



**PUBLIC PROTECTION AND COMMUNITIES
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
31 OCTOBER 2023**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR N H PEPPER (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors P A Skinner (Vice-Chairman), Mrs A M Austin, Mrs J Brockway, M R Clarke, Mrs N F Clarke, K E Lee and E J Sneath.

Councillors L A Cawrey, (Executive Councillor Fire and Rescue and Cultural Services), A P Maughan, (Executive Support Councillor Fire and Rescue and Cultural Services) attended the meeting as observers, remotely via Teams.

Councillors S P Roe (Executive Support Councillor Children's Services, Community Safety, Procurement and Migration) and Mrs S Woolley (Executive Councillor for NHS Liaison, Integrated Care System, Registration and Coroners) attended the meeting as observers.

Officers in attendance:-

Mark Baxter (Chief Fire Officer), Katrina Cope (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Fiona Fielding (Senior Commercial and Procurement Officer), Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer), Mark Keal (Head of Trading Standards), Emma Krasinska (Programme Manager - Public Health), Will Mason (Head of Culture), Clare Newborn (Head of Community Safety), Vicky Salmon (Community Safety Strategy Co-ordinator), Anne-Marie Scott (Assistant Director - Prevention and Early Intervention), Steve Topham (Assistant Chief Fire Officer) and Professor Derek Ward (Director of Public Health).

33 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors W H Gray and A M Key.

(It was noted that an apology had been received from Nicole Hilton, Assistant Director - Communities and that Will Mason, Head of Culture was in attendance remotely, on her behalf. Lee Sirdifield, Assistant Director Corporate had also given his apologies for the meeting).

34 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declaration of members' interest were received at this stage of the proceedings.

2

**PUBLIC PROTECTION AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
31 OCTOBER 2023**

35 MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC PROTECTION AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON 19 SEPTEMBER 2023

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 19 September 2023 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

36 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND CHIEF
OFFICERS

The Chairman advised the meeting that Martyn Parker, Assistant Director for Public Protection had retired from Lincolnshire Police on the 24 October 2023, thus ending his secondment to Lincolnshire County Council. The Chairman on behalf of the Committee extended his thanks to Martyn for all the support and advice provided to the Committee during his secondment to the Council.

No Executive Councillor, or Chief Officer announcements were received.

37 SAFER LINCOLNSHIRE PARTNERSHIP - FRAUD UPDATE REPORT

SITTING AS THE CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee considered a report from Vicky Salmon, Community Safety Strategy Co-ordinator, which provided an update on the collaborative work being undertaken by the Crime and Disorder Core Priority Group of the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership whose current priority was to focus on digitally enabled fraud and ID theft.

In a presentation to the Committee, the Community Safety Strategy Co-ordinator advised of the work currently being undertaken through collaboration with the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership Crime and Disorder Group, Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) and other committed partners. It was highlighted that digitally enabled fraud and ID theft was a growing threat for Lincolnshire, and as a result the Core Priority Group had identified five objectives to reduce victimisation and details of the activity being taken for each of the five objectives were presented to the Committee.

The Committee was also advised that there was a commitment between LCC and Lincolnshire Police to working more collaboratively, with an example of collaborative working being the appointment of Scams Intervention and Prevention Officer who provided support to victims of scams and fraud and those at risk of such crimes. It was highlighted that this role was hosted by the LCC Community Safety service, funded by the LCC Trading Standards service, embedded in the Lincolnshire Police Prevention and Partnerships team with close links to the LCC Adults Safeguarding Team.

It was noted that due to the agreed partnership specific officers from both partners had access to organisational databases to allow for ease of support to victims and intelligence gathering for enforcement purposes.

In conclusion, the Committee noted that prevention was at the heart of keeping those living and working in Lincolnshire safe from digitally enabled fraud.

Appendix A to the report provided a copy of the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership Structure Chart for the Committee to consider.

(Note: As a result of a Fire Alarm sounding, the Committee had to evacuate the Council Chamber between 10.24am and 10:45am)

During consideration of this item, some of the following comments were noted.

- Confirmation was provided that information relating to scams was provided in the following three languages: Portuguese, Polish and Romanian;
- The Committee noted that to access a call blocker through the LCC Scams Officer, there was no set criteria, but the person requiring the blocker needed to be vulnerable, or at risk of fraud and that each individual case would be assessed by the Scams Officer. It was noted further that a call blocker could also be obtained via the National Trading Standards system, or could be purchased from Truecall, who were the industry leaders in this area. Officers agreed to provide further information in this regard for circulation to members of the Committee after the meeting;
- One member highlighted that an option provided by BT which enabled landline users to filter their own calls was no longer provided, because of there now being multiple providers. It was however felt that the re-introduction of the service would aid in preventing scams, allowing it to be dealt with on a national basis; and
- One member highlighted that fellow Councillors could help combat scams in their own division by getting messages out via Twitter, through town and parish councils, and signposting residents to the Friends Against Scams website for further information.

The Chairman on behalf of the Committee extended his thanks to the Community Safety Strategy Co-ordinator for her presentation.

RESOLVED

That support be extended to the continued delivery of the work of the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership's Crime and Disorder Priority Group in the proposed format.

PUBLIC PROTECTION AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
31 OCTOBER 2023

38 RE-PROCUREMENT OF LINCOLNSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE FLEET MAINTENANCE SERVICES

PUBLIC PROTECTION AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee considered a report from Mark Baxter, Chief Fire Officer, which invited the Committee to consider and comment on the Re-Procurement of LFR Fleet Maintenance, a decision which was due to be considered by the Executive Councillor for Fire and Rescue and Cultural Services between 6 and 10 November 2023.

The Chairman invited Mark Baxter, Chief Fire Officer to present the report. Fiona Fielding, Senior Commercial and Procurement Officer and Steve Topham, Assistant Chief Fire Officer were also in attendance for this item.

Attached at Appendix A was a copy of the report to the Executive Councillor for Fire and Rescue and Cultural Services regarding the Re-Procurement of LFR Fleet Maintenance for the Committee to consider.

In guiding the Committee through the report, particular reference was made to: the proposed contract being a three year contract with options to extend by two further periods of three years each being procured through a competitive tender, to allow the Council to put in place a flexible, value for money contract; that the current contract was due to expire on 30 June 2024; the background to the current arrangements; the cost implications; and contract management details to ensure that Key Performance Indicators were met.

It was highlighted collaborative working with Lincolnshire Police or other Fleet contracts could be future options to be explored, but currently neither option was viable at this time.

The Committee noted that collaboration with Humberside Fire and Rescue Services was being explored whilst the tender process was ongoing.

In conclusion, it was noted that the desired outcome was to have a flexible contract to cover all planned maintenance, servicing, and MOT to all levels of Service vehicle, as well as reactive repairs and breakdown support, including Out of Hours cover with the provision to break the contract, or include other services dependent on the outcome of the review of operations. The Committee was advised that the benefits from awarding the contract would ensure that LFR fleet was kept and maintained in safe, operational condition, with the required service levels and all legal requirements of fire service vehicles being met.

During consideration of this item, the following comments were noted:

Service Specification and Tender Process

- If there were no bids for the contract or the costs were too high, there were other procedures which could be undertaken to help get the contract in place. This could

include negotiating with other contractors, either the current contractor or other contractors in the market, while following the public contract regulations;

- With regards to the proposal to increase the no-fault break clause from 12 months in the existing contract to 18 months in the new contract, it was confirmed that this was to give maximum opportunity to explore other options should any come forward. A year was considered too short, and 18 months would be the halfway point for the initial contract period of three years and then for each extension period of three years;
- By splitting the tender into two lots, this would maximise opportunities to explore other options. There were more providers in the marketplace who could service the light vehicle fleet but not the heavy vehicle fleet. This would enable providers to provide quotes for doing both lots or just one of the lots which would give maximum flexibility to achieve the best possible service;
- With regards to the need for specialists for maintaining specialist vehicles, confirmation was provided that the service specification stated that all the staff who would work on the contract would have to hold specific certifications;
- The new contract would be assessed against a suite of key performance indicators (KPIs) that included timeliness of routine maintenance, turnaround times, recovery times, and getting vehicles back on the road. These KPIs currently perform very well under the current contract. A contract manager would continue to manage the contract on a day-to-day basis to oversee the performance;
- In relation to collaborating with other fire services or other partners such as the police and highways to negotiate a better contract for different types of vehicles, it was confirmed that the contract was structured to allow for greater flexibility to enable the Council to work with other partners if that became an option in the future. The longer break clause would provide this flexibility. Partnering and collaboration with other agencies was a key focus and the contract was centred around the ability to do that; and
- The Committee requested that it be kept informed of the outcomes of the discussions around collaborative arrangements with Humberside Fire and Rescue Service.

Contingency Plans for Vehicle Maintenance and Breakdowns

- In order to continue to provide a service while vehicles were being serviced, it was confirmed that there were up to four vehicles that were kept as spares for planned maintenance and in case an unplanned issue takes a vehicle off the road;
- The contract would provide for a spare vehicle to be made available and driven out to a broken-down vehicle and for the broken-down vehicle to be recovered for repairs. This would ensure that the high level of availability was constantly maintained; and
- In response to a suggestion about using local breakdown services instead, it was highlighted that this could lead to issues in consistency in regard to the servicing and the specialist knowledge of the equipment. Having one supplier centrally located would help to maintain the timetabling of the regular maintenance programme as well as the reactionary maintenance when something goes wrong.

The Chairman on behalf of the Committee extended his thanks to the presenters.

RESOLVED

That unanimous support be extended by the Public Protection and Community Scrutiny Committee to the recommendations to the Executive Councillor for Fire and Rescue and Cultural Services, as shown on page 31 of the report pack; and that the comments raised by the Committee be forwarded on to the Executive Councillor for Fire and Rescue and Cultural Services, prior to the decision being taken between 6 and 10 November 2023.

39 FUTURE FUNDING FOR CITIZENS ADVICE

Consideration was given to a report from Anne-Marie Scott, Assistant Director, Prevention & Early Intervention and Emma Krasinska, Programme Manager, Public Health and Professor Derek Ward, Director of Public Health, which invited the Committee to consider and comment on future funding for Citizens Advice Lincolnshire, prior to consideration by the Executive at its meeting on 7 November 2023.

Appendix A to the report provided a copy of the Executive report for the Committee to consider.

In presenting the Executive report to the Committee, reference was made to: details of the review of Citizen's Advice Service in Lincolnshire; options for future funding mechanisms; reasons for the proposed recommendations; the background to Citizens Advice in Lincolnshire; the Strategic outcomes, policy benefits and legal context; current arrangements and service model; the results of the equality impact assessment; details of the demand and need for the service in Lincolnshire; and service performance.

In conclusion, the Committee noted that it was felt that a multi-year grant agreement would provide a longer-term guarantee of financial certainty and stability at a time when the service was experiencing increases in demand. It was highlighted that the Lincolnshire County Council core grant funding supported employee costs and an annual uplift in line with the National Living Wage increases would help maintain the level of funding in real terms. The Committee noted further that working more closely with district councils and the Integrated Care Board could lead to future joint funding arrangements with some or all partners, which could encourage consistency in reporting across the three branches.

During consideration of this item, the following comments were noted:

Grant Funding Agreement

- Support was given to the continuation of the funding and the recommendation to move to a three-year grant funding agreement with annual increases in line with the National Living Wage;
- Disappointment was expressed that the level of funding would only increase by £17,236 on 1 April 2024 from the current level of funding which had been in place since 2018/19, and that no additional award was being provided to Citizens Advice to recognise that there had been no funding increase since 2018/19 even though there had been cost of living increases, especially over the last two years. It was confirmed that the £17,236 increase from April 2024 reflected the current 6.2% increase in the National Living Wage. In addition, it was highlighted that Lincolnshire County Council was one of a number of funders of the Citizens Advice Service in Lincolnshire; and
- With regards to the payment of the funding to Citizens Advice, it was confirmed that payment would be on a quarterly basis.

Lincolnshire Branches of Citizens Advice

- In relation to the three branches of Citizens Advice in Lincolnshire, it was confirmed that one of the smaller branches had an arrangement with the national advice line to provide reciprocal support. This meant that their calls would roll to the national advice line when they were unable to answer them, and when they had capacity, they would reciprocate that back as part of the arrangement.

Background Papers

- It was recommended that the information links under the Background Papers should be explored by all Members, in particular the monthly Cost of Living Dashboard provided by the national Citizens Advice service, where useful information about level of need by Lincolnshire district areas could be found.

The Chairman on behalf of the Committee extended his thanks to the presenters.

RESOLVED

That unanimous support be extended by the Public Protection and Community Scrutiny Committee to the recommendations to the Executive, as shown on page 42 of the report pack; and that the comments raised by the Committee be forwarded on to the Executive, prior to the decision being taken on 7 November 2023.

40 POTENTIAL TOPICS FOR SCRUTINY REVIEW BY SCRUTINY PANEL A

The Committee considered a report from Tracy Johnson, Senior Scrutiny Officer, which invited the Committee to consider whether it wished to make a suggestion for a potential scrutiny review topic to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

PUBLIC PROTECTION AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
31 OCTOBER 2023

The Committee was reminded that when selecting an item consideration needed to be made to the Scrutiny Prioritisation Toolkit document as detailed at Appendix A to the report.

The Senior Scrutiny Officer advised the Committee that the Assistant Director – Public Protection had suggested ‘Vapes’ as a potential topic for consideration. This would allow for the review of the Council’s response to the current vapes issues with non-compliant vapes usage and the use of vapes by children whilst supporting a public health message to reduce the numbers of cigarette smokers.

During consideration of this item, the following suggestions were put forward:

- The impact of recent Flooding. The Committee was advised that this topic would be a matter for the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee;
- Reference was also made for the need for all groups within the Council to put forward member representatives to Scrutiny Panels, to enable inclusive and meaningful scrutiny reviews to take place; and
- Members extended their support to the item of ‘Vapes’ being put forward for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on 21 December 2023.

RESOLVED

That the topic of ‘Vapes’ be put forward as a potential scrutiny review topic to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board for consideration at its meeting on 21 December 2023.

41 **PUBLIC PROTECTION AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

Consideration was given to a report from Tracy Johnson, Senior Scrutiny Officer, which invited the Committee to review the work programme, as detailed on pages 84 to 88 of the report pack and to highlight any additional scrutiny activity which could be included for consideration in the work programme.

The Senior Scrutiny Officer briefed the Committee on the items scheduled to be considered at the 12 December 2023 meeting.

During consideration of this item, the following suggestions were put forward:

- An update on the Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Fire Services training facilities at Waddington and future plans; and
- One member enquired whether for the 12 December 2023 meeting, the Committee could consider the Crime and Disorder item first, followed by the Numeracy item.

The Chairman advised that the order of the agenda would be considered further at the scheduled pre-meeting.

REESOLVED

That the work programme as detailed on pages 84 to 88 of the report pack be approved subject to the consideration of the suggestion made above.

42 CONSIDERATION OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

RESOLVED

That in accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that if they were present there could be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

43 LFR CONTROL PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to an exempt report concerning the LFR Control Programme, prior to a decision being taken by the Leader of the Council (Executive Councillor for Resources, Communications and Commissioning) and the Executive Councillor for Fire and Rescue and Cultural Services between 3 November and 1 December 2023.

The Chairman invited Mark Baxter, Chief Fire Officer and Steve Topham, Assistant Chief Fire Officer to present the exempt item to the Committee.

RESOLVED

That unanimous support be given by the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee to the recommendations as detailed within the exempt report and that the comments raised by the Committee be forwarded on to the Leader of the Council (Executive Councillor for Resources, Communications and Commissioning) and the Executive Councillor for Fire and Rescue and Cultural Services, prior to a decision being taken between 3 November and 1 December 2023.

The meeting closed at 12.00 pm.

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