

## **COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 11 DECEMBER 2020**

**Statement from: Councillor Mrs S Woolley, Executive Councillor for  
NHS Liaison and Community Engagement**

### **NHS LIAISON**

#### **Health and Wellbeing Board Reset and Refocus**

I highlighted my intention to undertake a review of the Lincolnshire Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) in my last statement. I can confirm the HWB agreed the proposals to reset and refocus at our meeting on 29 September 2020. With support from the Local Government Association, we are currently exploring a proposition put forward by the Lincolnshire NHS Clinical Commissioning Group to combine the role of the HWB with that of the Integrated Care System Partnership Board (ICSPB). There are some obvious areas of overlap between the role of the HWB and the emerging role of the ICSPB. The need for closer integration across health and social care is a key driver therefore a partnership board to steer the strategic direction across the system would be beneficial. Discussions are on-going to identify a workable approach for Lincolnshire.

#### **Support to those who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable**

Since the announcement of the second lockdown which started on 5 November 2020, the Council and its partners have supported over 30,000 clinically extremely vulnerable people in Lincolnshire. This has included telephoning or writing to all of those people individually, supporting them as appropriate to access shopping and helping prevent social isolation.

I am extremely grateful to colleagues in the Local Resilience Forum, the Customer Service Centre, the Wellbeing Service (operated by our District Council colleagues), the Carer's Service, the British Red Cross and the NHS Volunteers, including the many other local community groups who provided valuable support through this period.

#### **Covid Support to Communities: DEFRA funds**

I am pleased that we are seeing a good number of applications for the funds allocated by DEFRA to help local organisations continue their support to communities during and hopefully after the Covid-19 pandemic. The Community Foundation has received over £200,000 to support community groups to develop more Good Neighbour schemes, food kitchens and other support for local communities. Almost £400,000 is being distributed through the Lincolnshire Food Partnership to ensure new and emerging local food banks will have grants and support in place to help them to thrive. If you are aware of an organisation which would benefit, please encourage them to seek further information from the relevant organisation. Both schemes continue to be open for applications and all funds must be awarded by 31 March 2021.

## **COMMUNITY ENAGEMENT**

### **Council's engagement activities**

The new engagement directory is now live and ready for use across the council and in your ward. Designed to make finding information about engagement easier and sharing feedback with respondents an automatic part of engagement, the simple form on George and search facility on the Council's website will benefit the public, services and members.

Despite the challenges presented by the impact of social distancing on engagement and consultation activity, council services continue to actively communicate and engage with residents. In the FY2020-21 Q1 and Q2 a 104 engagement activities were carried out by service departments (Place 19, Children's 30, Adults 21, Resources 10, Commercial 7, Fire and Rescue 8, Corporate Services 9).

### **County Views Citizens' Panel**

Lincolnshire County Council has led the development of a new citizens' panel, known as County Views. It is in place to establish what residents value most and where we can improve services. Panel members take part in a residents' survey and may also be invited to take part in a rolling programme of surveys, focus groups and workshops. This calendar year has seen three surveys asking about views on the county, and more specifically, the environment, the Council's response to Covid-19 and highways. A promotional programme to raise the panel's profile and enhance representation from across Greater Lincolnshire is underway. Since its launch in August, the panel has grown to 336 members.

The results so far tell us that over four fifths (82%) of residents who responded think their area is a great place to live. This dropped to three quarters among people with a disability. The top three areas respondents said were the most important in making an area a good place to live are access to nature, coast, parks and open spaces; education provision; and safety. The top three areas that respondents said need improvement are road networks and highway maintenance; public transport; and job prospects.

### **Funding enquiries and use of the portal**

Funding enquiries received directly by officers amounted to 31 during October and November 2020. Enquiries received were from a wide range of organisations including community buildings, town and parish councils and smaller community groups.

The use of the Lincolnshire Funding Portal increased by 127% in October 2020 compared to same period last year. There were 2,436 visits to the Lincolnshire Funding Portal and 118 funding searches made during October 2020.

The use of the Lincolnshire Funding Portal increased by 100.5% in November 2020 compared to same period last year. There were 2239 visits to the Lincolnshire Funding Portal and 122 funding searches made during November 2020.

## **Funding Ready Programme**

Lincolnshire Community and Voluntary Service (LCVS) and Voluntary Centre Services (VCS), in partnership with Lincolnshire County Council have launched a new programme of workshops available for town and parish councils and community groups across Lincolnshire.

The Funding Ready programme has been developed and designed to give local councils and groups the tools needed to apply for funding and is focused on improving funding success rates for Lincolnshire. Many organisations struggle with writing funding applications, but project planning and evidencing the need are also reasons for bids failing. These workshops take organisations through the full process.

The programme consists of a benchmarking activity, followed by a series of online workshops and an informational toolkit to support participants. Workshops include getting a project ready for funding, identifying funding sources, evidencing the need for the project, and writing a successful bid.

LCC officers will deliver to town and parish councils and LCVS/VCS will deliver to community groups. The first programme of 5 workshops was held during September and October and a total of 21 people attended from councils across the county.

Further delivery will be scheduled for town and parish councils in 2021 as a part of the LALC training programme.

## **Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils (LALC)**

LALC developed new ways of working to enable, as a minimum, their core training delivery to take place. Having already amended the schedule to detail which courses would be covered by the Annual Training Scheme (ATS) subscription (core training) and those which are charged in addition to the ATS (Non-core training), they were able to prioritise delivery, set up our subscription to Zoom and begin rearranging courses that were postponed due to the Lockdown restrictions.

LALC's first ever online E-learning (A Guide to Being a Good Councillor) is now up and running, following months of work, and having delegates book in and undertake the training. At the time of writing this statement, 25 delegates have booked and paid for the e-learning, although as yet limited feedback has been received. A number of these delegates have not yet completed the e-learning and multiple-choice questions as there is no time limit to do so.

During 2019, LALC received a request from LCC Highways to deliver a short presentation regarding the involvement of Highways in the planning process. This is being delivered remotely with a total of 12 sessions delivered to 123 delegates.

LALC Annual General Meeting was held virtually on 13 October 2020. The guest speaker from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) gave thanks to all town and parish councils for their response and speed of step up in the Covid-19 pandemic. It was noted that local town and parish councils have a growing

reputation within central Government and have demonstrated to residents over the past months that they are relevant, current and important.

### **Voluntary Centre Services (VCS)**

Continuing to navigate the on-going Covid-19 restrictions, the focus remains on supporting volunteers, community groups and voluntary organisations. VCS continue to provide remote support and advice to volunteers to help them access mainstream volunteering opportunities and Covid-19 related volunteering through the NHS volunteer responder's scheme or locally co-ordinated schemes that have been established in response to the pandemic.

A big focus of the work over recent months has been supporting local groups and organisations to continue to operate. This has included supporting with practical adaptations to working arrangements and risk assessments for providing face to face support, help and advice with implementing digital technologies, support to secure new funding, help with recruiting new volunteers and support for staff and volunteers to access online training. This type of support for small groups and charities is needed now more than ever and will be for the foreseeable future.

The service is working closely with the Primary Care Networks to develop Community Information Points to connect communities and help build capacity according to need. They are also helping to shape the Mental Health Spoke developments in each district.

### **Citizens Advice Lincolnshire (CAL)**

CAL services have been faced with new challenges and the need for new ways of working. Whilst keeping their services running and accessible, they help people navigate issues that they have never been presented with before. There is an increase in redundancies, with more expected as furloughing comes to an end. Debt problems are forecast to increase by 60% and there are likely to be many more associated issues that will mean more demands than ever on their much-needed services over the coming 18 months.

Citizens Advice offices across Lincolnshire have continued to help substantial numbers of people, mainly over the phone but increasingly via zoom and other virtual meeting services. A few offices have also been able to open for limited face-to-face meetings as some client issues cannot be easily resolved by remote contact. Unfortunately, the latest lockdown has caused a suspension of the face-to-face service.

We have seen growth in requests for help with Universal Credit and anticipate increasing demand for Benefit and Debt help as Government financial support is reduced. In some areas, 34% of employees are furloughed.

During Q2 CAL helped 3,900 clients through their Core service – up from 2,900 in Q1. This reflects easing of restrictions which allowed CAL to increase service offering. They have answered 75% of Advice line calls and gained £693,575 income for clients, up from £325,869 in Q1.

## **Town and Parish Council Websites**

The migration of the town and parish council websites is underway with the roll out of the new websites. Parish councils continue being supported with a range of tools, such as 'how to' videos and user guides, as well as on-going advice and support available by email and phone. So far, 314 parishes have signed up to the new website and 51 parishes have already successfully moved all their content across.

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