

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 11 MAY 2018

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

SAFER COMMUNITIES

Trading Standards

The final quarter of the financial year saw the conclusion of several Trading Standards investigations. In total eight defendants were successfully prosecuted for a range of offences relating to the sale of illicit tobacco, unsafe toys and make-up and counterfeit goods. The defendants were sentenced to a total of £1,103 in fines with a contribution to costs of £21,093.48. One defendant was imprisoned for six months having been convicted for a second time with further suspended sentences totalling eleven months to three others. In addition four defendants received community orders requiring them to complete a total of 650 hours unpaid work.

The Trading Standards Service completed its annual inspection programme targeting the sale of age restricted products. In total 64 attempts were made by volunteers tasked with purchasing tobacco, alcohol and fireworks. Over the year 14 sales were made. One business is currently under investigation for offences relating to the sale of fireworks.

The Trading Standards Service has continued to work closely with Lincolnshire Police and the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner to protect local residents at risk from financial fraud arising from scams and doorstep crime. In addition to visiting individual residents who have fallen foul of rogue traders, officers have participated in several events to educate local communities in recognising scams and crime prevention.

Routine Inspection and Sampling programmes targeting high risk premises have been completed, including specific projects looking at second-hand car sales and foreign labelled food.

Community Safety

A review into the structure and priorities for the Community Safety Partnership for Lincolnshire has been facilitated by the Community Safety Team and was concluded in the final quarter of 2017/18. The review has recommendations for a revised structure that will bring partners together to tackle a smaller number of focused priorities that have been identified through analysis and partner engagement. The areas of focus will be Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), Domestic Abuse, Reducing Offending and Serious and Organised Crime. A programme of delivery for the period 2018-2021 will now be put in place in partnership with the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lincolnshire, Lincolnshire Police, district councils, the health trusts and probation services.

To support partnership working, the Community Safety Team have facilitated the procurement of a new database to manage ASB, which will aid enforcement and help protect the most vulnerable victims.

It is estimated that 25,500 people experience domestic abuse every year in Lincolnshire. This quarter saw the commencement of a re-procurement exercise for the commissioning of services to support the victims of domestic abuse and their children; this will see an annual investment of over £800,000 into services to those who have suffered from physical, sexual, psychological or financial abuse, control or coercion. The new service providers were announced at the beginning of May, implementation work is now in full swing for the launch of the revised service on 1 August 2018.

PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

Apprenticeship Reforms

We see the government's apprenticeship reforms as central to our Workforce Development Strategy. Whilst we have started conservatively, the apprenticeship headcount has increased month-on-month. A number of training standards, that the organisation is keen to undertake are progressing in their development and we are proactively making contact with Trail Blazer leads to receive updates on the progression of standards.

We have been recognised for the excellent quality of our Business Administration Apprenticeship training and were assessed and awarded an A-rating for our Employer Provider Apprenticeship Programme by the Education and Skills Funding Agency at the start of this year. We received an award from Boston College in March in recognition of the work we do in supporting apprenticeships.

The Assessment of Care Leavers' aspirations has concluded and we have discovered that for many their desired careers sit outside of LCC and we are working with Barnados to support Care Leavers career ambitions.

We are proactively matching possible opportunities for apprenticeship training against current structures. Our main procurement of training providers has been commenced and this has generated interest from suppliers. Once the first tranche of procurement has concluded we will have a better understanding of how the current market is able to meet our workforce development needs.

LEGAL SERVICES

At the end of March 2018 Legal Services Lincolnshire (LSL) reached its ten year anniversary. The occasion was marked by a conference for existing and potential future clients at which a range of speakers from the service addressed some of the main legal issues affecting local government and the public sector more widely.

When it was first established in April 2008, LSL was a ground-breaking shared service partnership between the County Council and five of Lincolnshire's district councils, which since then has become known as 'The Lincolnshire Model' and has been followed in a number of other areas around the country.

Ten years later the partnership remains strong and the service continues to fulfil the purposes for which it was established. In particular it remains a stable and sustainable source of in-house legal expertise not just for the County Council but also district partners ensuring ready access to expert legal advice at in-house costs,

well below those charged by external firms. It also provides services to other public bodies within Lincolnshire and more widely bringing in external revenue.

However, the world of local government and the world of legal practice has changed over the last ten years and continue to change. Local government has seen the introduction of more innovative approaches to service delivery with councils, for example, fulfilling their functions through partnership arrangements or the establishment of external bodies including companies. This can raise professional issues for LSL in continuing to support that work.

In the meantime the rules governing the ownership of legal practices has changed leading to the creation of new types of firm known as alternative business structures owned by entities such as insurance companies or accountancy firms. This is a route which has been followed by some councils who have established their own wholly owned law firms to enable them to support some of the entities those councils have created as well as allowing wider trading.

The Legal Management Board which oversees LSL, of which I and Cllr Butroid are members, is keeping abreast of these changes and has authorised work within the service to investigate whether it is necessary or would be desirable to establish such an alternative business structure in Lincolnshire as the next step in the journey started ten years ago with the creation of Legal Services Lincolnshire.

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