do not readily report incidents or seek early support. This is being achieved through awareness raising and by providing clear information to individuals about how to access help.

In respect of domestic abuse, the County Council is currently in the process of finalising specifications for the retendering of both the Domestic Abuse Support Service contract for standard and medium risk cases and the IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor) Service for high risk cases of domestic abuse. New contracts will commence on the 1 April 2018.

On behalf of the Anti-Social Behaviour Strategic Management Board, the County Council is leading on the procurement of a new case management system. The solution needs to enable partners to share information with the aim of effectively managing cases of anti-social behaviour, particularly repeat and vulnerable cases.

An emerging issue has been identified in relation to a national threat known as 'County Lines'. County Lines involves gangs from other areas utilising mainly the rail network to travel into Lincolnshire from other metropolitan areas. Once in the county they befriend vulnerable and substance misusers and eventually take over their property and establish one phone line (the line) in which to deal drugs from. This was identified as a cross cutting issue impacting on both the Serious & Organised Crime and Substance Misuse Strategic Management Boards and the County Council are working as part of these forums to prevent and disrupt activity in our county. Specifically a multi-agency task and finish group has been established. The first part of this work has focused on raising awareness of County Lines, how to identify concerns and who to report intelligence to. A number of frontline staff have been trained and intelligence briefings are being developed and shared with appropriate staff.

The Safer Communities service continues to co-ordinate 'Stay Safe'. The latest developments of the programme means that all secondary schools will be offered age appropriate safety and prevention inputs through interactive workshops targeted at the current threat and risk identified through community safety process. These days will be free for the schools and will involve five workshops with follow on material for the teachers to use in their own lessons. These workshops will be quality assured and controlled ensuring Lincolnshire's young people receive the correct information to make informed decisions in these important areas.

Youth Offending

In November 2016, the Youth Offending Service formally moved within the wider Children Services Directorate. The service has considered some of the initial recommendations which emerged from national the review of Youth Justice by Charlie Taylor in late 2016. One specific element of this is the creation of Joint Diversionary Panels in Lincolnshire in collaboration with Lincolnshire Police and Children Services.

The panels will enable us to provide an informed and proportionate response to offending by children and young people and the subsequent disposals. Wherever possible this will avoid unnecessary criminalisation and utilise a restorative approach and ensure victims of crime are an integral consideration. Whilst the panels are in the early stages there are some encouraging signs emerging which demonstrate excellent multi-agency working and commitment within Lincolnshire from all key partners and stakeholders.

To support this work the Children's Safeguarding Board recently signed off a county wide protocol to reduce the criminalisation of young people in residential care. This has been recognised as a key focus of the board for some time and will again ensure that we recognise the unique and complex needs of 'looked after' children and respond appropriately to their behaviour.

Finally, the service is progressing key work steams as part of Partners in Practice with the Department for Education. This is working towards a true model of integration between the Youth Offending Service and Children Services and also addressing the challenge of managing risk taking behaviour in adolescents.

TRADING STANDARDS

Trading Standards have undertaken a review of the work being carried out in partnership with Lincolnshire's Neighbourhood Policing Teams to deliver the 'Break the Cycle' project aimed at educating local residents who have been identified as engaging with scam mail.

Over 25 visits carried out in the past year which revealed that 43 residents had been regularly engaging with the scam mail with a total detriment of £273,400, or on average £10,538 per resident.

The programme has been rolled out across the county with several training sessions delivered to the neighbourhood policing teams. Over 2000 residents have already been identified as being vulnerable to this particular scam.

Trading Standards supported the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) in the response to 3 outbreaks of Avian Influenza within the County. A liaison officer was assigned to the APHA who coordinated foot patrols within the protection zone to identify non registered poultry flocks, the closure of public footpaths and road markings in conjunction with colleagues from LCC Emergency Planning, Countryside Services and Highways.

Trading Standards continue to engage with local businesses through the Primary Authority Process. 12 new businesses signed up in 2016/17, many of whom trade across the country. With current members encouraging their own suppliers to enter into similar arrangements interest remains high and the service is confident that we will see continued growth in the number of businesses seeking assured advice.

Trading Standards continue its work to tackle illicit trading, particularly tobacco, product safety and counterfeiting which has resulted in some significant results. The Service has worked with all major partners to tackle fraudulent trading including Lincolnshire Police, HMRC, Immigration and the Anti-Counterfeiting Group.

PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

Apprenticeship Reforms – Update

Background Information

As outlined in previous briefings, in 2017, the new Apprenticeship Levy was implemented from 6 April 2017 along with a number of reforms which include:

- Apprenticeships no longer being age specific
- On the proviso that any qualifications a potential candidate holds are substantially different or a lower grade than the apprenticeship, they are eligible to apply
- The introduction of apprenticeship standards that include degree, diploma or technical qualifications

Apprenticeship training has historically been undertaken using a framework qualification; these will be replaced by Apprenticeship Standards where transition is due to be completed by April 2020.

Some examples of standards currently being developed are in the following professions:

- Teacher
- Lawyer
- Social Worker

Current Status

Procurement Lincolnshire are working closely with the Adult Learning Team undertaking a procurement exercise to meet existing requirements. A further procurement exercise to meet future requirements is due to conclude in quarter three of this financial year.

Lincolnshire County Council is in the process of recruiting a number of apprentices. On conclusion of the procurement exercise, we expect to have apprenticeship providers in place by quarter four. Lincolnshire County Council is in line to achieve the 2.3% government target on apprenticeships set for the public sector.

LEGAL SERVICES

The Council is a creature of statute and can only act in accordance with its legal powers. It is subject to the courts' overriding powers of judicial review in relation to its decision making.

Almost all of the activities of the Council involve some degree of legal documentation or process. The more obvious examples include court proceedings, contracts, conveyances or leases of land and statutory orders such as Compulsory Purchase.

Legal advice therefore contributes to the management of a wide range of risks including not just legal risk but also reputational, commercial and financial risk.

It is for this reason that I have been encouraging the early involvement of Legal Services in the planning and development of Council initiatives.

Between 7th - 10th August Legal Services Lincolnshire underwent a four day assessment of its compliance with LEXCEL, the Law Society approved quality standard for practice management and client care. The assessor identified just seven minor non-compliances after a detailed examination of a random sample of files of 16 lawyers. This was considered by the assessor to be an excellent result. A number of areas of good practice were identified including induction, appraisal, risk management and file management.

This means that the Council's legal advisors will be re-accredited for a further three years giving this Council and the District partners the assurance that Legal Services Lincolnshire is run in accordance with legal industry best practice.

Work continues to address difficulties in recruiting to key areas of legal specialism. In particular, Legal Services has appointed a trainee solicitor who will start in September. They will undertake a two year training contract during which they will train in 6 areas of specialism across the range of Legal Services activity giving them a solid grounding in local authority legal work.

I am pleased to say that their first period will involve two weeks within Democratic Services giving them an introduction to the council as a political body together with detailed insight into the council's decision making and scrutiny processes and the role of elected members.

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