

## **COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 10 DECEMBER 2021**

**Statement from: Councillor R D Butroid – Executive Councillor for People Management, Legal and Corporate Property**

### **CORPORATE PROPERTY**

#### **Smarter Working**

As part of our aspiration to be an ‘employer of choice’ and support the Council’s new People Strategy, the Smarter Working Policy was launched on 23 September 2021. This establishes for the first time (initially at the Newland Campus) new working arrangements of shared managed workspace, service hubs and a dedicated work area for senior leaders; in addition to working from home.

This policy provides our employees with choice and flexibility, as part of the commitment for more distributed and compassionate leadership within the Council, with evidence demonstrating that with high trust, comes high performance. This is therefore the first step on developing a new employment culture.

In addition to the Council's first managed workspace at Lancaster House, which opened on 2nd August, a Leadership Hub has now opened for senior leaders. This provides a variety of workspaces including drop-in spaces, desks, informal and formal meeting spaces which will include Teams technology to enable hybrid meetings. A VIP room has also been included where the Council will be able to meet with external guests.

Work is on-going to repurpose space at County Offices in Lincoln for collaborative working and interim Service Hubs whilst Orchard House B is being refurbished.

#### **Special Schools Programme**

In addition to Boston Endeavour, a new special school opening in August, a further two new buildings have been successfully completed. These are The Eresby School in Spilsby and Willoughby Academy, Bourne. Both were opened on time and significantly further improve the learning environment for young people.

#### **Lincoln Castle**

Following the successful bid for Historic England funding, embankment stabilisation works were completed earlier this year. This has resulted in the castle being removed from Historic England’s buildings at risk register, and the restoration works will secure the building for future generations.

#### **Former Linelands Care Home site**

Following a successful marketing exercise the Council has received an offer of £660,000 for the former care home site in Nettleham. The capital receipt exceeded expectations.

#### **PFM award**

The VINCI contract managed by Corporate Property has won the prize for the Partners in Corporate category at the prestigious annual PFM (Premises and Facilities Management) Awards.

## **PEOPLE MANAGEMENT**

### **Apprenticeships**

Apprenticeships are an important aspect of the Council's Corporate Plan and People Strategy, to aid attraction and retention. There continues to be healthy take up, including across maintained schools and corporate areas.

The Council continues to support apprenticeships through the levy transfer scheme through which we support 29 apprentices. The apprenticeships that are being supported in our County include:

- Trainee Nursing Associate
- Adult Care Workers
- Senior Healthcare Support Workers
- Leadership and Management (Care Sector)
- Community Activator Coach (Education Sector)
- Community Health and Sport Officer
- Teaching Assistants
- Production Chef (Care Sector)

Currently the total number of apprentices is 294 on roll, with a levy allocation of £2.7m. This is an increase of 59 apprenticeships since this was last reported in September 2021. 68% of training provision is also being delivered by local providers, which is a further 7% increase.

### **Health and Wellbeing**

The Council continues to promote health and wellbeing as an important role in being a good employer. A recent development has been the launch of the Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Programme in which over 50 council employees have been fully trained and accredited by Mental Health England and have been selected for their high level of empathy and sensitivity.

The MHFA's work in service areas across the breadth of LCC and have skills, qualities, and knowledge to support the workforce.

It is pleasing to see that Council's sickness absence remains below its target of 7.5 days per employee per annum, reporting in at 7.1 days as of 30 September 2021.

## **LEGAL**

Recruitment and retention continues to be a challenge, particularly in the area of Child Care law where there is a national shortage of candidates together with a significant locum agency market which makes attracting permanent members of staff difficult. One response to this is for LSL to develop bespoke training contracts in which individuals wishing to qualify as solicitors can undertake their professional training within the Council with a specific focus on a particular subject area where the Council struggles to recruit.

We currently have two trainees undertaking child care training contracts and the process has been very successful. At the end of the training contract in September 2022, we will potentially be able to appoint to two full time vacancies currently covered by agency staff.

To build on this model we are currently recruiting to a third bespoke child care training contract with plans to expand the model to another hard to recruit to area – highways and planning.

In another development relating to Child Care law the court digitisation process has gone live and is underway. Currently all non-urgent cases are issued on the system with this expected to be expanded to further cases in the coming weeks.

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