

# Agenda Item 6

## **COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 15 SEPTEMBER 2023**

**Statement from: Councillor M J Hill OBE – Leader of the Council, Executive Councillor for Resources, Communications and Commissioning**

### **COMMERCIAL**

#### **Procurement and Commissioning**

The Commercial Team (Infrastructure) have helped deliver a wide range of procurement and commissioning projects throughout 2023 including the supply, installation and maintenance of electric vehicle charging points with intelligent software to LCC's Business Centre portfolio, the employee benefits offer, the disposal and recycling of surplus furniture, the Council's software reseller to access Microsoft products & laptops, fire service fleet maintenance and the Customer Service Centre & digital transformation support.

Moving forward, the team are supporting the re-provision of the Corporate Property contract, with a particular focus on the multi-million pound Facilities Management service and we are assisting in the early stages of re-commissioning the Libraries service. To prepare for changes in the Environment Act 2021, which will place a requirement to divert food waste from landfill the team is supporting the commissioning and procurement of food waste collection.

### **FINANCE**

#### **Statement of Accounts 2021/2022 and 2022/2023**

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUCH) have been working with the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) to address the national issue of the number of local audits outstanding. Whilst our accounts for 2021/2022 have not received a final audit opinion, our external auditors have presented their findings to the Audit Committee and have provided assurance that the only outstanding items to address are technical accounting issues being addressed at a national level. The Council's draft accounts for 2022/2023 were presented to Audit Committee on the 19 June 2023 and were available for public inspection as per the statutory requirements. Our external auditors Mazars are currently reviewing our accounts and will be updating Audit committee of their progress on the 25 September 2023.

#### **Revenue and Capital budget monitoring Quarter 1 (Q1)**

The first budget monitoring reports for the current financial year 2023/2024 are based on the forecast position as at 30 June 2023. The reports were presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Management Board at its meeting on 24 August 2023, with the comments of the Board presented to the Executive on 5 September 2023. Our prudent budgeting has allowed us to fully budget for the delivery of our services, in spite of challenging economic factors. Whilst we continue to closely monitor our costs and service demands we are forecasting a small underspend on our budgets for 2023/2024 at this time.

## **CORPORATE SERVICES**

### **Devolution**

Greater Lincolnshire remains on track to agree a devolution proposal for the area. It is engaged in negotiations with government departments to secure funding and powers that will help to accelerate growth across our key sectors of food, energy security, ports and logistics. The deal text is being drafted with DLUHC officials and numerous government departments, setting out the powers and funding that will be contained within the devolution deal, and to a clear intention for further devolution beyond the first deal.

Briefing sessions have been offered to district council elected members to highlight the opportunities that devolution can offer to Greater Lincolnshire and update on the latest progress.

Work is on-going with the governance, reform, and democracy unit to ensure that effective arrangements are agreed and that there is appropriate representation from colleagues in district councils, businesses, and education providers. This will see further engagement with district councils and other stakeholders over the coming weeks.

It is still expected that a deal will be reached in Autumn 2023.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The newly commissioned Lincolnshire Domestic Abuse Specialist Service (LDASS), commenced on 1 April 2023. The priority during these initial five months has been to ensure a smooth transition to the new service model, whilst ensuring a continuation of support for child and adult victims of domestic abuse.

### **LDASS and Victim Lincs**

LDASS (provided by EDAN Lincs) offers three elements of service: Adult Intervention, Children and Young People and Independent Domestic Abuse Advocacy. Working in partnership with Victim Lincs (OPCC Victims services) there have been improvements to the triage process allowing LDASS to focus its resources on supporting victims and speeding up access to its services.

### **Digital Platform**

As part of the new contract expectations, EDAN Lincs have developed a new digital platform [www.ldass.or.uk](http://www.ldass.or.uk), the first phase of which went live in May 2023. This phase of the digital platform has been designed around the three key principles of prevention, protection, and recovery. The platform provides comprehensive information for both child and adult victims of domestic abuse and includes a chat or text-based service to ensure people have a range of ways to access the service and support at different times of the day and week.

The platform also has a professional's area, with resources tailored to meet the needs of partner stakeholders and referrers including promotional materials, referral pathways, information for referrers, top tips for referrals, what to expect following a referral, how to work jointly with the service, and how to identify and support victims. The service will continue to grow the number of resources over time and update where necessary.

### **Survivor groups**

To support a new element of the service model, Outreach and Engagement, EDAN Lincs has worked in partnership with the social prescribing team in South Holland to establish a pilot Domestic Abuse survivor group; with the focus being on building self-esteem, confidence and empowerment. EDAN Lincs worked with other professionals in the area to promote this group, to ensure they reached the intended audience. The service plans to work with other social prescribing groups and volunteering groups, to replicate this approach in other parts of the county.

## **COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 15 SEPTEMBER 2023**

**Statement from: Councillor Mrs P A Bradwell OBE - Deputy Leader and Executive Councillor for Children’s Services, Community Safety, Procurement and Migration.**

### **CHILDREN’S SERVICES**

#### **Leaving Care**

The support to our young people leaving care has received additional invigoration and funding through a successful bid to the Department For Education (DfE) around the staying Close and Connected agenda. Lincolnshire Children Services has successfully secured £1.3million extra funding to invest into a model aimed at supporting our young people so they stay connected to their previous children’s homes.

Staying Close is not simply a housing offer, it is a model which provides an enhanced package of support to young people leaving children’s homes and is designed to be a comparable offer to the option to Stay Put, which supports young people in foster care to remain with their former foster carers until age 21. Many care leavers report experiencing a ‘cliff-edge’ when they leave care and move out into independent tenancies, we want to create a service that helps young people achieve their best at that point of transition. The programme provides an offer of move-on accommodation, alongside a package of practical and emotional support from partner agencies and Lincolnshire’s leaving care service. This project will run for two years and will be subject to evaluation.

#### **Children’s Health Service**

The Children’s Health 0-19 team has seen an increased demand on the service post-pandemic and continues to focus on full delivery of the Healthy Child Programme. The service has introduced a new Community Nurse role to support delivery of the programme and ensure that health visitors can focus on meeting the more complex needs of our most vulnerable children. In line with the national picture, recruitment to health visitor posts remains challenging but the new nurse roles and our family health workers will ensure that families continue to receive a high-quality service. Despite the challenges, the service has recruited six student Health Visitors due to commence in September 2023 and will join the qualified workforce in September 2024, evidence that Lincolnshire continues to be viewed as an attractive place to work.

#### **Fostering**

Lincolnshire children in care who are unable to be placed within their family network or with connected persons are matched and placed with fostering families. The fostering service supervise and support a wide range and number of carers to offer placements for the short and longer term. The use of the Valuing Care Toolkit enables staff to match the needs of the children alongside the skills and knowledge of the foster carers available.

There continues to be a shortage of carers across the country and our efforts to retain and recruit carers is a continued priority. Valuing this group is essential and investing in them with

quality support, supervision and training in addition to an increase of 12% on the allowances this year will hopefully ensure that carers remain, and new carers will join us as their fostering agency of choice.

The service continues to attract new applications and the engagement of existing carers within the recruitment activity continues. This together with the fostering-friendly initiative, positive foster carer community and the layered support to carers to support children who have experienced trauma encourages the sustainability of our in-house provision, notwithstanding that commissioned resources continue to be needed to support the children in care numbers.

### **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Service**

In July, the SEND Employment Project hosted the very first SEND Careers and Employment Awards at Lincoln City Football Club. The event celebrated the talents and successes of young people with SEND and recognised some of the great staff that support them.

The project is creating careers and employment opportunities for young people and adults with special educational needs and disabilities. Awards were sponsored by local employers and presented to participants that have demonstrated excellence in their work.

Students from Eresby, Willoughby, Aegir, St Christopher's and St Francis Special Schools, along with learners from Lincolnshire County Council's (LCC) Young People's Learning Provision and Ancaster Day Centre received awards in the following categories: The PepsiCo Enterprise Challenge, Lincoln City Foundation Community Impact, the British Army's Desert Rats, Serco's Work Experience, Ruddock's Career Eager Beavers, Aaron Services' Supported Internships and LCC's awards to volunteers and students for their work in The QUAD Café. The event also celebrated the success of several young people who have now gained paid employment.

The SEND Employment Project continues to promote employer engagement and to widen opportunities for young people with SEND.

### **Schools**

The Education Team works closely with our strategic partners in the Teaching School Hub, Diocese of Lincoln, and schools to ensure that all schools have access to the best professional support and development possible. Through the Education Improvement Strategy, the majority of maintained schools continue to work collaboratively to support each other, and schools are accessing a range of nationally funded programmes for tutoring and intervention.

Early examination results show that Lincolnshire's primary pupils are performing well in relation to their starting points in most schools. The performance of secondary schools overall continues to be in line with the national picture. Our maintained schools are performing well in Ofsted inspections, but there is some turbulence in inspection outcomes in the academy sector.

### **School Admissions**

Despite an increase in demand, on national offer day 86% of secondary-age children received a place at their first-choice school, with a further 1% allocated their first preference following

revised applications and appeals. We expect this number will be higher next year as the cohort size decreases. For primary admissions, 95% received a place at their first-choice school.

### **Families First for Children - Pathfinder**

In July 2023, the DfE formally announced Lincolnshire as one of the initial three national Families First for Children Pathfinders which will run between September 2023 and March 2025. The pathfinders have been established as part of the government's children's social care implementation strategy, 'Stable Homes built on love' and responds to recommendations from the independent review of children's social care and the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel report on child protection. This brings opportunities to develop and test new ways of working within Lincolnshire who are recognised within the sector as an innovative and transformational authority. The pathfinder has been created to co-design new reforms to Family Help, Child Protection, Statutory Safeguarding Partnerships and in unlocking the potential of Family Networks for children and families across Lincolnshire.

In Lincolnshire we will now start work alongside key government agencies and local partners including Police, Health, and Education within Lincolnshire to support the creation of a future system where we support families in a new way and develop a stronger multi-agency and expert child protection response. Our work on this pathfinder will be captured and evaluated by the Department for Education, with a view towards wider national sector led improvement.

### **Children's Homes Expansion**

Work on Robin House, the new children's home in Lincoln is now complete and the home will open early September following confirmation of successful Ofsted Registration. Construction is well underway for our second new build children's home in Louth which is expected to open early 2024. These exciting projects have been made possible due to DfE match funding.

### **Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme**

This programme continues to build on the strong provision of Children's Centres and our early help offer. A range of services to enhance children, parents and families' experiences have been commissioned and will be implemented over the next three months.

In June and July we saw the launch of three of our Family Hubs:- Lincoln North, Sleaford and Swingbridge. The launches were enjoyed by many families and partners with a range of enrichment activities on offer.

Our next steps are:

- To implement our training plan and workforce development strategy.
- Work with locality teams to ensure the start for life offer is embedded.
- Embed parent/carer panels to inform the programme.
- Develop our evaluation methodology.

### **Children's Centres**

Children's Centres continue to be popular and well attended across Lincolnshire, with a range of family activities taking place during August to support families during the school holidays. We have seen high engagement at the themed holiday events which have included Rhubarb Theatre company and sensory themed sessions which include visits from the sensory bus. Baby massage continues to be very popular with courses fully booked and lovely feedback regularly shared by families.

### **Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF)**

For Summer 2023 we have one-hundred and thirty-two HAF clubs across Lincolnshire, seventeen of which are SEND specific. All providers delivering HAF in Lincolnshire should provide an inclusive offer and are supported with advice and guidance where required to help them to meet the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities. From last year HAF has seen a rapid growth in clubs in particular those being provided for children with additional needs.

The Lincolnshire programme has been recognised by the DfE for its partnership work and presented to other local authorities on 'value for money' showcasing how donations have enhanced our clubs. Some of our partners include, Branston Ltd, GoGro, Lincolnshire Coop, Active Lincolnshire, Community Dental Services and many more.

A Lincolnshire provider has also been recognised for engaging with secondary-aged girls to improve fitness, make new friendship groups and access a variety of enrichment activities and was awarded with a special recognition award during the annual DfE HAF awards at Westminster earlier this year.

## **COMMUNITY SAFETY**

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### **Digital Platform**

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of domestic abuse and includes a chat or text-based service to ensure people have a range of ways to access the service and support at different times of the day and week.

### **Serious Violence**

The Safer Lincolnshire Partnership has agreed a serious violence strategy that will focus on the following areas:

- Public place serious violence, with or without a weapon, particularly in the night-time economy and related to the illicit drug trade.
- Male on male violence, particularly in the under 25s.
- Sexual offences, particularly against the 0-19s.
- Geographic pockets of violence that are in the most prevalent areas in Lincolnshire (this will be monitored and addressed through regular analytical reviews and a place based, whole system approach).
- Homicide (Domestic/Non-Domestic).

## **MIGRATION**

### **Homes for Ukraine**

Since the Homes for Ukraine scheme launched on 14 March 2022 Lincolnshire has welcomed over one-thousand three-hundred Ukrainian guests to join their hosts across the County. The Scheme is still live with new applications received every week (though at much lower numbers in comparison to Spring/Summer 2022).

Some guests are successfully starting to move on to other areas of the UK either into independent accommodation or to a new host. However, the majority are choosing to stay in Lincolnshire where they have settled into the community, may have children in school and started working. More than one-hundred and sixty family groups and individuals are now living independently in the County; whilst two-hundred and fifty family groups and individuals are residing in hosting arrangements. The rest have moved to other areas, moved abroad or returned to Ukraine.

### **Afghan Resettlement**

In Spring the government announced plans to end the use of bridging hotels that nationally are still temporarily housing around eight-thousand Afghans. On 14 May 2023, the government issued formal notice to those housed at The Urban Hotel in Grantham to vacate their accommodation by 25 August 2023. South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) is taking the lead and a dedicated Housing Officer has been working with twenty-seven Afghan families. Following intensive support from SKDC over the last few months, only four families are looking to remain in the county with the other twenty-three families sourcing accommodation elsewhere in the Country. All families have a plan for settled accommodation to move on to once the hotel is closed.

### **Asylum Dispersal**

Following the government announcement in March 2023 that surplus military sites will be used to accommodate asylum seekers, RAF Scampton in Lincolnshire was identified to house approximately two-thousand single, adult males.



A factsheet along with frequently asked questions (FAQ's) has been produced by the Home Office and can be found [here](#)

West Lindsey District Council is pursuing legal action seeking to prevent the use of the site. East Midlands Councils Strategic Migration Partnership are chairing a weekly Multi-Agency Forum (MAF). This strategic group of chief officers is seeking assurance that all identified risks have been considered and mitigated appropriately by the Home Office and its contractors before the site is mobilised.

In addition to utilisation of the MAF governance, the Local Government Association (LGA) have chaired meetings between all large site Chief Executives and Senior Civil Servants. The three Lincolnshire Council Leaders have also corresponded with the Immigration Minister to seek the government's response to actions expected of the Home Office to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the local community, those accommodated and staff working on site. They are also seeking recognition that a major national infrastructure project requires significant resource commitment, should it go ahead as planned.

We continue to liaise with colleagues in Essex, East Sussex and North Yorkshire, to share information/learning, especially as other large sites have already gone live and can share valuable reflections.

## **COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 15 SEPTEMBER 2023**

**Statement from Councillor Mrs W Bowkett, Executive Councillor for Adult Care and Public Health**

### **PUBLIC HEALTH**

#### **Greater Lincolnshire Public Health Pilot**

The Greater Lincolnshire Public Health Pilot has now come to an end after eighteen months of collaboration between the Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire public health teams. The Lincolnshire Health Protection Service exited Greater Lincolnshire arrangements at the end of July having agreed priorities and programmes of work, which are now being progressed within their respective teams. As of the end of August, Derek Ward has returned to his pre-pilot role as Director of Public Health at Lincolnshire County Council.

#### **Oral Health**

Oral Health remains a key priority for Public Health and we have contributed significantly to the development of the Lincolnshire Dental Strategy. The focus of Public Health is on oral health promotion, supporting people to know how to look after their teeth and gums through information campaigns and targeted projects. Recently, as part of National Smile Month, we worked in collaboration with the Community Dental Service and The Red Arrows to run a poster competition for children across Lincolnshire. The winning poster will be used to promote oral health messages in the future. Next, we will support local delivery of Mouth Cancer Action Month in November. We also promote good oral health by distributing toothbrushing packs to vulnerable groups, including to children through the Holiday Activity and Food Programme, through the Health Visiting Programme, and to service users in key Public Health Commissioned Services.

#### **Mental Health and Wellbeing**

Suicide Prevention remains a key priority for the Mental Health, Dementia, Learning Disability and Autism Alliance. Currently, we are focussing on refreshing the Lincolnshire Suicide Prevention Strategy and exploring ways to support people following a suicide attempt. We continue to raise awareness and provide training that aligns with the aims of World Suicide Prevention Day, which took place recently.

I am pleased to announce the launch of a new website, hosted by Double Impact, which signposts to support for gambling related harms. Gambling is a key risk factor for poor mental health and suicide, and raising awareness of where to go for help is important both for people who experience gambling harms and professionals who are supporting them.

#### **New Strength and Balance Service Launched**

Our new Strength and Balance Exercise Service for falls prevention is up and running. The programme follows the well-established FaME (Falls Management Exercise) model. Delivered by One You Lincolnshire, there are currently five groups up and running - two in Lincoln, one in Spalding, one in Moulton and one in Skegness. Further roll out is planned, focusing on rural

and coastal Lincolnshire. So far, participants have been very complimentary about the support received through the programme.

### **Health Protection in Care Homes**

The Health Protection Team continues to work collaboratively across Health and Social Care to influence the delivery of a proactive care model in care homes across Lincolnshire. Alongside the Integrated Care Board (ICB), the Health Protection Team recently supported the launch of the 'to dip or not to dip' protocol, an evidence-based pathway which aims to improve the diagnosis and management of Urinary Tract Infections (UTI) in older people living in care homes. This has now been introduced into Orders of St John Care Trust homes with the intention to implement it in all Primacy Care Networks and care home settings.

Results of the LCC 2022/2023 Annual Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Assurance Programme for Care Homes were positive, with the majority of care homes demonstrating overall IPC compliance and indicating good standards of practice. Of the two hundred and eighty-nine homes in Lincolnshire, forty three did not achieve overall compliance in some or all IPC criteria. These homes are currently receiving intensive support via their named Health Protection Nurse, with training and improvement plans in place to address areas where compliance was not achieved. We will prioritise re-inspection of these homes in the 2023/2024 IPC Assurance Programme.

### **Integrated Lifestyle Service – One You Lincolnshire**

This year our Integrated Lifestyle Service, One You Lincolnshire, has been evaluated by the University of Lincoln and has been found to outperform national standards in every area – for smoking cessation, weight loss, alcohol reduction and increased physical activity. The service has also been shown to have a positive impact on health inequalities, with more people accessing the service from the groups that experience poorest health outcomes.

### **Child & Family Weight Management Pilot**

Helping our children maintain a healthy weight is a key priority for the Health and Wellbeing Board and Integrated Care System. This year our new Child & Family Weight Management service 'Gloji Energy' has been offering support to families, including to those who are classified as obese via the National Child Measurement Programme. This is an innovative pilot programme designed to ensure children and families can get active, have fun but also learn how to eat well and stay healthy. We've seen some very positive feedback from families and it has been featured on BBC Look North. We look forward to evaluating this pilot fully in 2024.

### **E-cigarettes & Vaping**

The growth in children and young people using vapes has caused some concern in the last twelve months. Our public health team have led work to contribute to the government's 'call for evidence' on the subject, ensuring that the perspective of people in Lincolnshire is heard as national policy is considered. Work with colleagues in Children's Services and Trading Standards will continue to ensure that we are supporting schools and young people to understand the risks around tobacco products, including disposable and reusable vapes, and to ensure that the problem of illicit and illegal vapes is addressed.

## **ADULT CARE**

### **Day Services – The Quad Café**

The Quad Café opened its doors in July 2022 with a mission to create purposeful opportunities for people of all abilities. The café is now run and operated by a dedicated team including people with learning disabilities from the county's day service and hosts work placements from local special schools, with the café becoming an asset for the city.

The café has cultivated a loyal customer base who are as invested in the café's social mission as they are in the coffee and cakes! Many have taken part in the café's innovative 'seed cycle' offer, where customers take a free seed kit and return a few months later and re donate their produce to the café.

The Quad's wider supply chain also reflects its social focus. A network of community groups now supply fresh produce and engage in the seed exchange program, driven by a shared commitment to the café's social impact. The success of the Café has allowed The Quad to support these local projects, by gifting Polly tunnels and equipment to build accessible raised beds.

One year on The Quad continues to thrive by providing purposeful placement opportunities and pathways into work for participants who benefit from welcoming, supportive work experience where they can learn, contribute, and grow.

### **Team Around the Adult**

In June, the Team Around the Adult (TAA) hosted a one-day Conference in partnership with the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adults Board. The focus on effective multi-disciplinary meetings, trauma-informed approaches and hoarding. Glen Garrod, Executive Director for Adult Care and Community Well-being welcomed one hundred and twenty participants from all agencies across Lincolnshire. The conference provided an opportunity to discuss and explore ideas about how to achieve the best outcomes, making sure that intervention and action plans are developed to help and support people with a range of complex needs and always ensuring the person is central to the process. The evaluations from the day show how successful the event was; as well as positive feedback on increasing knowledge, participants commented on the positive atmosphere and a wonderful opportunity to share ideas and make new connections.

Phase two of TAA continues to undertake a multi-agency audit of forty cases with the aim of learning to identify opportunities for early intervention and prevention. Analysing themes and trends, the Team Around the Adult Phase two strategic Task and Finish Group has identified a need for co-ordinated and multi-agency access to Trauma informed intervention training, which the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adults Board has now agreed to develop and put in place in Lincolnshire. Emerging findings associated with the perception of 'non-engagement' and individuals 'not being ready' for support has also informed a review of the LSAB Self-Neglect Protocol.

## **Lincolnshire's Care Workforce – Updated Action Plan**

The adult social care workforce is the key enabler to delivering the right services, at the right time, to the right standard to meet the needs of the people who draw on services in Lincolnshire.

There are approximately 23,500 jobs in adult social care, across Lincolnshire split between local authorities (3%), independent sector providers (92%) and jobs working for direct payment recipients (5%). Attracting and retaining the workforce remains a key priority and as such the 'Bridging the Gap' action plan has been updated by The Independent & Voluntary Sector Workforce Strategy Group which is chaired by Justin Hackney, Assistant Director for Specialist Adult Services and Safeguarding.

The membership of the group recognises that most organisations or individuals responsible for employing people to deliver care and support will have their own strategies, plans and approaches to secure a sustainable and high-quality workforce that will be capable of delivering excellent outcomes. The group is focussed on taking forward strategic areas that will add value to the wider work being completed in the Lincolnshire Health and Care system in relation to workforce matters.

The strategy group reports into the wider Integrated Care System (ICS) People Board but also provides a dedicated place to focus on the Adult Social Care workforce. The updated plan sets out the priorities we will work on together over the next two years (and beyond). The priorities included in this plan have been informed by several sources of intelligence including but not limited to, feedback from the sector, feedback from people who need care and support, strategic risks, local commissioning strategies & plans and national policy and strategy.

### **CQC Assurance Pilot**

The Health and Care Act 2022 gave the Care Quality Commission, (CQC) new powers to assess how adult social care performs. Under the new regime, the CQC will be reviewing data and published evidence across all local authorities with responsibility for adult social care, focusing on care provision, integration and continuity as well as assessing needs.

Data and evidence from this review won't be published at individual local authority level but will be published at an overall national level as a collection of evidence similar to their annual statutory 'State of Care' report to Parliament.

Prior to the formal assessments of local authorities taking place (which are expected to start in October) and in the intervening period, LCC expressed an interest in supporting CQC with a pilot to test their assurance methodology. We see the CQC assurance process as something that will add value to our existing ambitions of continuous improvement. It was a very busy three-month period from May through to the end of July, taken up with the CQC Assurance pilot. Many of our ACCW staff were involved, diverting their efforts from the usual day job in preparing the data and readying ourselves for the CQC team visit to County Offices and the interviews they undertook. A host of information about the way we provide support and the way we all work together was completed by the deadline of early June and ninety-four

colleagues were interviewed as part of the Assurance process in early July. We now must wait for the formal feedback from CQC and their overall rating.

### **Specialist Housing**

The Council is committed to supporting Lincolnshire residents to live as independently as possible and remain in a home of their own where they can age in place, with access to care and support. Working in partnership with District Councils and Registered Housing Providers, the Council aims to improve the health and wellbeing of older people and adults of working age with a disability and help reduce funding pressures attached to domiciliary and residential care.

In March 2022, De Wint Court opened its doors after two years construction, offering alternative accommodation choice for older people. The scheme, in partnership with the City of Lincoln Council is the first development of LCC's capital programme and features seventy one- and two-bedroom apartments in Lincoln. The scheme has provided Lincolnshire residents with additional employment opportunities, with twenty-four new jobs created for individuals who were previously out of work. 20% of the construction workers lived within 5km of the scheme and eight apprentices were employed to support development.

De Wint Court has helped to divert people from residential care, improve social isolation, and provide health and wellbeing benefits for tenants. Many tenants have experienced a decrease in the care and support hours they require since moving into De Wint Court, whilst other tenants have shared how they are now able to see close family members who haven't been able to visit them in the past due to access issues in their previous accommodation - just one example of the improvements individuals have experienced to their lives since signing their tenancy at De Wint Court.

The Council recognises the importance of housing to someone's health and wellbeing and continues to partner with others to fulfil its ambitions. Following the demand for De Wint Court, the Council has partnered with LACE Housing and West Lindsey District Council to provide additional extra care units for older people within the West Lindsey district. The scheme on Prebend Lane, Welton which started construction in April 2023 will feature an additional sixty-two units of accommodation for over 55's. The scheme is due to complete at the end of 2024.

In February 2021 the Council committed to supporting the development of an extra care scheme for older people and supported living accommodation for working aged adults with a disability in Sleaford. In partnership with North Kesteven District Council, the scheme once complete will feature fifty-two units of accommodation. The scheme is currently progressing through the planning process and subject to planning approval and funding will commence development in early 2024.

In addition, in March 2023 working in partnership with ACIS Group and West Lindsey District Council, LCC committed to support the regeneration of Market Rasen House in the centre of Market Rasen to provide ten apartments for working aged adults with a disability. This scheme will be the first of its kind for the Council within the county providing exclusive access

for service users. Subject to planning and funding the scheme will commence construction in Autumn 2023 with the desire to open its doors in September 2024.

## **COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 15 SEPTEMBER 2023**

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

### **PEOPLE MANAGEMENT**

#### **HR Management Information**

There has been further improvement in the workforce metrics over the last twelve months. 2022/2023 saw a continued and gradual reduction in days lost to sickness absence but this was above the County Council target 7.5 full time equivalent (FTE).

2023/2024 Quarter 1 however, has seen the first reduction under the target and is now at 7.44 FTE. It has been nearly two years since the Council reported at this level. Similarly, the twelve-month voluntary turnover percentage has also continued to decline and is now at its lowest for twelve-months at 9.27%.

### **LEGAL SERVICES**

From 8 to 10 August 2023 Legal Services Lincolnshire underwent a full assessment of its compliance with LEXCEL, the Law Society's Practice Management Standard. The assessor found no areas of non-conformity with the standard and twenty areas of good practice. The LEXCEL standard applies across the legal profession including private practice and is an important part of the assurance framework for Legal Services. This excellent result provides evidence for the Council that the service is run in accordance with established professional principles.

### **CORPORATE PROPERTY**

#### **Property Services Re-procurement**

On 4 July 2023, Executive approved the direction of travel regarding the re-procurement of Property Services (once the existing contract ends in March 2025). This will include the insourcing of several property professionals to strengthen the statutory compliance responsibilities around our buildings and ensure property projects are delivered within budget and on time. In addition, it will improve the overall responsiveness of our Property Services and ensure value for money in all construction related activities.

#### **Property Rationalisation Project**

Lincolnshire County Council's (LCC) Smarter Working project was launched with the aim of improving technology and adapting our workspaces to support colleagues to deliver their best for our communities. Our approach, which also includes the widespread adoption of hybrid working is detailed in our Smarter Working Policy. As this approach has now been embedded across LCC, Smarter Working as a project has been formally closed and a Property Rationalisation Project has been launched with effect from September 2023. This Rationalisation Programme will focus on reviewing the main Lincoln Newland Campus, including re-opening Orchard House B, and welcoming colleagues from some outsourced services into the council onto the Newland Campus. We will also



be working with colleagues who work across Lincolnshire to enhance and rationalise our buildings in other areas of the County.

**Deepings Leisure Centre**

The Council has a statutory obligation to grant a 125-year Academy lease to the Academy Trust operating the Deepings School. To enable this to progress, following an Executive decision on 4 July, an Expressions of Interest exercise was launched on 11 August 2023 offering an opportunity for a third party to acquire, refurbish and operate the vacant Deepings Leisure Centre. The opportunity will run for six weeks, closing on 22 September and will be subject to a viable and sustainable business case. Should a successful bid not be received, the Council will look to demolish the Leisure Centre. A formal decision will be made by December 2023, following a full review and evaluation of proposals.

## **COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 15 SEPTEMBER 2023**

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

### **LINCOLNSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE**

#### **Operational Response**

In the first quarter of 2023/2024 the service saw a reduction in the number of incidents compared to last year. The biggest reduction was in secondary fires, which was attributed to environmental factors. For example, Lincolnshire experienced fewer wildfires, as the county was not exposed to such extreme temperatures during June and July of this year.

#### **His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS)**

Lincolnshire Fire & Rescue (LFR) was one of the first services to be inspected as part of tranche one of the third round of HMICFRS inspections. The inspection visits were conducted over eight weeks in May and June of this year, and had a significant resource impact on the service, as staff supported the inspection process.

The initial feedback received following the inspection is largely positive. While there will be areas for improvement detailed in the inspectors' final report, overall, the inspectorate suggested that the service is moving in a positive direction.

The final report is due in the autumn and will, no doubt, detail areas for improvement. We understand that there is a slight delay in the publication of the report so that moderation to benchmark against other inspections can be completed.

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

The development of LFR's new Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP 2024-2028) has been the focus of the integrated risk management team over recent months. The team, together with staff from Lincolnshire County Council's communications team have conducted two public engagement forums to ensure we fully understand our community's perception of risk across the county. The feedback will enable us to shape our organisation to ensure we continue to have the right resources in the right place at the right time.

We continue to focus on our business continuity arrangements to ensure we have robust and resilient plans in place to deal with significant events such as staff shortages. This was highlighted through the planning phases following the need to prepare for potential industrial action at the beginning of 2023.

Following national research undertaken by the University of Central Lancashire, and the designation of firefighting as a carcinogenic occupation by the World Health Organisation, the service undertook a gap analysis. Work is now underway to ensure we adopt the appropriate procedures and protocols to protect our staff accordingly.

The development of Grantham Fire Station has been completed, with a refurbishment of the station and the development of a training facility on the site.

The purchase of the Waddington training facility site has also been completed and work is now underway to identify how the site can be developed to meet the future needs of LFR, including collaboration opportunities with our other blue light partners.

The service support team have been successful in implementing Office 365 and the service's new intranet site. This work is a significant step change for LFR and will enable optimisation across a number of our functions. It will also enhance to our communication channels across the service.

Work has now started on the procurement of a new management information system, enabling us to utilise data sets to drive decision making and to share information across systems within LFR to ensure we eliminate inefficiencies.

The replacement of the control room's command and control/mobilisation software, in addition to the aging station communications equipment, has been initiated. This will consider a wide range of new technologies, and represents a key investment for the service and authority. The service support team will be instrumental in providing guidance and support throughout the lifecycle of the project which will continue into 2025/2026.

### **People**

The service has taken steps to ensure that the recommendations contained in the London Fire Brigade cultural review are actioned within our service. We have developed a people framework that links to our CRMP. HMICFRS also published a spotlight report into values and culture which has informed our thinking.

The service is reviewing staff structures to ensure it is making best use of skills, and ensuring it is capable of meeting the demands of the future. The first part of this structural review will take place in November 2023, while full delivery is likely to extend over 2-3 years. As part of the process, we have both engaged and consulted with staff widely and will continue to do so as the project moves forward.

### **Fire Protection**

A positive end to 2022 resulted in the three areas identified as a 'cause for concern', in the previous HMICFRS report, have been signed off by the Inspectorate. A significant amount of effort from the team ensured that several improvements were able to be implemented, whilst maintaining a focus on the next inspection.

Our risk-based inspection programme (RBIP), has continued to evolve and we have aligned our categorisation of risk to the most recent guidance issued by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC). Delivery against the RBIP remains on track, with a focus on using partner datasets to ensure our understanding of local risk is enhanced and drives our protection activities.

The competence and development of the fire protection team and operational crews, to support delivery of protection activities, continues to be a priority. We have developed a robust training plan and have committed to utilising the Home Office grant funding to upskill our workforce. A programme of training to uplift the skill sets of our operational crews is ensuring that we have resilience arrangements in place for the enforcement of fire safety legislation.

The team have been developing a service-wide response to the new and emerging risk of Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS). Linking with colleagues in Planning, we are contributing to consultations to outline minimum safety standards required within fire safety management plans.

### **Fire Prevention**

Understanding risk and ensuring we target our resources and support towards those identified as most vulnerable has been a focus for the team. In partnership with the Integrated Risk team, we have developed our risk profiling and identification methodology. By understanding key vulnerabilities that make individuals more at risk from fires and injuries in the home setting, we have been able to identify datasets to allow us to profile and categorise risk to household level. Engagement with LCC colleagues in Public Health has allowed us to utilise external datasets to enhance the risk profile.

A national focus on evaluating the impact of prevention activities has offered direction for the prevention management team. We have been able to implement a comprehensive evaluation programme that measures three specific areas; behavioural change, social and economic benefits and measures against key performance indicators. Performance is presented regularly to our Performance Management Board, evidencing how we are having a positive impact on our communities.

Safeguarding remains a priority for the team and service. The NFCC have developed and published national policy and we have been working hard to review and adopt where relevant. Following a recent change in legislation requiring service staff to have a three yearly enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check, arrangements have been put in place to implement this step change.

## **EMERGENCY PLANNING AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY SERVICE**

### **Business Continuity Audit**

The Emergency Planning and Business Continuity team are responsible for co-ordinating the completion of suitable risk assessments and plans for LCC critical functions to ensure mitigation of service disruption and recovery from any business continuity incidents.

Internal Audit will be carrying out a full audit of LCC business continuity preparedness commencing the end of October. The objective is to assess the effectiveness and readiness of the council's business continuity management and delivery. The audit aims to identify strengths, weaknesses and any areas for improvement. It will focus on looking at delivery,

training, assessment and plans across different services. As this is a corporate risk, it gets a high profile with the Audit Committee and is due for completion by the end of November.

We are audited every three years and, last time, we received substantial assurance. In preparation for this, the team are working towards ensuring that all area plans have been recently updated and validated through a series of tabletop exercises, an area highlighted during the last audit for some improvement.

### **Scampton**

The team are also involved in planning for the arrival of asylum seekers at the former RAF Scampton site. Members of the team have been attending a range of planning meetings and liaising with other council departments and wider partners.

In the absence of any site emergency plans for the site, the team were asked to design and facilitate an exercise to test a range of scenarios that are deemed foreseeable risks. This exercise took place on 10 August and was attended by partners from the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum (LRF), our own departments and the Home Office were also in attendance.

### **Training and Exercises**

The new LRF training prospectus, designed and delivered by the team, has now been published for the next twelve months. All council strategic and tactical commanders have access to this training and will be contacted when they are due for refresh, or if they require training – for example – because of promotion to a different post or are new to the organisation. Our officers all have their training records stored on a new training database.

Exercise Mighty Oak took place in March which involved both Nettleham HQ and the County Emergency Centre (CEC). The exercise had huge implications for both LRF partners and the council especially from a business continuity perspective. Debriefs have taken place and learning is being incorporated into plans and procedures. The final exercise report was presented to the LRF Programme Management Board in August, all recommendations have been accepted and added to relevant workstreams.

Preparations are under way for the planning of next year's LRF multi-agency exercise. It is hoped to test our developing plans for the recovery from a Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, (CBRN) incident. The team will be leading this piece of work and bringing the planning group together. In total, another nine relevant plans will also be tested as part of this exercise.

It is worth noting that the rest centre registration project has found an alternative way to take forward digital registration for evacuees, including the ability to share this information securely with police casualty bureaus and similar during times of emergency. These new procedures will be tested during exercise Ezra taking place on 4 October at the Embassy Centre in Skegness. The exercise will also involve local community groups established and trained by the team.

Following the highly successful LRF continuing professional development days at the Showroom in Lincoln in early 2023, the team are working on putting together next year's CPD

events. The events are designed for strategic and tactical commanders to ensure that their portfolios are kept up to date and all LCC commanders receive an invite. The location for the events next year is Bishop Grosseteste University and speakers already confirmed are Jonathan Van Tam and Figen Murray, who lost her son during the Manchester Arena attack and who has campaigned for better venue planning, which resulted in Martyn's Law.

### **Drone Project**

The drone project is now operational, and two drones have been purchased, with the first three pilots from the team having passed both their theory and practical Civil Aviation Authority exams. The drones allow us to conduct pre-emergency planning and survey work but can be used alongside police drones during large scale incidents, if necessary. Surveys of Lincoln Castle and Lincoln City Football Club have already been carried out and used as training exercises. This has resulted in 3D modelling which has been shared with these locations.

### **LRF Strategy and Business Plan**

The team have been working on the new LRF strategy and business plan which will be in place for the next three years. The new plan reflects the UK Government Resilience Framework, (UKGRF), the stronger LRFs programme and pillars of reform. It also reflects its new structure and innovation projects which have been made possible by central government's pilot funding scheme.

### **LRF Winter Campaign**

Emergency Planning act as chair of the LRF Warning and Forming group and will be putting together the usual advice to the public regarding severe weather and flooding as we approach the autumn and winter. This year's campaign will be enhanced by the launch of the LRF's new website which will take place during September. The website has been designed to be very user friendly and residents can enter their postcodes to find out more information about risks in their area. During times of emergency, separate maps will be published which will give out more information regarding any flooded areas or road closures. It is hoped that, as part of the promotion, residents will use the site as a trusted source of information both in peacetime and during emergencies.

## **CULTURE**

### **Heritage**

#### ***King Charles III visits the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight***

King Charles III visited the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, based at RAF Coningsby, in July where he met World War Two veterans, volunteers and staff at the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight and the Visitor Centre operated by Lincolnshire County Council's Heritage Service.

#### ***Lincoln Castle makes list of top national attractions***

VisitEngland has named Lincoln Castle grounds one of the top 20 most visited free attractions in 2022. With over 660,000 visitors last year, the castle joins a prestigious list of tourism heavyweights like the Natural History Museum, British Library and Tate Modern.

In a crowded field of museums and art galleries, Lincoln stands out as the only castle grounds to make the list. The huge increase in visitors last year was undoubtedly helped by a certain friendly fire-breather who took up residence in the grounds in April - Lucy the Dragon. These are reassuring figures against a national trend that demonstrate how the sites' post covid recovery is going from strength to strength.

### ***Mind bending digital exhibitions at Lincoln Museum***

Our family friendly, mind bending digitally interactive exhibition 'Coded: Digital Art that Defies Definition' opened at Lincoln Museum in July, alongside a fascinating exhibition about Lincolnshire's own George Boole. These two exhibitions complement each other, where the visitor can interact with a spectacular, coded environment that reacts to noise, movement, and touch; visitors will also be inspired by the life and legacy of the Lincolnshire-born mathematician George Boole, who devised Boolean algebra, on which much of our computer language is based today.

### ***Incredible things can happen when you open up the doors to new voices***

The Community Choice exhibition launched at the Usher Gallery in June. The wide array of artwork has been selected by five incredible community groups, who each work with Lincoln Museum and Usher Gallery in different ways to showcase the quality and breadth of the work in our collection and as a celebration of the many amazing community connections that we have.

### ***Charles Sharpe's Victoria Cross***

The Museum of Lincolnshire Life has acquired, on a five-year renewable loan agreement, Charles Sharpe's medal set, including his Victoria Cross. The medals belong to South Kesteven District Council and, for some years, were on display in the Mayor's Parlour in Grantham. At present they are with our Preservation Officer awaiting condition checking and remounting for display and we hope to have them on display in the Regimental Galleries shortly.

### ***Lincolnshire sheep heads to Norway***

The painting, 'Mr Healey's Sheep', which is usually displayed in the Parlour Room set at the Museum of Lincolnshire Life, is currently on loan to the National Museum of Norway in Oslo, for inclusion in their exhibition 'Oltra Terra: Why Wool Matters', which runs until October 2023. The exhibition explores the development of sheep farming and wool production.

The painting depicts gentleman sheep-breeder, Mr Healey of Scunthorpe feeding turnips to his sheep. In 1834, Mr Healey challenged the sheep breeders of Britain to a weigh-in on the Market Place in Brigg. William beat the competition hands down weighing in at 31 stones!

Unfortunately, poor William was then slaughtered to weigh his meat, but the competition raised the profile of the Lincolnshire Longwool breed across the country.

The painting returns to the Museum of Lincolnshire Life in October.

## **Libraries**

### ***Lincolnshire Libraries App***

We have now launched our new libraries app on both Apple and Android phones and tablets, it is free to download and is proving to be a great success, making it even easier to check accounts, opening hours or reserve items.

### ***Summer reading Challenge***

This year's summer reading challenge focused on 'Ready, Set, Read', which is a teamwork and games themed challenge to inspire children to take part and have fun. The challenge motivates children to keep reading over the summer holidays to build their skills and confidence, with lots of activities delivered across the sites and prizes won. It is open to all primary school aged children and is designed for all reading abilities. There was also the mini challenge for children aged four and under, where they received a sticker for each book read and a bookmark if they completed six books.

### ***Library improvements***

Boston Library has undergone significant refurbishment including providing a new dedicated entrance to the library. Double glazing has been installed in the library atrium, and new LED lights have been put in throughout to make the library more energy efficient. The layout of the library has also been changed to improve the flow around the site from the new entrance.

The Business Bubbles at Lincoln and Spalding libraries are now completed and operational. They provide space for start-ups to meet with clients and benefit from the services within the sites, such as free WiFi, and printing from devices. Finally, we continue to grow from the pandemic, welcoming more customers and issues than last year.



## **COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 15 SEPTEMBER 2023**

**Statement from: Councillor C J Davie, Executive Councillor for Economic Development, Environment and Planning**

### **GROWTH SERVICES**

#### **Small Business Premises Portfolio**

At the South Lincolnshire Food Enterprise Zone near Holbeach in South Holland, private sector investment continues to follow on from the Council's investment to support the growth of the agri-tech and food-tech sectors, and being at the centre of the UK Food Valley is creating an impact over a much wider area.

On phase I, a local food sector control and automation company has recently completed and is now occupying a bespoke facility, and a local developer is soon to start building speculative business accommodation on a further three plots. Interest in phase II also continues and we are in advanced discussions with an innovative farming inward investor.

In addition, the Council's new, three-storey innovation centre, 'The Hub', which opened in September on a sixth plot, now has six tenants over eight offices and two workshops.

At Kirton Distribution Park in Boston Borough, an investor/developer with significant job creation plans and a local business undertaking a strategic consolidation and expansion, continue to undertake their due diligence and await planning consent with a view to completing the purchase of phases II and III.

In East Lindsey, the Skegness Countryside Business Park extension, which Members will recall was completed in May 2021, will provide a much-needed opportunity for local employers to expand in sectors which will help to diversify the coastal economy. A local developer is now nearing completion of several industrial units on the first plot, which will be available for small local businesses to rent.

At the Eventus Business Centre in Market Deeping, South Kesteven, the spatial reconfiguration scheme is complete. The centre now offers grow-on space for expanding businesses and has responded to small businesses' new hybrid accommodation requirements by introducing agile/'co-working' space for flexible and collaborative working for existing tenants and other local businesses. A successful 're-launch' event was held on 19<sup>th</sup> July.

Across the county, we continue to support our small business tenants, which total around 150, in our five business centres, innovation centre and industrial and commercial units, which cover 25 separate estates/locations in 18 towns. Occupancy levels remain buoyant with a healthy mix of lease renewals and new tenants.

#### **Energy for Growth**

The Council's leadership role in the countywide energy for growth agenda continues with developing relationships with electricity Distribution Network Operators to understand their

plans across Lincolnshire to assist growth in areas, especially where supply is volatile. This is complemented by a year-long 'Energy Options Analysis for Greater Lincolnshire' study to identify energy constraints and promote local innovative solutions, which concluded in July, and the final report and next steps are due to be considered by the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee during this month's meeting.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

At the Lincolnshire Show this year, I was delighted to sign the Local Leadership Partnership with Katrina Pierce from the Lincolnshire Federation of Small Businesses, on behalf of Lincolnshire County Council. This recognises and celebrates the lead role we have taken as a council in working with others locally to support businesses.

The Business Lincolnshire Growth Hub Team continue to be busy providing much needed support to local businesses. Between October and June, 725 businesses have been supported.

I am very pleased to highlight that our ongoing evaluation activities continue to confirm that our business support services are well received, with 93% of respondents either satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of the service, and 93% of respondents either very or somewhat likely to recommend the service they received/event they attended to a friend or colleague.

Our European funded business support programmes have now ended, and we are currently focussing on embedding the new business support delivery under the Business Lincolnshire UKSPF Shared Service programme. Six Local Authorities have opted into the new service and have committed funding from their UKSPF allocations – City of Lincoln, North Kesteven, South Kesteven and West Lindsey, alongside Rutland and North East Lincolnshire. Boston, East Lindsey and South Holland have opted out of the service and plan to deliver a local business support solution. A decision from North Lincolnshire is still pending.

Business Lincolnshire will continue to directly deliver a full breadth of advice services for many areas in Greater Lincolnshire, except for East Lindsey, South Holland, and Boston. In these areas, the Local Authority will directly deliver most business support services through a new service.

Business Lincolnshire is committed to using funds received from other sources – such as Lincolnshire County Council and central government funding outside of the Shared Prosperity Fund – to continue to provide all businesses across Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland with online self-service support tools, no matter where the business is located. This will include access to exclusive content on our website, such as podcasts, live chats (#BLlive), factsheets, guides and diagnostic tools – all focused on helping businesses to start and grow.

Geographies that are eligible for Business Lincolnshire direct services will have access to more in-depth support, including advisor support, access to business industry specialists, exclusive events, virtual workshops, specialist programmes - from starting up to scaling up, training and development.

In addition to the Shared Service, there are a number of additional programmes available for businesses to access, such as the Made Smarter programme specifically for manufacturers and the Create Growth programme which is aimed at supporting the growth of businesses within Greater Lincolnshire's vibrant Creative Sector. For digital sector businesses there is a diverse events calendar hosted through the Mosaic Digital Hub. This includes regular breakfast networking events – Mosaic Connects - alongside Lunch and Learn events – Mosaic Talks - which cover current and future technology trends. Mosaic Talk events are also Livestreamed on LinkedIn for any interested business to access.

Exporting support also continues to be a priority and Business Lincolnshire delivers two programmes that support businesses to enter exporting for the first time or to expand exporting in new markets. These include the Internationalising SMEs in International Trade Programme and the Exporting Peer Network and Roundtable programme. Planning is also underway for an Exporting conference later in the year. Details of all programmes and events are available on the Business Lincolnshire website.

## **PLACE AND INVESTMENT**

### **Team Lincolnshire Activity**

The 2023-2025 Inward Investment Plan was fully adopted from 01/04/2023. Areas of focus include supporting investment into the UK Food Valley, Humber Freeport, Decarbonisation, Defence and Security, and promoting our "Place" as an investment tool. Sector propositions continue to be written with Visitor Economy and Film Location propositions.

The Team Lincolnshire Ambassador programme continues with 145 members. During May 2023, Team Lincolnshire ran a very successful fringe event at the UK Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum (REiiF) held in Leeds with over 160 attendees. Also, a successful Lincolnshire Show event promoting the UK Food valley strategy was attended by a high number of Ambassadors.

A planned annual conference is being held in October 2023, announcing further enhancement of the programme, adopting an industry aligned approach, and adding additional sector insight, relevance, and connectivity. Future ambassador events, both face to face and virtual will also adopt this approach, with Ambassadors able to select events in either their sector or relevant to businesses they would like to connect to or learn from.

### **Inward Investment and Foreign Direct Investment Key Account Management update**

Eight sites were added to the Midlands Engine investment portfolio for wider UK promotion, including sites entered from all Lincolnshire districts. This was promoted on their web portal and showcased at UK REiiF in Leeds.

All Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Key Account management activities have been arranged into sector specific portfolios with named officers taking responsibility for inward investment enquiries and outbound support. This combines a uniform approach to sector relevance and knowledge, to add the most value to ongoing and future relationships. We

continue to support thirty-three FDI businesses as part of the Department of Business and Trade funded Key Account Management Programme. Year end 2022/2023 resulted in four successful locally supported investment projects being landed. These totalled circa £4.5m capex, creating fifty-nine new jobs in the Advanced Manufacturing/Engineering and Agri Food sectors.

Since December 2022, thirty-six inward investment enquiries have been received and serviced by the Place & Investment Team. Currently, fifty-four enquiries (across all financial years) are at an active status, with intensive support being given to support the companies' investment ambitions into the region. These are from a variety of sectors including twenty-one from agrifood, six from advanced manufacturing and five from the energy sector.

### **Visitor Economy:**

Investment in [www.visitlincolnshire.com](http://www.visitlincolnshire.com) continues with new content ensuring growing footfall to the site. The first six months of 2023 show good performance. Google searches for places like Stamford, Horncastle, Louth, Skegness, Mablethorpe, Market Rasen, Woodhall Spa and Boston result in the website appearing either top or second; search engine optimization is an ongoing effort to maintain this position.

- 243,062 website visits Jan-June 2023 (167,177 comparable period 2022) with 1,052,605 page views (780,611 comparable period 2022).
- A conversion rate to a booking or external link of 14.33%. Top 3 performers are Burghley House, Butlins Day Visits and Spa Trail (linking to download the map).
- In June alone there were 51.6k website visits and 220,737 page views, an 88% increase on 2022.

While the 2022 STEAM figures show a definite improvement on the 2021 figures, it is estimated that visitors to the area were still lower than pre-Covid levels.

In total there were 30.82m visits made to Greater Lincolnshire in 2022, 16.8% more than in 2021, but 7.8% lower than 2016 levels. The overall value of the visitor economy has increased to £2.62bn, up 28.9% on 2021. 1.16m visitors stayed in hotels and B&B's during 2022, below 2018 and 2019 levels, whilst 1.86m visitors stayed in self-catering accommodation. This fits with the national picture as clearly visitors, during the pandemic, felt more protected in self-contained accommodation.

Content improvement to the website includes new videos on Battle of Britain Memorial Flight and the Lincolnshire Archives, as it was felt that these attractions needed more explanation. There is a new packaged Experiences area on the website and support to businesses to encourage them to develop themed packages. Working with the countryside team, the whole walks area has been re-done; it is now more comprehensive and has better searchability. Walking is the most popular area of the website and in recent research, whilst it states that general sightseeing, eating out and shopping are the three most common activities for visitors, 35% mention walking. Working with local conservation bodies on Lincolnshire's excellent birding offer, the county was divided into four character areas. The new coastal birding area on the website has proved popular; the Wolds birding area will launch this month, and then the Fens and western Lincolnshire will follow.

There are several major countryside improvements in development; standouts are the developing nature reserves at Saltfleet and Sandilands, improvements to Viking Way and planned completion of the King Charles III England's Coastal Path (KCIIECP). Nature Tourism is a growth area for the website and we are working to set it up as an umbrella under which walking, cycling, birding, nature reserves and greener tourism businesses can sit, showcasing what Lincolnshire has to offer. Nature Tourism tends to be a year-round offer and it will contribute to our ambition of extending the season.

A King Charles III England Coastal Path toolkit is nearing completion and this, with accompanying workshops in the autumn, will be used to encourage businesses to make the most of the opportunity when the path completes in early 2025. The Hospitable Green course proved as successful as the previous Hospitable Boost courses and was highly rated by participants.

We have also been working with Creative England and the Filming in England Partnership to develop a Greater Lincolnshire Film Proposition, the aim of the proposition is to highlight what a fantastic offer we have within the County and to encourage the creative Film/TV sector to come here and use our unique location. We have been receiving a stream of enquiries, several of which have been successful, which I think demonstrates that we do have an appeal.

Most recently we have managed to secure filming of scenes for Sherwood Season 2 along the coast near Chapel St Leonard's and this was achieved by working closely with our Countryside Team and District Council colleagues. We have also managed to attract filming of Ben Fogle: New Lives in the Wild, Susan Calman's: Grand Week by the Sea, and parts of the Napoleon film features the inside of Lincoln Cathedral. The enquiries we receive vary in terms of scale from University students, to TV, and more recently Hollywood productions. We are proud to showcase our Lincolnshire assets to support sustain and promote our economy.

Finally, we have been working with Visit England, Destination Lincolnshire, Local Authority partners and the private sector to apply for Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) accreditation for Greater Lincolnshire, which will be a collaboration agreement with partners to jointly deliver an agreed destination management plan to enable a sustainable and resilient visitor economy in Lincolnshire, driving forward the industry and ensuring it continues to thrive.

## **ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING**

### **Flood Risk and Water Resources Management**

The County Council recognises the major importance of the environmental and economic prosperity of the coast to the future of the county. Prosperity is also intrinsic to engagement with our partners to ensure appropriate strategies are developed to manage the risks of coastal flooding, both in the present day and into the future, to secure resilience for coastal communities against the impacts of climate change and sea level rise.

The Adaptive & Resilient Coastal Communities Project has completed its evidence gathering of the risks to the coast from climate changes. Working with the University of Lincoln, project

partners have put together a jointly agreed, transparent evidence base so that authorities can start to plan how best to adapt to meet the challenges of climate change, continue to thrive, and realise its potential economic contribution to the region and the country through an investment strategy for the coast and its communities.

Similarly, the Humber 2100+ project has continued to formulate baseline data to understand tidal flood risk affecting the estuary and surrounding land. This data will be shared in the coming months, as the project moves toward developing a range of strategic options.

With regards to the Lincolnshire Reservoir project, our officers are in regular communication with Anglian Water who are putting together a community liaison group. This group will ensure that the opinions of residents local to the allocated area are heard, and that the concerns raised are measured against the opportunities the reservoir may bring. Officers will continue to push for the project to incorporate a wider range of benefits than just water storage and distribution to ensure that the economic, environmental and recreational benefits of the scheme are recognised.

The Greater Lincolnshire Groundwater Project, funded by Defra's national Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation programme, will provide the opportunity to develop understanding of a broad range of groundwater risks and opportunities across Greater Lincolnshire. This will lead to a range of practical actions delivered in partnership between now and 31 March 2027. It is intended that these actions should incorporate multiple benefits, such that environmental and social resilience are built into the approaches developed. The areas being reviewed as part of this project include:

- Improving understanding of groundwater flooding.
- Regional improvements to groundwater resilience.
- Improving groundwater flood resilience in Grimsby & Barton and Barrow-upon-Humber.
- Improving groundwater flood resilience in Scopwick & Bourne.

### **Sustainability and Natural Environment**

The Council continues to deliver against its carbon emissions targets; compared to 1990, emissions have been reduced by 68%. It is recognised that more can still be done, and therefore Sustainability team have been working to ensure that the Council's 4th Carbon Management Plan will be completed in the coming quarter of the year. To achieve our end goals, it is important that all council services recognise the need to review their operations to ensure we are working in the most effective, efficient way to reduce carbon emissions.

The Council also recognises its role in influencing and aiding others in this drive and have continued to engage with local communities through the Net Zero Parishes scheme – projects delivered include: contributing towards new LED floodlights at North Somercotes, supporting the installation of solar panels on the Sports Pavilion at Nettleham and installing LED lights at the Reading Rooms in Holbeach. These schemes have reduced carbon emissions and running costs for these important community facilities. We have worked with colleagues in County Farms to recognise the potential for energy efficiency. This has culminated in the installation of 54-kilowatt solar array on a farm barn which will generate around 52,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity annually.

Naturally, I was pleased to welcome the King to the Coronation Nature Reserve at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe in July, where we had a brief opportunity to highlight the great work the Council is doing on the coastline, alongside other landowning partners and Natural England. The King was interested in the role of nature as an attraction for economy and tourism and was pleased that the Council was taking its role in nature recovery seriously. With a number of key milestones (the 75-year anniversary of the establishment of the Gibraltar Point reserve, the 50-year anniversary of the designation of the Lincolnshire Wolds AONB, and the 70-year anniversary of the devastating floods on the east coast), it was excellent to see His Majesty speak with those most closely involved in managing the coastline in a positive, environmentally beneficial way.

In the same vein, I am pleased to report that the Government has appointed Lincolnshire County Council as the Responsible Authority for the delivery of the Greater Lincolnshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Preparations are well underway, a governance structure has been agreed and we look forward to the completion of the strategy which will help identify, set priorities and advocate for the recovery of our most vulnerable habitats and to aid in the delivery of biodiversity net gain across the region.

The Council has also been successful in its bid to the Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund which will help us create the capacity to develop and accelerate our tree planting ambitions. Two officers have been specifically engaged to identify opportunities and set in motion those ambitions.

### **Rights of Way & Access**

Members may be aware that the Government has made the decision to repeal the cut-off date for recording historic rights of way, often known as “lost ways”, to the rights of way definitive map.

User groups and individuals have continued to research these missing routes in Lincolnshire. There is a significant case backlog, which has increased in volume within the last year; this now stands at over 400 cases. This is impacting the landowner community in the County, and I am pleased that officers have taken time to address members of the NFU on the matter at both a specific event, but also at the Lincolnshire Show during the summer. Whilst landowners remain understandably concerned regarding the influx of applications, they are pleased that they are able to approach the Council for professional advice about the process.

You will recall that I emailed all councillors to ask for suggestions to improve and enhance the public rights of way networks in their local areas. I am pleased to inform the Council that officers are working through these to assess them for feasibility and financial viability.

At the coast, I am pleased to announce that the now renamed King Charles III England Coast Path is being established around Lincolnshire, including the repair and improvement of the bridge over the River Steeping at Gibraltar Point.

### **Planning Services**

The planning team continues to be extremely busy responding to the increasing number of Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) that are being promoted in the County, the majority of these relate to solar energy generation schemes but also include carbon capture and connection cables from off-shore wind farms. A number of these projects are at the examination stage and whilst the Council will seek as far as possible to reduce the impact of these projects on the affected communities, whilst also seeking to negotiate community benefit package from the promoters to compensate for the disruption that these large-scale projects will bring to the affected communities.

Work is on-going to develop a Council Position statement that sets out the expected engagement from NSIP developers with local communities during the pre-application stage and the community benefits that would be expected if the Development Consent Order is granted by the Secretary of State. It will also set out the issues that the Council can take into consideration when providing a formal response to the Secretary of State and the weight that the Council consider should be given to these issues.

With more NSIPs in the pipeline this activity shows no sign of easing as the County has the geographical and locational advantages that makes it attractive to energy generation promoters and close to the source of future renewable energy sources in respect of the off-shore wind farms.

The Councils core planning activity of mineral and waste applications is also particularly busy at the moment with especially significant interest in developing large Anerobic Digestion facilities across the County. Also, a resurgence in the national demand for raw materials, such as sand and gravel, has meant that Lincolnshire as one of the largest sources of sand and gravel, has seen the land bank of sand and gravel permissions being rapidly depleted and a number of applications for large sand and gravel extractions are expected to be submitted shortly.

The introduction of Biodiversity Net Gain legislation later this year will put additional burdens on the planning team which is looking to consolidate following the retirement of a number of long serving and experienced Officers this year.

The background work on the review of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan is also continuing although at a slightly slower pace than anticipated. Again the retirement of an experienced Policy Officer and following the call for sites exercise resulting in a greater than expected number of sand and gravel sites and representations from a local community regarding one of these potential sites has delayed progress and is now expected that the public consultation on the review of the Plan will take place next Spring rather than early in 2024 which had been the initial ambition.

### **Historic Places Team**

The Historic Places Team are also seeing significant pressure as the team absorbs staff resource issues with an ever-increasing workload. A great deal of the team's work is coming from NSIPs such as the numerous solar farms, and other infrastructure projects. One such



infrastructure project, the water supply pipeline currently being constructed across the length of the county by the Strategic Pipeline Alliance, has resulted in a number of significant finds.

Currently the Anglian Water team are excavating a significant site from the Roman period between Bracebridge Heath and Waddington. The full nature of the site is yet to be determined but is expected to contain a number of structures with stone foundations.

Members of the public continue to report objects to the Finds Liaison Officer (part of the national Portable Antiquities Scheme). We recently had a report of a Roman lead font being found. The landowner paid for both a geophysical survey and a small excavation to find out more. It seems this was a late Roman ritually deposited item. On 30<sup>th</sup> July 2023 the rules which define treasure were changed and now a much broader definition is in place.

The team continues to provide access wherever possible to the county's Historic Environment Record. We have had to restrict online access to the Lincolnshire Heritage Explorer website due to the impact that over-use by one user is having on our map licensing arrangements but expecting a resolution to this issue to be achieved shortly that will enable full access to be restored.

The team is working closely with colleagues across the authority on a number of projects aimed at promoting the wider benefits of engagement with and enjoyment of the historic environment.

## **COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 15 SEPTEMBER 2023**

**Statement from: Councillor R G Davies Executive for Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT**

### **HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT**

#### **Grantham Southern Relief Road**

Phase 1 from the B1174 running towards the A1 was completed in 2016.

Phase 2, the new graded separated junction onto the A1, was completed in 2022.

Phase 3 is the project's final phase and is the largest and most complex to deliver. It comprises a five-span viaduct carrying the road over the East Coast Mainline railway and the River Witham. Works commenced in April 2021, and much of the project has progressed well, with sections already open. There have, however, been issues with the viaduct design regarding piling and embankment stability. As a result, the bridge has been lengthened by approximately seventy metres towards the East to avoid the area where the poor ground is situated. This has resulted in project delays, pushing the completion date to 2025. The project will also incur significant cost increases, which are being developed with the design solution. A full investigation is underway to understand how this has occurred and where the liability rests. Even so, the bridge has progressed with the pier foundations completed and the piers installed. Piling works for the extended bridge has also now commenced. Works are moving towards the next milestone; beams will be installed between the end of 2023 and Summer/Autumn 2024.

#### **North Hykeham Relief Road**

This new road will link the A15 Lincoln Eastern Bypass with the A46 Western Bypass at Pennells Roundabout to create a full-ring road around Lincoln. The project also aims to:

- Assist the sustainable economic growth of Lincoln and Lincolnshire.
- Maximise accessibility to Lincoln.
- Improve journey times and road safety in Lincoln.

In December, LCC was informed that the project had achieved programme entry approval from the Department for Transport (Department for Transport), which also secured £110m towards the project from the Department for Transport. A pivotal decision to appoint Balfour Beatty as the Design and Build Contractor was approved on the 5<sup>th</sup> of April 2022, who in turn appointed a design consultant, Ramboll.

The project has completed most of the data acquisition and preliminary design before a planning application is submitted in October 2023. An initial public engagement event took place in September 2022 to inform the public of progress and to gain their views on developments. There have been two further engagement events in March and June 2023. Feedback has been generally positive, with good comments about how the project team have listened and enacted changes based on the public's opinions. Intrusive geophysical, ground investigation and ecology surveys are completed, which has allowed the team to model the

environmental impact and pose mitigation, such as bunding, landscaping, etc. These elements were shared with the public at the June engagement event. The next milestone is to present the project to the Executive for a key decision, allowing a planning application to be submitted in October 2023.

### **Spalding Western Relief Road (SWRR)**

Section 5 (Northern Connection) – In February 2018, South Holland District Council (SHDC), in collaboration with Lincolnshire County Council (LCC), were successful in securing £12m from the Homes and Community Agency (HCA) for delivering this section of the SWRR. Since then, a further £8.13m has been sourced from the HCA.

Works commenced in January 2022 with the construction of the two piling platforms to allow the c1600 number piles to be installed to support the bridge over the rail line. These piles are now complete, and so are the pile caps. In addition, the new roundabout on Spalding Road is complete and open to traffic. The works have now moved on to the bridge foundations and the vertical lightweight fill embankment installation. Works are programmed to be completed in Summer 2024.

### **Lincolnshire Coastal Highway**

LCC investigated potential improvements to the A158 across the county from the A1 to the North Sea coast, known as the 'Lincolnshire Coastal Highway'. This looked at the options for intervention along the route. In identifying improvements to the Highway, consideration was given to being future-ready, building in capacity to support growth, investigating options across a range of modes, building in resilience, and lowering longer-term costs for infrastructure management.

A Horncastle bypass concept paper was completed, which identified expected costs and benefits. Due to the Department for Transport scoring mechanism, the benefits are very low compared to the cost and, therefore, would not attract any central government funding. This project is currently not progressing but is included in the Council's pipeline of projects to consider in the future.

A Skegness Relief Road concept paper has also been completed, which indicates a route that attracts a poor/very poor 'Benefit to Cost Ratio' score, meaning that it is unlikely to attract third-party funding, should a funding opportunity be presented.

A feasibility of an Orby bypass has been completed, indicating a very poor 'Benefit to Cost Ratio' score, meaning that it's unlikely to attract third-party funding should a funding opportunity be presented.

### **Levelling Up Fund Projects (LUF)**

LCC submitted a bid to central government under the LUF initiative; this consisted of the following projects:

- A16/A151 Springfield roundabout capacity improvement.
- A16 Greencell roundabout (Spalding Power Station) capacity improvement.

- A16 Kirton four-way signalised junction – with an associated small section of dual carriageway leading into and out of the junction along the A16 – *Now removed; see below.*
- A16 Marsh Lane Roundabout.
- Boston Active travel scheme.
- Spalding Active travel scheme.

In October 2021, it was announced that the bid had been successful. Since the announcement, the projects have all moved into the detailed design to start on-site in 2023 and be completed in 2025.

The local community raised concerns regarding the development of the Kirton signalised junction. In July, the project team attended a public meeting to answer questions and took away many views and thoughts for the proposed scheme. Following this meeting, discussions have been ongoing with the Department for Transport. Recently, they have announced that they are content with removing this scheme from the programme and to use those funds to offset the inflationary cost increases on the other five projects.

The first two projects, Marsh Lane Roundabout and Boston Active Travel commenced on site in May 2023 and are due to be completed by the end of the year.

Springfield and Greencell roundabout received positive views from the Highway and Scrutiny Committee in May 2023 and were presented to the Executive in June 2023 for a Key Decision. This decision was approved, and the project team are working towards commencing Springfield Road Roundabout by October 2023.

#### **Grantham Future High Street Fund**

South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) were successful with its Future High Street fund bid, which included two projects that impact the highway. These include Station Approach, the five-arm junction, and the Market Place. The Station Approach project entails improving the pedestrian facilities to make the pedestrian movement flow from the station into Grantham town centre a more pleasing experience. Now, it is very industrial; therefore, the project will remove barriers, improve the form of the pedestrian islands, and install conservation street furniture, amongst some more general maintenance elements. The Market Place project will lift the existing carriageway stone setts to be the same level as the existing footway stone setts. This, combined with the removal of street furniture, will allow for more events to be held in the marketplace while not impacting the stability of the carriageway.

Both projects are nearing the end of detailed design, with the next stage being procurement and gaining approval from SKDC to underwrite the costs. These projects have recently been put on hold to allow time for SKDC to review their funding position.

It should be stressed that these are not County Council projects; therefore, the risks sit with SKDC.

### **Sincil Bank**

The City of Lincoln Council (CoLC) were successful with their Towns Fund Bid, which included, amongst other things, the Sincil Bank regeneration scheme. This project includes implementing a one-way system and residents' parking. The project also entails significant public realm improvement to enhance the townscape. There are concerns regarding the scheme's cost compared to the budget allowance when factoring in the accelerated construction inflation since the bid was successful. As such, the team are preparing for the project to be split into phases so that the County Council can ensure the scheme is within the funds held by the CoLC.

It should be stressed that this is not a County Council-led project, so the risks sit with CoLC.

### **Dolphin Lane**

This joint-funded project between LCC and Boston Borough Council originated from the District's Heritage Lottery Fund. The project is a public realm scheme that will improve the pavement with new stone setts that are in keeping with the surrounding environment. This will connect directly to the Market Place, which has the same type of stone setts.

Works started in May 2023 and are progressing well.

### **Highways Maintenance Budget**

Inflation within the construction sector continues to cause challenges for the Highway service, as it does for the broader cost of living challenge experienced by the residents of Lincolnshire. Whilst the dramatic rises witnessed in 2021 and 2022 have subsided, increases of 2.4% in the last five months have been experienced in road surfacing-related activities. These increases will commercially impact the Highway Service in April 2024, but it does indicate a potential future budget pressure unless it is matched by additional funding or further service efficiencies.

The additional LCC highway funding announced in the 2023 budget has ensured that the existing service levels can be maintained for the current financial year. The LCC funding was also increased by the Additional Pothole Funding, announced by the Department for Transport. The one-year funding of £6.8 million will help improve the Highway service. However, the funding level falls short of the inflation pressure on the Highways Maintenance Block allocation, which is due to remain static between April 2022 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 under a three-year settlement. LCC Highways continues to lobby the Department for Transport via regional bodies concerning this ongoing pressure.

### **Carriageway Condition**

The survey results for the Principal, Non-Principal and Unclassified roads all exceed the minimum agreed target levels in terms of the percentage of the network where maintenance should be considered.

- PI 84 Condition of Principal Roads.  
Actual: 2%  
Target: 3%
- PI 85 Condition of Non Principal Roads.

Actual: 6%

Target: 7%

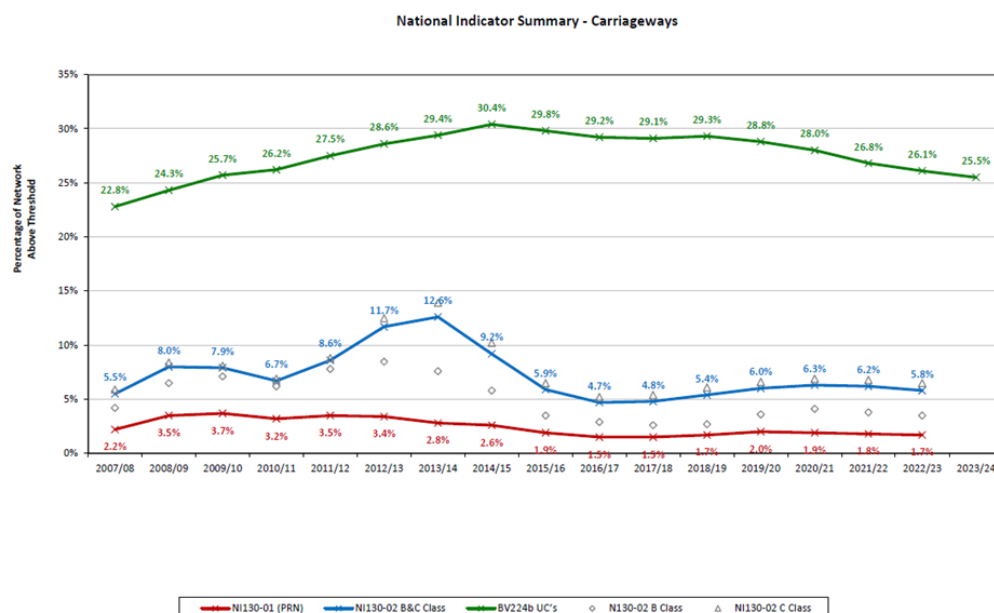
- PI 86 Condition of Unclassified Roads.

Actual: 26%

Target: 27%

Comparisons to other authorities demonstrate that the Principal road network in Lincolnshire is in a better state than the average rural authority. In contrast, the Non-Principal and Unclassified road networks are in a worse state than the average rural authority. LCC's Highways team continues to target improvement in these areas and maximising service efficiency so that the condition of the assets is maintained and, where possible, improved.

The current strategy of an accelerated improvement on the Unclassified network remains on track:



### **Contract Refresh**

Following the individual contracts, the refresh procedure has commenced for the Highway Works, Professional Services and Traffic Signal contracts. The process requires the Client and the Contractor/Consultant to review service delivery and identify contract improvements should an offer of extension be made and accepted by the parties. Any extension to the contract will be made from 1 April 2026, with a minimum extension of two years and a maximum extension of six years being available.

The outcome of the contract refresh procedure will be returned to the Highways and Transportation Scrutiny Committee in October 2023.

### **Highways Works (Balfour Beatty)**

The Highway service continues to focus on reactive service delivery. The scale of demand, resource requirements and commercial pressure within the contract are challenging, but all parties involved (including the supply chain) are making the required improvements. A series

of “Day in the Life” sessions with the operational reactive gangs have been held to help identify and implement further service improvements. These improvements will be implemented jointly between LCC and Balfour Beatty over the next three months.

Combined with this improvement activity, the Construction of a new Operational Control Hub within the LCC Highways office has recently commenced and is expected to be completed by the end of the month. The control hub will monitor live data of gang performance feedback on operational issues and be responsible for identifying service improvements. The control hub will be the focal point for any Highway incidents when broader team input and management decisions on the network are required.

### **Passenger Transport**

Most of the service activity is focused on planning and arranging educational travel provisions for September, including a constant stream of applications for processing and multiple tendering events taking place throughout July and August.

The Educational Travel Transformation Programme remains a priority. However, it is being delivered as part of a service-wide transformation now that the new permanent staff structure is in place. The service-wide staff restructure was completed and went live on 1 February 2023, and recruitment continues to fill vacancies in the service. The focus has been on operational roles, and the remaining ten vacancies will be targeted over the coming months now that the summer peak period of work is concluding. As a temporary measure, three agency placements have been filled. We have advertised and interviewed for five further roles funded by the Department for Transport Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP).

The passenger transport industry faces numerous pressures from bus and taxi suppliers. The Council is finding taxi contract prices are starting to stabilise, but it is important to note they are staying the same. The national living wage increases took effect in April, and driver shortages continue across the industry, continuing the reduced resilience post-COVID in operators’ ability to respond to operational issues such as staff sickness. However, we see some improvements in these resilience levels, with passengers experiencing significantly fewer cancellations of services than in 2022, and the majority of operators are running 90% of scheduled mileage, which puts it on par with pre-COVID provision levels. TransportConnect Ltd, the Council-owned operator, experiences the same pressures as all operators and continues to support the Council in delivering CallConnect services and educational travel provision, alongside maintenance for the Council’s fleet of gritter vehicles.

The Council’s passenger transport supplier market continues to grow, albeit slowly and only with new taxi operators choosing to work with the Council instead of bus operators. We now have three hundred and thirty-two operators with whom we contract through our dynamic purchasing system.

We are reviewing the passenger travel supplier market in partnership with the Council’s Commercial Team. This will form an essential part of a passenger transport strategy for Lincolnshire, establishing clarity surrounding supply and demand and creating a vision and plan for the supplier market in collaboration with operators.

## **Public Transport Services**

An annual report on public transport was taken through the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee in July 2023; the main points are highlighted below.

Since April 2020, the central government have provided funding for bus services directly to bus operators and the Local Transport Authority (LTA) to ensure bus services are viable, both through and following the pandemic. Such funding packages have been short-term, covering three to six months at a time, as the industry adapted to the changing public transport needs brought about by COVID-19. Ultimately, bus operators and LTAs are working in partnership to re-establish a sustainable public transport offer in an environment where passenger levels and travel habits have changed significantly. As part of this work, we are working with two bus operators to identify where school and college organised services may duplicate the commercial network to identify efficiencies and synergies to produce a proposal for schools and colleges. We aim to enable students to travel cost-effectively and in a way that supports the long-term sustainability of the commercial bus network.

In May 2023, the Government announced a two-year funding period entitled BSIP+ to support and develop bus services nationwide. Lincolnshire will receive £4.2m BSIP+ funding for the financial years 2023/2024 and 2024/2025. We are engaging with bus operators to scope schemes to maximise the impact of this funding along the principles set out in the Lincolnshire Enhanced Partnership (EP).

For Lincolnshire's bus operators, a new funding stream from the Department for Transport replaces Bus Recovery Grant (BRG) funding, which ended on 30 June 2023. The allocation will be calculated based on fuel use and distance.

The Department for Transport has also announced it will provide up to £200 million to continue capping single bus fares at £2 outside London until the end of October 2023 and then at £2.50 until 30 November 2024, when the government will review their effectiveness and future bus fares. In Lincolnshire, four main bus operators have taken up this scheme and indicated they will continue. The Council will also implement this scheme on its demand-responsive CallConnect services.

The EP and scheme above were made on April 1, 2023. It is a legal arrangement between the LTA and bus operators, which sets out the county's obligations to advance bus services. Full details of the scheme can be found here: [Lincolnshire enhanced partnership scheme for buses](#).

Throughout the process of making the EP, LCC has progressed many of the obligations set out in the document, including:

- Provided bus priority measures at eight junctions.
- Audited all bus stop infrastructure in the county.
- Updated roadside information across 80% of the county, covering approximately 2,600 bus stops.
- Undertaken a countywide campaign encouraging English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) pass holders to use buses. This campaign has received



recognition from the Department for Transport and Transport Focus as an example of best practice.

The nature of the BSIP process requires us to update our plan annually with the next iteration of the document to be submitted to the Department for Transport by October 31 2023. The revised plan responds to feedback from the Department for Transport on our unsuccessful plan, focusing on smaller schemes and generating passenger growth through meaningful bus priority measures, improvements in bus infrastructure and bus service enhancements. The updated plan will be taken through the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee.

The County Council supports one hundred and forty-four local bus services. Some services are contracted directly by the Council (seventy-nine services currently), and others involve supporting specific parts of particular routes (sixty-five currently through this arrangement, entitled 'de minimise). Since July 2022, we have contracted two additional routes compared to the previous year; both services were previously commercial. However, the operator could no longer operate them on a financially viable basis. These services have been funded by utilising grant support from the Department for Transport and making the best use of the Council's public transport budget to ensure that we meet our statutory duty to our residents.

In September 2022, the Council contracted for a much-improved Spalding Into Town service by utilising funding from the Government's Better Bus Fund. The Service was expanded from an hourly off-peak (09:00-15:00) bus service to one that spans between 07:00-18:30 on a 45-minute frequency, taking in new locations such as Springfields, Morrisons, and The Johnson Community Hospital.

Bus service revenue is supported by reimbursement to operators for using ENCTS pass holders on their services. During 2023/2024, LCC reimburses this scheme at 100% of pre-covid levels. Such financial support provided much-needed stability for bus operators and allowed services to be planned based on guaranteed funding over twelve months.

### **Bus Passenger Travel**

Government statistics show that in 2021/2022, bus operators provided 10.1 million journeys in Lincolnshire compared to 4.2 million the previous year, an increase of 240%. The national picture saw passenger numbers improve on average by 194%, demonstrating that passengers returned to public transport in Lincolnshire better than most regions.

We have run a marketing campaign targeting bus pass holders, and there has been an upward trend in the number of passengers travelling since June 2020 as the industry recovers; however, May 2023 saw 57,000 ENCTS passengers travel compared to 75,000 in November 2019.

Lincolnshire's Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) service, Callconnect, has seen excellent levels of passengers returning to the service in the last twelve months across the thirty-five services in the county. On average, weekly patronage levels are 98-99% of pre-COVID levels, suggesting passengers have high confidence levels in the service. We have introduced an app-based booking system, and to date, approximately 45% of all bookings are now conducted through the app (VIA), showing good levels of channel shift from previous telephone-based

booking. The underlying platform has also brought about a more adaptive scheduling and monitoring mechanism that has improved punctuality significantly over the past eighteen months. The app is now being rolled out across the county, with a completion date of March 2024.

### **Bus Infrastructure and Roadside Information**

In Lincolnshire, all bus stops are the responsibility of the County Council. However, bus shelters and all associated infrastructure relating to bus stops are treated differently. The County Council has responsibility for managing several bus shelters, usually on Interconnect routes, but others are the responsibility of the District, City and Borough or Town and Parish Councils.

We have undertaken an audit of bus stop infrastructure across the county, and we are reviewing which stops to improve across the network to enhance passenger experience on public transport.

### **Educational Travel**

As with all local authorities in England, we continue to focus on managing the cost pressures in educational travel provision, arranging travel provision for 19,000+ pupils daily. Whilst we are seeing contract prices stabilise, they will not reduce, creating a new baseline in the industry and for the Council's budgets. This continues to be monitored, with a particular focus in November, when the position for 2023/2024 becomes clear, following the start of the new academic year – this creates new pupils with eligibility for travel provision, pupils leaving school and colleges, and requires new contracts with operators to be set up; all of which makes financial impacts, not embedded until November.

The cost pressures are not solely related to contract prices, however. We continue to experience high expectations of parents/carers and the complex needs of passengers, alongside more parents/carers applying for travel provision due to the cost implications for their households. Working closely with Children's Services, we are also experiencing school placement sufficiency issues, which has an impact on increasing the number of pupils eligible for travel provision.

An important impact of increased contract prices and high volumes of pupils requiring travel provision, the process of successfully contract with operators and adding passengers to contracts is now taking longer than it has previously. We currently have five working days to process an application and five working days to put provision in place. Other local authorities are moving to between fifteen and thirty days, excluding the processing of applications. We are reviewing this, primarily as it generates complaints from parents/carers due to our inability to meet the expected timeframes.

Mechanisms to avoid increased costs and make savings are being delivered as part of the three-year transformation programme and focus on the following:

- Implement a new Travel Options function, enabling and empowering pupils to use alternative travel modes to taxis, from travel training SEN pupils to maximising opportunities for sustainable travel. A development plan is being established now that all vacant posts in this team have been recruited. This includes collaborative work

with Adult Care and Community Wellbeing to support adults with independent travel training.

- Re-procurement of all contracts during the three years (2021-2024) in geographical areas using reverse auctions.
- Route optimisation activity is part of preparing for re-tendering all contracts, ensuring all possible efficiencies are maximised.

A management information dashboard is being created to manage and monitor key measures in educational travel, with significant support from corporate teams in data services and performance. The dashboard will be presented at the October meeting of the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee.

### **Policy Consultations**

Several consultations from the Department for Transport are either live or have closed recently, proactive responses are developed on behalf of the authority, and where appropriate, a Greater Lincolnshire response is generated. Recent consultations include: “Shaping the Future of England’s Strategic Roads Report” and the “Future of Rail Station Ticket Offices”. Information is also provided to calls for evidence: Currently, information is being provided regarding freight, logistics, and the planning system.

### **Electric Vehicle Infrastructure**

The Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund supports local authorities in England to work with the chargepoint industry to improve the rollout and commercialisation of local charging infrastructure. These public chargepoints will help residents who don’t have off-street parking and need to charge their electric vehicles (EVs).

In Lincolnshire, the initial funding will be used to deliver approximately one hundred standard and eight rapid charging points (each EV charger will provide a minimum of two charging points) across the county, with the majority of these being on-street chargers in residential areas with the remainder being placed in other council-owned land. A second, more significant funding allocation is also anticipated.

The final draft tender specification document has been received and is being reviewed by all consortium partners. The project is anticipated to go out to tender in late September. The next step will be to move forward with the appointed charge point operator to review and finalise the potential sites for electric vehicle charge points.

### **IMT SERVICES**

LCC’s IT team have delivered substantial change in the past year, including through projects and governance improvements.

Updated governance arrangements have been implemented to ensure that the council’s senior officers have complete oversight, can prioritise the projects to be invested in, and that IT is involved in all projects with a technology component at the outset to help achieve

improved outcomes. The IT team have made strides in engaging with colleagues who will use the systems to ensure their needs are fully considered.

Office 365 is now in place in all but two departments, and replacing an out-of-date and expensive telephony system is complete. Plans to help colleagues leverage these investments' benefits are in place and will develop further throughout 2023.

A fresh IT Strategy that will underpin the LCC services is progressing through the Council's governance structures and will inform the approach to procuring our major IT services in April 2026.

Significant attention and effort are being applied to cyber security due to the evolving threat landscape and the need to maintain our defences to match.

We are progressing proposals for us in 2023/2024 to replace all personal computers (PCs) that are reaching or have reached the end of their everyday life to ensure that colleagues are equipped with tools that enable them to do their work efficiently. 2023/2024 will also see changes in our data networks.

## **LINCOLNSHIRE BROADBAND UPDATE**

### **Contract 3 - Quickline**

The contract between LCC/BDUK and Quickline is to upgrade 8K premises to Ultrafast broadband in rural areas prefixed by postcodes LN & DN. Currently, 5.2K premises have been upgraded to download speeds > 100Mb/s. Completion is due between December 2023 and 31 March 2024.

Discussions are ongoing regarding the addition of further available funding under an agreed contractual Change Control. This Change Control will be utilised to 'infill' areas that Project Gigabit will not cover, and any such deployment will run in tandem with Lots 10 and 23 of Project Gigabit (see following). Data down to property level is expected to be available towards the end of 2023.

### **Project Gigabit**

Project Gigabit is the Government's (BDUK) project to deliver gigabit-capable broadband to rural areas deemed non-commercially viable to existing providers. Where Lincolnshire is concerned, the county has been divided into two 'Lots', Lots 10 and 23. Lot 10 went to tender in June 2023 and closed on 13 September 2023. The eligible premises count for Lincolnshire Lot 10 is 9.6K. Lot 23 is still being finalised regarding eligible premises at the time of writing this report.

'Supplier Engagement' concluded at the end of April, and we are awaiting details of interested suppliers from BDUK, but we are aware of two organisations that are keen to win this contract. At this point, the eligible premises count for Lincolnshire Lot 23 is 75.3K. We went to tender in late August 2023, and the contract will likely be awarded Feb/March 2024. The Broadband Team will work in a partnership agreement with BDUK to deliver both contracts.

### **Commercial Investment**

Commercial investment is moving rapidly in West Lindsey and well above what we envisaged two years ago. Full Fibre (FTTP) is now 35%, Ultrafast (>100Mb/s) = 47%, Gigabit-capable = 46%. We expect more than 220K premises to be upgraded by commercial investment by the end of 2025.

BT/Openreach has just announced a technology enhancement that will be trialled in North Kelsey. South Reston and Honington Telephone Exchange areas and LCC are working closely with Openreach and have met with the communities to drive up interest and ask residents to sign up for BDUK vouchers for this trial that will provide total fibre to over eight hundred premises, subject to sufficient demand existing. At the time of writing this report, further meetings have been held at South Kelsey and Mareham le Fen to expand the scheme further. Circa 3K premises are included in the scope of these trials. North Kelsey, South Reston and Honington have reached the required level of community interest and are moving into the planning phase before deployment commencing in early Autumn, with an agreed completion date of within twelve months. This is excellent news and demonstrates the effectiveness of this scheme and how working with suppliers and communities can drive better broadband forward.

### **Rural Gigabit Voucher Schemes**

Despite this scheme now being on hold temporarily in terms of new communities applying, there are a significant number of ongoing projects that BDUK has allowed to progress. Quickline is engaged in several schemes across West Lindsey and is actively deploying or planning to deploy full fibre to over 5K rural premises this calendar year. Openreach has seven ongoing projects at various stages of planning/completion.

We continue to work with communities to encourage their involvement in this scheme, and it is pleasing to note that several communities have successfully been upgraded. Current BDUK voucher values are now £4.5K for residential and business premises.

We are discussing with BDUK to understand how any non-upgraded areas under Project Gigabit might be picked up by a collaboration with LCC and providers utilising BDUK vouchers. Discussions are progressing well.

## **COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 15 SEPTEMBER 2023**

**Statement from: Councillor D McNally, Executive Councillor for Waste and Trading Standards**

### **TRADING STANDARDS**

The Tobacco Control Officer has continued delivering the vaping workshop to children and young people. The workshop was developed with Public Health colleagues in response to recent vaping incidents resulting in hospitalisation and upon requests from schools. Sessions have been delivered to the Young Persons Learning Provision groups in Louth and Skegness and over forty workshops in schools.

Trading Standard Service have successfully prosecuted a business who sold a disposable vape to an underage volunteer. The shop had received advice on two prior occasions but had failed to introduce any preventative measures. The Magistrates found that the business had been given ample opportunity by Trading Standards to put a system in place to address underage sales and had failed to do. They were fined £1200, ordered to pay a victim surcharge of £481 and costs of £1,621.81 making a total of £3,302.81.

In the New Year the Trading Standards Service launched a 25-minute film containing the most relevant food allergen advice detailing the importance of allergen management, food hypersensitivities and the potentially devastating consequences when things go wrong. The video was intended for promotion to Food Business Operators. Following requests, the Service has produced a second film aimed at providing this important advice specifically tailored for school meal providers, School caterers, outside school holiday clubs and Nurseries.

Trading Standards continues to target premises selling illicit tobacco products. A further four temporary closure orders have been issued by the court for the maximum period of three months. The applications are all based on evidence bundles compiled by trading standards officers who have attended court where the applications have been contested. The Service will continue to work with Police colleagues making use of these orders to disrupt this illegal trade.

Lincolnshire Trading Standards took part in this year's Operation Rogue Trader. Focussing on areas where intelligence about rogue businesses has been received, officers have carried out operations in Louth, Spalding, Bourne and Boston in May.

Residents in those areas had reported a range of problems including charging for unnecessary work, damaging property deliberately to obtain money, leaving work unfinished and using intimidating behaviour to extort money. The purpose of the visits was to make sure any businesses operating in the area were aware of the paperwork they are legally required to provide to their customers, and the customers' rights, including the fourteen day 'cooling-off' period.

Officers spoke to traders, who were advised on what paperwork they should be legally providing before conducting any work on a customer's home. Homeowners were also advised on what documentation they should legally receive before a tradesman conducts any work on their home.

## **WASTE AND RECYCLING SERVICES**

Waste Services faced some operational challenges earlier this year when the Household Waste Recycling Centres experienced disruption in the spring, due to a number of factors, including haulage difficulties. Unfortunately, this caused residents to be turned away from some sites when full containers couldn't be emptied quickly enough to keep up with demand which was understandably frustrating for the public. The vast majority of people were sympathetic to the problems, and we thank them for being so patient and understanding whilst the Waste team resolved the logistical issues. The team having sourced other local haulage trucks to supplement the service and resolved the issues within weeks. This will additionally enable us to provide better contingency to prevent such disruption again.

Whilst many local authorities around the country are reducing HWRC services we continue to maintain all eleven sites with a five-day opening. This obviously comes at a higher financial cost, but the service is so highly valued by the public that we took the decision early in the year to continue maintaining our current opening hours. This will continue to help the public to dispose of their waste in an environmentally friendly manner which is becoming increasingly important.

One initiative which we are exploring to improve recycling centres, is a re-use facility at Tattershall HWRC. This would allow residents to buy items which other residents want to dispose of at a minimal cost. We are hopeful that the income generated will cover the costs of running such a service and with the potential of expanding this facility across other sites. More importantly it will help to minimize the amount of material which needs disposing of which has a financial cost and a carbon impact.

Improvements continue to be made with kerbside collections as the rollout of the separate paper and card project has continued around the county and residents of North Kesteven, Boston Borough, East Lindsey and West Lindsey have all received their purple lidded bins. Work continues to widen this into South Kesteven when paper and card should be collected after Christmas.

The project continues to provide excellent material which can be recycled into the highest quality paper and has also produced an annual income in excess of £1m which will help to offset the initial investment of the project and provides financial support to budgets within Waste Services which have increased significantly in recent times. Part of this income supports the Engagement team who are visiting schools to discuss waste and the environment. There have been around two hundred workshops delivered this year and this will hopefully provide a significant benefit in the future as children learn the importance of waste and resources.

## **COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 15 SEPTEMBER 2022**

**Statement from: Councillor Mrs S Woolley, Executive Councillor for NHS Liaison, Integrated Care System and Registration and Coroners**

### **NHS LIAISON AND INTEGRATED CARE SYSTEM**

#### **Visit to Washingborough School by the Princess Royal**

In June, I had the immense pleasure of being invited by the headteacher of Washingborough School to attend the school for a visit by the Princess Royal. The school has developed a strong focus on food education along with good mental and physical wellbeing. The Princess was visiting in her capacity as President of the Healthy Eating Foundation. I was fortunate to meet the Princess and explain how healthy eating fits into the Healthy Weight priority in the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS).

#### **Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy**

Following the publication of the Lincolnshire's new [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment \(JSNA\)](#) in March, work is now underway to review the JHWS for Lincolnshire. An engagement exercise with partners took place during April and March looking at the evidence in the JSNA to assess if the current priorities in the JHWS are still relevant and to identify any further areas of concern. The outcome of this work, along with a series of recommendations, were considered by the Lincolnshire Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) in June.

The Board agreed to adopt a life course approach in the next iteration of the JHWS and to reduce the number of priorities from seven to five.

The priorities are now:

- Mental Health and Dementia.
- Homes for Independence.
- Physical Activity.
- Healthy Weight.
- Carers.

Further engagement with partners will take place over the autumn to develop the next strategy, with a view to have it ready for approval by the HWB in March 2024.

#### **Integrated Care Strategy**

The Integrated Care System (ICS) in Lincolnshire is well established and arrangements embedded. The Integrated Care Partnership (ICP), a joint committee between the county council and the Integrated Care Board (ICB), has been operating for a year with myself and John Turner, Chief Executive NHS Lincolnshire ICB, as chair and vice chair, respectively. The first iteration of the Integrated Care Strategy was published by the ICP in January 2023 and further work is underway to finalise the strategy based on wider engagement with partners. Also, since publishing the strategy there have been several developments that also need to be taken account of, most notably the new JSNA, the Lincolnshire NHS Five Year Forward Plan and the redevelopment of the JHWS.



Last year, the government announced it would be issuing refreshed guidance on Integrated Care Strategies in summer 2023. However, I have been informed that this is now delayed, and the new guidance is not expected until autumn 2023.

Considering this, work to finalise this strategy will take place over the coming months in tandem with the JHWS. This will ensure there is a clear read across so the plans acknowledge and complement each other and ensure a cohesive system approach.

### **Hewitt Review**

At the end of 2022, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) announced an independent review into the oversight and governance of ICSs. The review was led by former Health Secretary, the Right Hon Patricia Hewitt. I welcomed the review and was part of the prevention and health management workstream. The [Hewitt Report](#) was published in April 2023 and the government's [response](#) was published in June 2023.

### **Department of Health and Social Care Visit**

I am pleased to inform colleagues that the DHSC have asked to visit Lincolnshire in the autumn to learn more about how our ICS is working and how we are building positive working partnerships. They are particularly interested in finding out more about our experiences of working in a coterminous system with one ICB, one upper tier local authority, and several district councils.

### **ICS Assurance**

Under the Health and Care Act 2022, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) were given new powers to assess the quality of care at a local authority level and integrated care system level. The CQC have indicated that they want to start to assess ICSs as soon as it is practical and meaningful to do so. They are currently working on what the approach will be and are expected to pilot the new assessment with Birmingham and Solihull ICS and Dorset ICS later this year. Inspection reports will be published but it is unclear if the two systems will be rated. Learning from the two pilots will feed into the final assessment framework and ratings which the Secretary of State will approve.

Full inspections and ratings for other ICSs are not expected until at least 2024/2025. It is expected that regulators will gather evidence under six headings: People's experience of health and care services, feedback from staff and leaders, feedback from partners, observations, processes, and outcomes.

## **REGISTRATION AND CORONERS**

### **Coroners Service**

The Coroners Service continues to focus on performance improvement and bringing down the number of older cases. The number of deaths reported to the coroner is expected to be over 3,000 this year and the service is on target to hear a record 600 coronial inquests.

In my May statement I was pleased to confirm the appointment of Paul Smith as HM Senior Coroner for Lincolnshire. We have now had approval from the Chief Coroner to fill the position of Area Coroner for Lincolnshire, once the selection exercise is complete and we have made the appointment the Coroners Service will be at full complement for the first time in nearly five years.

Our business case with the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) to create a Greater Lincolnshire Coroners Service is moving forward. A public consultation has now been completed and we await the Ministerial decision. If successful, the new Coroners Area could be formed as early as October this year and would become one of the largest in the country.

### **Registration Service**

The Registration Service continues to develop its online offering. Excellent take up of online public bookings continues to be experienced, with over 80% of all birth death and notice appointments now being booked online via the Council website. The service has introduced online payments for weddings and civil partnership and is in the process of developing more online services. Later this year consumers will have the ability to pre order birth and death certificates when booking their appointment online.

The Registration Service has experienced another busy summer of weddings and civil partnership with nearly a thousand ceremonies taking place between June and August. Our ceremony offering continues to grow with more venues becoming licenced for weddings and civil partnership and the introduction of the private citizenship ceremony has been well received. Future developments will see online ceremony bookings, a new customer ceremony planner and the introduction of renewal of vows and baby naming ceremonies.