

## **COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 09 December 2022**

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

### **LINCOLNSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE (LFR)**

#### **Operational Response**

Following the extreme temperatures that the county encountered in July and August, the Service has returned to similar incident numbers compared with last year for September and October.

Our response to medical only emergencies through our co-responder response remains stable and we continue to support East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS) in this provision whilst completing our review of future co-responder model with the outstanding objective of securing future funding.

#### **His Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) for Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services**

LFR continues to make good progress against the cause of concern and action plan from the 2021 full inspection. All areas within the cause of concern recommendations are now signed off and (at the time of writing) are awaiting HMI to re-visit LFR in November to evaluate progress against the areas relating to Protection.

Confirmation of the next full inspection is planned for early 2023 and, therefore, planning is well underway in preparing LFR for this next round of inspection.

#### **Integrated Risk Management, Operational Support & Service Support**

The Integrated risk management team continue to develop current systems to enhance data provision and support our resource to risk approach. Work on the implementation of the National Fire Chief Council (NFCC) fire standards continues with a gap analysis now complete across the 15 current fire standards. Work to improve the mobile data terminals continues and training is being delivered across the organisation to ensure crews are fully conversant with the system and its capability to deliver essential operational information.

The operational support team are providing innovative solutions to the procurement of fleet and equipment in line with the latest technologies, but also in line with the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and our commitment to having the right resources in the right place at the right time. The fleet strategy has been published and demonstrates LFR's commitment to the Green Master Plan, and work is currently underway to review Officer Response provision and the use of hybrid technology.

The refurbishment of Grantham fire station is now underway and the options appraisal for the Waddington Training Centre site is also being developed in conjunction with the fire service, Kier, Lincolnshire County Council and in liaison with Lincolnshire Police.

## **Fire Protection**

Focused work has been carried out in preparation to support the enactment of the new Fire Safety Act and Fire Safety Regulations. The new regulations will give Fire and Rescue Services additional legislative powers to support fire safety compliance in high and medium rise premises. More responsibility will also be placed on building custodians to ensure they keep services updated with on-going issues and compliance with testing and maintenance.

The team have ensured the three areas highlighted in the HMI cause for concern are completed and ready for when the Inspectorate re-visit. The delivery of the risk-based inspection programme remains ahead of schedule, and recruitment into all vacant posts will see the team with a full complement of inspectors, trained and supporting delivery in the early New Year.

Investment utilising the Home Office (HO) grant fund has seen FloSuite (our management information system) progress with the new version loaded on to the test server with user acceptance testing scheduled for early November. We have also been using the funding to support the development of our inspectors, ensuring they are trained on the latest updates to legislation and processes.

## **Fire Prevention**

In-line with the NFCC direction we have transitioned across from our Safe & Well visits to the recognised Home Fire Safety Visits, (HFSVs). The visits remain broadly the same, but they have a clear focus on eight core components: Home Fire Detection and Assistive Technology, General Fire Safety (Candles, Cooking and Escape Planning), Electrical Safety, Fire and Heaters (Safer Heating), Clutter and Hoarding, Deliberate Fires, Smoking-Related Fires, Medicines and Medical Devices. A standard approach to visits across the country will allow a dataset to be developed to ensure we remain evidence-focused to improve the safety of our most vulnerable.

We have been promoting the on-line self-assessment tool that will allow individuals to carry out their own assessment of their homes whilst being given generic safety advice. Where a significant risk is identified a referral is automatically generated, allowing us to support those identified as most in need of help and guidance.

## **EMERGENCY PLANNING**

The Emergency Planning & Business Continuity team are moving into an extremely busy period.

The passing of Her Majesty the Queen in September necessitated the implementation of the county's Operation London Bridge plans. This operation required a consistent and coordinated approach to the notification, activation and escalation of individual local resilience partnership plans to ensure the delivery of a safe and befitting response to a period of national mourning. The whole operation was coordinated from the County Emergency Centre (CEC) and the team played an active role from both a county council and Lincolnshire Resilience Forum (LRF) secretariat perspective. Planning for this event had been taking place

for several years and had been exercised during previous royal events. A full debrief has now taken place and learning is being incorporated into future Operation Bridges planning and will be used during next year's coronation planning which has been named Golden Orb.

Operation London Bridge resulted in the cancellation and postponement of many events including the national weeklong flooding exercise - Exercise FloodEx 2022. This exercise was rescheduled and took place in November and lasted for a full week, some of you may have taken part on the Friday recovery day or attended as an observer. Again, this exercise was coordinated from the CEC and there was full participation from all LRF partners. During the exercise there were a couple of film crews attending as part of the team's new LRF engagement project, a full report will be written following the debrief of the exercise.

As we move into the autumn/winter period, we also move into the main flooding and NHS winter pressures season. The team have been busy ensuring that policies, plans and procedures have all been reviewed in readiness. This year has seen the added pressures of soaring fuel and energy costs along with heightened inflation, interest rates and cost of living rises. The team are leading on two pieces of work looking into this area in more detail, they are project managing a piece of work entitled the Cost-of-Living Challenge and are also chairing the LRF's Winter Pressures Group. These pieces of work aim to bring all responsible organisations together to discuss and risk assess this situation, and to ensure that information is shared and a coordinated approach is taken to the challenges that may arise as a result.

The team are also committed to planning for any possible gas and electricity outages or issues that may occur because of the ongoing situation between the Ukraine and Russia and the resulting shortages and distribution issues. Whilst national planning assumptions state that, at the time of writing, gas and electricity availability should be okay, concerns remain. The media have been reporting that there may be rolling power cuts over the winter, and this is one of the areas where the team have been planning, liaising with the utility companies and LRF partners and trying to understand those areas that may need priority and looking into preparing plans once this information has been collated and understood. There are two distinct areas of planning; one is winter resilience planning, which relates to this piece of work, and the other is planning for a national power outage.

The Cabinet Office have been planning a national exercise to test the response to a national power outage for a number of years. It should be noted that this is not due to any heightened threat but something that needs to be exercised at a national level (similar to the recent FloodEx event). To this end, a national exercise has been planned to take place next year. This exercise will be played out over twenty-four hours and will involve all LRF partner organisations.

This exercise will, again, be coordinated from the CEC and it will include both tactical and strategic command groups. For realism, the CEC will also operate on its backup generator for the duration of the exercise. This exercise will have huge implications for the county council especially from a business continuity perspective as we would have to plan for prioritising our critical functions, loss of premises, loss of staff, loss of IT and utilities. The team already support our organisation's critical functions to ensure that they have business impact documents, risk assessments, plans and that there is a strategic corporate plan but in

preparation for the exercise the team will be contacting individual directorates and services over the coming weeks to facilitate small scale exercises and training events in preparation.

Finally, the Lincoln Christmas Market returns from 1 – 4 December. This is the county's largest major event and is attended by over two hundred thousand people. Planning for the event takes place all year round and the team support this by chairing the Safety Advisory Group and facilitating the exercise which took place at the beginning of this month. They will also be on shift at the multi-agency event control room for the duration of the event, to ensure that any incident can be swiftly responded to with appropriate coordination and plans implemented.

## **CULTURE**

### **£205,000 Arts Council Funding**

We have been successful in attracting £205,000 a year from the Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation programme for activity at The Collection and the Usher Gallery from 2023 to 2026. This is an increase from the £72,000 we have previously received on an annual basis.

The funding will allow us to work with schools and the community in both formal and informal settings, increasing schools' engagement with the arts through the curriculum, taking art out to schools and bringing schools into the gallery.

It will also allow us to uplift and add greater value to the exhibitions programme working with partners to maximise engagement with our temporary programme and to develop and deliver a rehang of the Usher Gallery.

### **Visit England Welcome Accolade**

Lincoln Castle, The Collection and Usher Art Gallery have been successful in winning Visit England's Welcome Accolade 2021/22.

Visit England's Accolades are designed to celebrate excellence within the visitor attraction sector and showcase those businesses that go the extra mile to provide a high-quality day out. This could be through a warm welcome, an engaging story, a delicious lunch, or the overall visitor experience.

Only 22 Welcome Accolades were awarded in the country. To achieve this accolade attractions are required to score 100% in the staffing section and at least 90 per cent overall score from the assessment.

### **Libraries**

We had an amazing Summer Reading Challenge this year which had over 3,000 children participate, giving an increase of 57 per cent compared to 2021 and 6 per cent in 2019. Given 2019 was our highest participation figure since the core libraries model was introduced, this 6 per cent increase is not insignificant. The Little Library Star Challenge launched in June,

where pre-schoolers got a little star on every visit (some weeks it was a double star week), was also well welcomed and enjoyed.

The Business Bubbles at Lincoln and Spalding libraries are progressing well, with approvals granted and physical works anticipated to start over the winter. This will see two sites adapted to provide space for start-ups to meet with clients and benefit from the services within the sites, such as free WiFi, printing from devices and access to COBRA – a software programme that is ideal for anyone looking to start a business, write a business plan or marketing plan or conduct research into a new market.

### **Lincoln Castle**

Lincoln Castle welcomed back the popular Steampunk weekend and Sausage Festival for the first time in three years with both events proving just as popular with the public.

The Steampunk festival saw the return of a mix of amazing costumes and steam-powered gadgetry to create an alternate reality centred in the grounds of Lincoln Castle and including a costume contest, wacky races, and creative installations.

The Sausage Festival showcased Lincolnshire produce from award-winning producers and entertainment by The Cosmic Sausages & Juggling Jim, cookery demonstrations with renowned Lincolnshire chef, Rachel Green, circus skills workshops, as well as, of course, the return of Mr and Mrs Sausage!

### **Sandford Award for Education**

The Culture Service's Learning Team has received the Sandford Award from the Heritage Education Trust for the outstanding quality of their learning offer at Lincoln Castle. The Sandford Award affords prestigious national recognition and independent endorsement of the high quality of the heritage learning offer and follows a rigorous and detailed assessment.

In particular, the report notes that: "Lincoln Castle offers students a truly unique educational opportunity to participate in historically authentic, intelligently designed and memorable learning activities in the atmospheric surroundings of a nationally significant heritage attraction. The enthusiasm its staff exude for the castle as a learning resource is palpable and there is a clear commitment to making a complex and multi-faceted site accessible to as wide an audience as possible."

### **Memory Lane, Pop-up Museum in Holbeach**

During the summer the Culture Service and the Historic Places Team worked in partnership with the local community in Holbeach, South Holland District Council and EnergyCell to create a pop-up museum in an empty shop on the High Street, called Memory Lane.

The exhibition has lots of information, artefacts, images and films from the past which tell some of the fascinating and unique stories of Holbeach and the surrounding area. It is proving to be popular not just with local residents, but also with visitors from further afield, and is helping to support local businesses.

The pop-up museum is going to feature as December's Attraction of the Month in the 'Best of British' magazine, with a national circulation of 100,000.

**A British Museum Spotlight Loan *Gathering light: A Bronze golden sun***

Fresh from being a key component of the British Museum's summer exhibition, World of Stonehenge, the British Museum has loaned The Collection a stunning gold sun pendant which will be on display at The Collection until 20 February 2023.

This treasure is over 4,000 years old and reveals the importance of the sun to the lives of our Bronze Age ancestors, including the use of precious gold to depict the golden star and its centrality to their beliefs in this period.

It is one of the most significant pieces of Bronze Age metalwork ever discovered in Britain and will only be displayed in three other venues across the country.