

**EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR: NHS LIAISON,
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, REGISTRATION AND CORONERS**

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30 JULY 2021

**PROPOSED SUBMISSION TO THE CHIEF CORONER FOR THE MERGER OF THE LINCOLNSHIRE
AND GRIMSBY AND NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE CORONERS AREAS**

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC PROTECTION AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

On 27 July 2021, the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee considered the report on the Proposed Submission to the Chief Coroner for the merger of the Lincolnshire and Grimsby and North Lincolnshire Coroners Areas and unanimously supported the recommendations to the Executive Councillor.

The following points were highlighted:

- Members sought assurance that following the merger post-mortems would be carried out in the closest area to the deceased and their families as the relocation of a deceased person caused distress to families and delayed funerals. The stress caused was recognised and assurance was provided, that post-mortems would continue to be carried out at appropriate facilities locally (to the deceased and their families); however, Lincoln has not been able to service requirements and therefore the potential for a public mortuary was being explored to resolve present issues.
- Concern was raised in relation to transference costs incurred moving the deceased for post-mortems to be carried out and members asked for assurance that the new arrangements would not be more expensive in comparison to those currently in place. It was confirmed that the costs of transferring the deceased outside and then back into the county was part of the contract cost and that the issue around not retaining the deceased within the county was due to limited availability of pathologists and insufficient facility capabilities within Lincoln to carry out post-mortems. These issues would be mitigated by a potential public mortuary.
- Post-mortem contracts were being retendered for the medium and long term, however in the short term the only option was to move the deceased out of the county for those services.
- Lincolnshire has a Post-mortem rate of 38% of all reported deaths (2020) which was on a par with the national average.
- The proposed merger would not increase problems for the Police with it cutting across two different policing authorities. In terms of referrals, there were set processes for these, and the coroners service worked very closely with the Police on these. The merger would require Humberside Police to report into two different authorities, however, it was recognised that Humberside Police was already reporting into different authorities, namely North and North-East Lincolnshire and

Hull and East Riding. Assurance was provided that generating that relationship and developing processes moving forward with Humberside Police was not viewed as a further challenge.

- The Humberside and Lincolnshire Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC) were consulted following on from the Greater Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Oversight Committee meeting in June, which agreed on an informal consultation via letter which was worded in order to not suggest a predetermined outcome. The letter was sent to Humberside Police and Lincolnshire Police and the PCC and requested early observations and concerns to be reported. No concerns had been reported to date through this activity.