

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 11 DECEMBER 2020

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

PUBLIC PROTECTION

Community Safety

The Community Safety Team continue to ensure there is a shared understanding across partners of the impact of Covid-19 on community safety issues across the county, through scanning and analytical work. The team continue to monitor trends to enable partners to focus their response to these issues, for example, an analysis of reported Fraud and Scams has enabled partners to be much more targeted in their approach to preventing and protecting vulnerable victims. This coincides with the appointment of a Community Safety Strategy Co-ordinator within the Service to lead on Fraud activity. The co-ordinator will work in collaboration with a wide range of partners and other dedicated staff within Trading Standards and Lincolnshire Police, to ensure a joined-up response to prevention, protection and prosecution work.

Modern Slavery is a current core priority for the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership. As a member of that partnership, Lincolnshire County Council is a key contributor, providing resources including a Community Safety Strategy Co-ordinator, to co-ordinate the work of the partnership and drive the Modern Slavery agenda forward. One key area of activity for the partnership is raising awareness of Modern Slavery with the public and also with partners.

In partnership with The Clewer Initiative (an initiative launched in 2016 by the Church of England to help raise awareness of Modern Slavery), the team have developed Lincolnshire specific resources to help raise awareness of Modern Slavery amongst both professionals and local communities. The County Council also led on a social media campaign in the week leading up to Anti-Slavery day on 18 October 2020. This ran alongside other partnership activities; including the National Crime Agency's 'Invisible People' exhibition being in-situ outside Lincoln Cathedral, and culminated in Lincoln Cathedral being illuminated yellow on Anti-Slavery Day to 'shine a light' on the issue.

Work is well underway to prepare the Council for the introduction of Domestic Abuse legislation in April 2021, which will place a legal duty on the Council to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation. This support will include advocacy support; domestic abuse prevention advice; specialist support for victims with protected characteristics and / or complex needs; children's support; housing-related support and counselling / therapy for both adults and children. The Council has for some time commissioned a broad range of support services for victims of domestic abuse (both children and adults) so is in an advantageous position in this regard, but work is taking place to ensure the Council is able to meet all requirements of the statutory framework.

Trading Standards

Following the landmark prosecution of a landlord for money laundering offences that arose after he knowingly accepted rental payments from tenants selling illicit tobacco, the Trading Standards Service have continued to follow the enforcement model to tackle other problem premises around the county. Any landlord of a premise where illicit tobacco is seized or purchased is being notified. To date, 13 premises have been closed with no evidence of further offending from new tenants, 5 are in the process of evicting tenants and the service is in contact with landlords regarding a further 14 premises. When requested, Trading Standards Officers are supporting landlords who apply for a court order to evict tenants who trade illegally by providing statements and evidence of illegal trading to support their application. Trading Standards have, and will continue, to escalate enforcement against landlords who fail to take action to remove tenants who persist in selling illicit tobacco.

The Trading Standards Service participated in this year's Citizen's Advice Scam Awareness Campaign. The event ran during 15-28 June with a focus on scams that emerged as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak. Trading Standards worked with key partners including Fire and Rescue, the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, Lincolnshire Police and local media. Locally, Trading Standards extended the campaign to work with Business Lincolnshire to raise awareness of scams targeted at local businesses.

In 2019 The Trading Standards Service received £10,000 from the Office of Product Safety and Standards to introduce a pilot scheme to enable maternity services and childcare professionals to quickly and easily report safety concerns about nursery products. The scheme is based on information sharing and went live in February 2020. Trading Standards provide regular monthly updates relating to product recalls for inclusion in newsletters sent to maternity and childcare professionals. Recent recalls relate to highchairs that failed in testing and could result in a child falling, baby clothing with detachable decoration that could present a choking hazard and flashing rings with easy access to button batteries that could result in severe burns and tissue damage if swallowed.

PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

Apprenticeships

As of the 31 October 2020, the total number of apprentices on roll was 232, with a levy allocation of £2,057,842.00. 64% of training provision is being delivered by local providers.

Lincolnshire County Council continues to work to the target of 250 staff undertaking apprenticeships for 2020-21. The emphasis will be on upskilling existing staff and recruiting new talent, so that we can maximise the levy and benefit from staff development.

Of the 27 apprentices previously reported as being on a break in learning, I am very pleased to share that 13 have recommenced their apprenticeships. We have also

agreed with providers, a further 10 who are currently focused on Covid-19 priorities, returning to their apprenticeships in March 2021.

Lincolnshire County Council has been recognised by the National Apprenticeship Service, on social media, for putting the wellbeing of all staff, including apprentices, at the heart of the organisation by re-prioritising services to meet the needs of the community, including those who most needed support over the initial Covid-19 lockdown.

The corporate approach is currently:

- Continuing to support take up of apprenticeships across all services and schools. For the Council, hard to recruit and retain areas remain a high priority.
- HR Services have launched the Leadership and Management Centre, starting with delivery of the Level 3 Team Leader / Supervisor Apprenticeship that embeds the ILM Level 3 qualification. This bespoke apprenticeship is being delivered to aspiring leaders, working across all directorates, within Lincolnshire County Council.
- Business Support continues to drive forward with their Apprenticeship Centre, as part of their workforce development approach. Business Support has introduced the new Business Administrator Level 3 qualification into their centre and has apprentices working to the new Customer Service Practitioner Level 2 standard.
- We continue to work with the Local Government Association (LGA), Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), local networks such as Compact and the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (GLLEP), and as part of the Apprenticeship Ambassador Network for the region. This enables Lincolnshire County Council to share and receive resources, refine good practice within the Council and participate in benchmarking exercises with other authorities.
- One example of this is a recent Comparative Report the LGA produced on behalf of Lincolnshire County Council. It took data from 2018/19 and 2019/20 and has highlighted the following-:
 - Lincolnshire County Council has achieved an increase of the number of new starts year on year.
 - Compared to other local authorities, Lincolnshire County Council is placed in the middle pack, though rank higher when it comes to the raw tally of apprenticeship starts created.
 - When it comes to creating starts in the Council's maintained schools, Lincolnshire was the second best performer in the East Midlands and ranked 17 out of 104 councils nationally.

LEGAL

Legal Services Lincolnshire has continued to support the County Council, District Council partners and the wider Lincolnshire Resilience Forum with advice during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Advice and support continues to be given to the local outbreak management process; including the exercise of the legal powers granted to County Councils in relation to premises, events and outdoor public places.

Legal Services Lincolnshire (Trading) Limited, the company established by the Council, has submitted its application to the Solicitor's Regulation Authority (SRA) for a licence to operate as an alternative business structure providing legal services to the wider public sector. The company is responding to various requests for information from the SRA and a decision is expected on the licence by the end of January 2021, at which point it is planned that the company will commence trading.

Work continues on the new case management system which is now not expected to go live until the New Year. While the new system has provided the opportunity to rationalise data and processes and introduce a greater number of workflows, the migration of the data has turned out to be more complex and time consuming than originally envisaged.

Finally, I am pleased to announce that at its meeting on 11 November 2020 the Legal Management Board, which oversees the Legal Services Lincolnshire shared services partnership, approved (subject to formal decision making) the admission of South Kesteven District Council to the partnership; the first new member of the partnership since its inception in 2008.