

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 13 SEPTEMBER 2013

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

Fire & Rescue Service

The Fire Brigade's Union (FBU) dispute with central government over proposed changes in firefighters' pensions has resulted in a strike ballot which ended on 29 August. The ballot resulted in 78% of the votes cast in favour of strike action.

At the time of writing this statement, the FBU has not announced any date for a strike and is seeking further meetings with government to arrive at a negotiated settlement.

From a Lincolnshire perspective, contingency plans have been drawn up for the operation of our Fire and Rescue Service in the event that an FBU strike is called. Although some specialist areas of FRS work would be badly affected, day to day operations would be maintained and there is no cause for public concern.

Emergency Planning

Our Emergency Planning team led a Lincolnshire Resilience Forum (LRF) Peer Review of Devon and Cornwall LRF in Exeter on 22/23 July. Whilst the major threats on the National Risk Register were common to both Lincolnshire and Devon and Cornwall, there were significant local differences in terms of scale and joint working with neighbours. For instance, Plymouth, with its major naval facilities and nuclear storage, poses a level of risk not shared in Lincolnshire, and we have no area as hard to reach as has Devon and Cornwall with the Scilly Islands. In organisational terms, the Devon and Cornwall situation is complicated by the police jointly serving both Devon and Somerset, whilst the Fire and Rescue Service jointly serves Devon, Cornwall and the Scilly Islands. In practice, it appeared to our team that this organisation may offer operational advantages in providing an increased weight of resource to deal with local emergencies and "cross border" risks.

Devon and Cornwall LRF will carry out a return "peer review" on Lincolnshire LRF on 19/20 September.

Trading Standards

Lincolnshire Trading Standards (TS) continues to be very active across the broad range of their responsibilities:

- The service has been granted £60,000 by the Food Standards Agency to carry out animal feed audits. This is new money to help provide EU reassurance that our feed controls are in place and support Lincolnshire farmers to comply with the complex legal requirements.
- Operation REPEAT involves Trading Standards working in partnership with Community Lincs and Lincolnshire Police to reduce the incidence of doorstep crime and rogue trader scams by raising awareness across the county.
- In partnership with Citizens Advice, Trading Standards are raising public awareness of the high cost of "payday loans" and are working to tackle irresponsible and illegal lenders. We are encouraging victims already known

to Citizens Advice to come forward to share their experiences and to seek help with their budgeting skills.

- The recently launched Trading Standards Twitter and Facebook accounts are reaping benefits through increased community engagement in areas such as toy safety.
- Over 20,000 illegal and counterfeit cigarettes were seized in Lincoln shops raided by Trading Standards officers and police in the last week of July.
- Two more sellers of counterfeit sportswear have been given prison sentences after being caught with the goods at market stalls in Lincolnshire. Both received a 6 month prison sentences (one suspended for 18 months and ordered to complete 100 hours of unpaid work in the community).