

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 14 SEPTEMBER 2018

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

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Trading Standards

The first quarter of the financial year saw the successful conclusion of a Trading Standards investigation, into the sale of an unsafe remote control helicopter that had caught fire and caused damage to the consumer's kitchen. The Importer was prosecuted having failed to ensure that the product was safe to supply to the public. He was fined £750 and ordered to pay prosecution costs in full amounting to £4189.

A second safety investigation into the sale of potentially unsafe and counterfeit perfumes saw the defendant sentenced to 8 weeks imprisonment, suspended for 18 months, 200 hours unpaid work and £5273 in costs.

Safety remains a high priority for the service and we have signed a Service Level Agreement with Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue, to promote joint working and the sharing of intelligence in areas including: fires attributed to electrical and electronic appliances; carbon monoxide poisoning arising from faulty installations; fires attributed to unsafe/illicit tobacco products or e-cigarettes, and any fires attributed to the safety of other consumer products.

LCC Trading Standards participated in Scams Awareness month working with the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner to promote crime prevention and safeguarding advice. Officers have attended several roadshows across the county, worked closely with the Communications Team to ensure media coverage and utilised our social media account to spread the word.

Community Safety

The Safer Lincolnshire Partnership has now been constituted, and has held several meetings. The priorities which have been agreed across the partnership are anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse, reducing offending and, serious and organised crime, incorporating the areas of fraud and modern day slavery. Each of these areas now has a fully populated delivery plan, which is open to scrutiny from the Overview and Scrutiny Board. Meetings are well attended, with active participation from agencies represented. The cross-cutting areas of mental health and substance misuse are also represented at these meetings by the relevant authorities.

The newly procured E-Cins case management system for anti-social behaviour is being rolled out to partners, allowing for joint case working across the sector. The department has identified the need for a well-orchestrated and organised roll out for other purposes, given that the system has the capacity to be used for far more than anti-social behaviour moving forwards.

The move to a single provider for victims of domestic abuse (DA) has now been completed, and was awarded to West Lincolnshire Domestic Abuse Service (WLDAS) which will be taking on all DA victims' services across the county, providing

a simpler, less complex landscape for referrals. It will also see enhancements to the offer for children and families affected by domestic abuse, as well as the provision of some hospital-based independent Domestic Violence Advisors in order to raise awareness with hospital staff, and to take referrals when victims are present at hospital.

PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

Apprenticeship Reforms

There are currently 103 apprentices across LCC. We see the government's apprenticeship reforms as central to our Workforce Development Strategy. We have proactively matched possible opportunities for apprenticeship training against current structures, and we have high commitment across schools and director areas, where we have staff eager to begin their apprenticeships, supported by their managers.

Our procurement of training providers has generated interest from suppliers. The Council is however, having to stimulate the provider market in certain areas as providers are not yet ready, locally and nationally, to deliver the training for all of the apprenticeship training we require to meet our workforce development needs.

There are significant changes to apprenticeship funding and performance rules which were introduced on 1 August and will be in place until 31 July 2019 including the requirement for providers to robustly assess candidates prior to learning commencement in order to ensure the apprenticeship programme covers individual skills gaps. Also, a move from the requirement of a 30 hour per week employment contract for an apprentice, meaning a number of part-time staff will now be eligible to undertake apprenticeship training.

LCC managers are involved in a number of trailblazer groups, who are developing new apprenticeship standards for the future. These standards include: Occupational Therapist Degree, Public Health Practitioner (Level 6) and Regulatory Compliance Officer (Level 4).

LEGAL SERVICES

Legal Services Lincolnshire (LSL) continues to support the work of the Council and its district council partners. One area of current activity is commercialisation. LSL has been centrally involved in the ongoing work to establish a holding company for the Council as approved by the Executive in March and to establish the various governance structures that would ensure appropriate control and scrutiny can be exercised by the Council over the holding company and any subsidiary companies created under it.

LSL is also exploring its own version of commercialisation through the creation of an alternative business structure which could work for entities other than the Councils and other public bodies. This would enable it to support entities such as Council-owned companies as its partners pursue their own commercialisation approaches.

Initial visits have been undertaken to another authority operating such an alternative business structure and to the Solicitor's Regulation Authority (SRA) who must approve any application to establish such a body.

The SRA imposes stringent regulatory requirements on such an entity and must be satisfied with the fitness of not just the officers but also any person who is in a position to exercise control over it. However, these issues are not insurmountable (as is shown by the existence of other local authority alternative business structures) and there are important advantages to be gained, not least the flexibility to support Councils' own commercial enterprises as they are developed.

This avenue therefore continues to be explored in conjunction with our partner authorities.

On 6 - 7 August, LSL underwent its annual assessment under the LEXCEL practice management standard. The assessment was successful with only four minor non-conformities to the standard. The fact that LSL already adheres to good practice in law practice management will hold it in good stead in its further discussions with the SRA.

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