

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 10 DECEMBER 2021

**Statement from: Councillor L A Cawrey, Executive Councillor for
Fire & Rescue and Culture Services**

FIRE & RESCUE

Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS)

Following initial feedback from HMI about our inspection earlier this year, we have received confirmation from HMI they are satisfied with our plans and the progress that we have made.

We have continued to liaise with HMI representatives ahead of publication of the formal report for LFR that we expect to be released in mid-December.

Response

Our operational response to emergency incidents has returned to the pre-Covid levels of 2019/20. However, trends have changed in line with the blended approach to work - as more people are working from home, more dwelling fires taking place in the daytime. The main reason for the increase in incidents is due to careless or negligent use of household equipment.

To support our Ambulance colleagues, our co-responding activity is still delivering a vital service to the county with 1,379 incidents attended already this year. The service currently has over 160 responders operating from 27 stations.

In line with the potential seasonal threat of flooding, two new trailer mounted flood pumps have been put online at Alford and Holbeach stations. These additional pumps were purchased through LCC funding as Lead Local Flood Authority and will supplement the two existing pumps which are located at Gainsborough and Wragby.

Our control room personnel continue to deliver our call handling, mobilising, management and communications effectively through the continued partnership with the East Coast Consortium. This is improving our resilience, and the local partnership with Lincolnshire Police control room personnel is delivering an improved multi-agency response when the situation dictates.

Fire Protection

With four new Fire Safety Inspectors coming into the team, we have been able to focus on the completion of their training and provide practical experience of auditing non-domestic premises. Aligning to the national competence framework, with the first level of their qualifications achieved, they have been able to deliver against our risk based inspection programme, (RBIP).

We have continued to focus on developing policies and procedures in line with HMICFRS requirements, with a clear plan of how to deliver our RBIP and visit the county's high risk premises in a twelve month period. A robust plan has been developed and implemented that allows us to monitor progress and shows we are on target for this year. Other areas of focus

have been a review of our quality assurance process for protection activities, and the continued administration of our protection files.

There remains a great deal of focus on fire protection at a national level and we have been supporting and contributing to the consultations driven by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC). The national Building Risk Review exercise (provision of information on all known high rise residential buildings) concludes at the end of December and we are able to confirm that the seventeen buildings we have identified have returned the required details.

Following the launch of the Fire Protection Standard from the Fire Standards Board, the team have completed a gap analysis to identify areas where further development work will need to be carried out. The gap analysis results were positive and whilst it identified a number of areas that will require some work, it was positive to see that the current planning and direction has demonstrated that we are aligning to the national standard set.

Fire Prevention

With the NFCC launching their online home fire safety check tool, LFR have been looking at how this process can support our delivery strategy. The online tool allows members of the public to access and carry out an initial safety check, prior to being referred to us, if the assessment deems it necessary and there is a risk identified. To support the check, generic fire safety information will also be provided, with the option of referring straight to us if there are concerns. Whilst this process will not replace our face to face Safe and Well checks, it will allow us to maximise our contact with our communities and ensure that our physical resources continue to focus on those who most need our support.

Our Resource to Risk strategy has resulted in a number of high risk areas across the county being identified, for example, communities and individuals in Mablethorpe. Working closely with the Integrated Risk team to ensure that risk information is accurate, focused intervention work by the local crews has been carried out in a proactive manner, engaging and carrying out Safe and Well checks. This updated element of our delivery strategy has complemented the partnership working and the receipt of referrals from partner agencies. Our dedicated engagement advocate has been working closely with one of newest partners, AgeUK, and we have seen a rise in the number of referrals that we have received.

With a number of specialist community safety advocates focusing on our most vulnerable individuals in our communities, an area that we have been able to develop is the support for those people that hoard. As hoarding has been identified as a significant fire risk, our hoarding advocate has been working closely with LCC colleagues to promote the Hoarding Protocol, offering guidance and information to colleagues, as well as referral pathways for support.

Developing and embedding the SHERMAN concept, we have been able to contribute to the Lincolnshire Homes for Independence Blueprint for the Housing, Health and Care delivery group. Recognising that our aim is to try and keep people safer in their homes for longer, we have been able to establish the importance of support that the prevention team can offer in not only establishing required standards but also ongoing support for those who might need us.

As stakeholders in the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership we have been supporting the review of current priorities, analysing data and ensuring that the partnership focuses efforts on areas identified risks - current and emerging. Being data- and intelligence-driven is a positive, that allows us to evidence required prevention interventions and support our communities.

People

We continue to have full intake on our initial on-call recruit courses and will be commencing our trial Safe to Ride modular course in January. We have had a very successful wholetime recruitment campaign receiving a total of 662 applications resulting in 8 of our existing on-call being successful, commencing their course in January 2022 and a further 12 new trainees commencing in February 2022.

Integrated Risk Management and Operational Support

The IRM team have been working hard this year to develop our operational performance reporting. The use of In-phase as a portal to monitor tasks and activities in relation to the Service Plan has proven to be very effective. This system continues to develop to enhance our performance reporting and to reflect progress against our latest inspection.

Our Health and Safety team are working hard to implement the new LCC reporting tool, Evosafe, into the organisation. We are also reviewing our IOSH and NEBOSH training for managers to ensure the levels of knowledge increase across LFR.

LFR's business continuity plans are continually reviewed and exercised to identify gaps and mitigation so that the organisation can continue to operate in any event or risk realisation. Lessons identified from the Covid outbreak have been embedded within many of our plans.

EMERGENCY PLANNING

On 1 September 2021, the Emergency Planning and Business Continuity team transferred over from Fire and Rescue to the Resources Directorate and now sit within Public Protection.

The team continues to play a significant role in the multi-agency recovery from the coronavirus pandemic. The team is co-ordinating the involvement of Lincolnshire County Council services and voluntary organisations and ensuring that our internal plans and business continuity arrangements dovetail with those of the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum (LRF). When the formal LRF command structure is stepped-down this month, the team will become the first point of contact for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, (formally MHCLG) for all Covid related communications.

A multi-agency intelligence winter preparedness group chaired by the team has been established to both gather and share information relating to Covid, driver shortages, fuel, food chain issues, hospital winter pressures and any other foreseeable risks that will be useful as the LRF move into the traditional flood and severe weather season. Early sight of existing pressures will allow for better use of both staff and resources when dealing with these types of incidents.

The Secretary of State has approved an LRF Funding Pilot with a budget of £7.5m nationally. Each LRF has received an allocation based upon a combination of population size and the Index of Multiple Deprivation; in Lincolnshire's case this amounts to £179,187.00. The purpose of this funding is to support the LRF's building core strategic capacity and capability, to take an active role in developing and delivering national priorities as set out in the Integrated Review and to provide evidence to feed into the National Resilience Strategy and review of the Civil Contingencies Act.

The team have picked up this project on behalf of the LRF for the duration of the pilot funding scheme. It is also seen as an opportunity to help shape the future of emergency planning and LRFs nationally through involvement in the Integrated Review and the Civil Contingencies Act. All costs associated with the project are being met by the LRF. As part of this project, the team have submitted five bids for additional central funding. These projects are seen as being important to our LRF but could also be used nationally by others. At present, the bids are with cabinet ministers for final approval and the team are hopeful that at least one of them has been successful. A monthly newsletter detailing project activities has been made available to all partners via Resilience Direct.

During the first week of October, the LRF's annual major exercise took place at both the Fire and Rescue training site at Waddington and the County Emergency Centre (CEC). The scenario involved a collision between two military aircraft, one of which came down in a built-up environment. The annual exercise takes a full year to plan and the team have both chaired the multi-agency planning team and also been actively involved in all aspects of planning and delivery. Participants included the emergency services, military, local authorities, health, local community volunteers, media and Lincoln College. Early feedback suggests that the exercise has been extremely well-received and beneficial to all that took part. A full debrief took place during November and all recommendations will be incorporated into future plans and procedures. Planning will soon commence on the next one which will be part of a national flooding exercise (FloodEx 2022). This will see Lincolnshire work alongside Humberside in the response to an East Coast tidal event.

On a final note, the team have a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with all but one District Council for provision of emergency planning and business continuity advice, training and liaison with community groups. Five years ago, South Holland District Council left the SLA but I am pleased to report that - as part of the strategic alliance that now exists between East Lindsey, Boston Borough and South Holland - they have decided to re-join. This is great news for the team - and the communities in South Holland - and will ensure better continuity across the county.

CULTURE

Visit England Awards

Lincoln Castle and the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight Visitor Centre have both received Welcome Accolades, recognising the venues as amongst the best visitor attractions in the country. Judges from Visit England scour the country for the best quality attractions, and the highest scoring venues are awarded their prestigious Attraction Accolades. The two Lincolnshire venues are part of a list of just 76 attractions across the country that have been highlighted for the warm and friendly welcome they provide to visitors.

Visit England – Digital Marketing Case Study

Our service has been selected by Visit England as one of six visitor attractions in England to be a case study for a Digital Marketing Toolkit being created to support attractions in the Visit England scheme with their digital output. We have been selected as our digital marketing is a 'stand-out' amongst visitor attractions in the scheme, particularly regarding our social media platform TikTok. The toolkit will be available to visitor attractions later in the year.

TikTok

In May this year, Cultural Services launched their first TikTok channel. This was a new development and aligned strongly with our strategic Covid recovery objectives.

Cultural Services successfully pivoted to digital engagement as a result of the impact of Covid-19. The option to integrate TikTok into this engagement provided a great opportunity for us to meaningfully engage with a younger audience and showcase our sites, collections and characters through inspiring, appealing and accessible content.

A small team of enthusiastic staff members from across a variety of roles within the service have all contributed to the channel's content – some have even become recognisable TikTok stars with many visitors to Lincoln Castle recognising our Visitor Experience Officer, Wayne. @Lincsmuseums now has 30k followers from across the globe. The most successful video to date has been viewed over 700,000 times and featured an ordinary household item with a particularly sinister and extraordinary past.

The platform has both a local and global audience and - most importantly - our content has acted as a motivator to visit our sites.

Agreements on the future of the Usher Gallery and City owned collections finalised.

The agreements detail the new arrangement whereby, as well as continuing to run the Usher Gallery as an art gallery, we are now able to use the space more flexibly, allowing us to host ceremonies, educational workshops and private hire. It is a much-improved solution – bringing more visitors to the site, for more reasons and more often.

As part of the arrangements, we are also pleased to announce a new collections management agreement (CMA) is now in place between Lincolnshire County Council and the City of Lincoln Council. This has secured the future of those museum and gallery artefacts representing the county's history, where legal title sits with the City of Lincoln Council. As a result of the new agreement, the artefacts have been secured to remain in the county, under the management and care of Lincolnshire County Council, as they have been since 1974. The agreement comprises new, modern, fit for purpose arrangements for collections, which provides for updated best practice measures for collections review and rationalisation, including provision for the legal title of designated artefacts, to be permanently transferred to Lincolnshire County Council, where appropriate to do so.

Exhibitions at The Collection

The Natural History Museum's Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibition opened at The Collection on 3 July and ran until 26 September, being seen by over 2,500 people. This included Friday late-night opening at the museum during August, with wildlife talks, birds of

prey handling, artisan food and craft activities. Alongside this, we also ran our own Wildlife Photography Competition which had 166 entrants. The winning entries, plus judges' favourites, were exhibited at the North Sea Observatory from 31 August through to 24 September.

Due to the interest shown in the competition, we have since installed this community competition at The Collection courtyard gallery and are looking to expand the number of entries displayed with a larger exhibition at the Usher Gallery soon.

'Our Plastic Ocean', an exhibition by international award-winning photographer, Mandy Barker, featuring items collected from shorelines across the world transformed into powerful and captivating images is now on display at The Collection. We have made links with the sustainability team in the Council to work with them and link this exhibition to the Green Master Plan.

A Season of Festivals and a Festival for all Seasons.

A brand new event celebrating the very best food, drink and beer in the county will be coming to Lincoln Castle during next summer. The event will showcase the wealth of fantastic food, drink and beer producers we have across Greater Lincolnshire. Lincoln Castle will be collaborating with local event producers Major Label, to host this special event.

The celebration of food and drink will be part of a huge summer of events at the Castle throughout June, July and August. There will be something for everyone with live music, food and drink and family fun, incorporating all our bank holidays and key celebrations.

The launch event will be the Great British Outdoor picnic, a chance for people to come together over the Queen's Jubilee bank holiday weekend in June and culminate with the return of the Steampunk Festival over the August bank holiday weekend.

Lincoln Castle Grounds

Since April this year, 400,000 visitors have taken the opportunity to enjoy the wonderful green open space set within the historical grounds. It has been wonderful to see such an uptake in visitors especially throughout the seasons. A popular autumnal activity appears to be rolling down the castle banks and through the fallen leaves.

We are looking forward to providing our visitors with a different take on this much loved space as part of the Lincoln Castle Illuminated event which will run from 11-23 December.

Libraries

Delivery of the Library Services continues to be received positively from customers, whether they are accessing books and information physically or digitally. Feedback received from customers shows they are a real lifeline to many and further illustrates how important this service is to our community.

Events and activities have recommenced at most sites throughout the autumn and, whilst some users have been reluctant to stay for a prolonged period, customers do welcome their return. Especially popular has been the initiative taken by the team to create activity packs

that can be taken away to ensure continuous participation can remain whilst allowing people to choose where the crafts are enjoyed.

Lincoln Central Library has been announced as one of 15 UK cities participating in the National 'StoryTrails' event; a unique storytelling experience where untold stories from the past are brought to life through 3D internet, using augmented and virtual reality to reanimate public spaces. Audiences in Lincoln will be able to time-travel via using new technologies to experience untold local histories where they happened. The project will start in July 2022.

Community Hubs

GLL continue to provide support to our 36 community hubs through dedicated Library Development Officers. Of these, 34 hubs are community group run. They continue to thrive and have proven to be well embedded within the communities they serve.

Discussions are ongoing between LCC and Bishop Grosseteste University over management of the Ermine Community Hub and we aim to be in a position to re-open the library in the coming months

This page is intentionally left blank