

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 19 DECEMBER 2014

**Statement from: Councillor P A Robinson – Executive Councillor for
Fire & Rescue, Emergency Planning, Trading Standards,
Equality and Diversity**

Fire and Rescue

Firefighters Pension Dispute

The dispute between the Fire Brigades' Union (FBU) and the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) over proposed changes to the firefighters' pension scheme is still unresolved.

The latest action was a 4 day strike by the FBU from 1800 hrs on 31 October to 1800 hours on 4 November 2014. During this period, Lincolnshire FRS attended 95 emergency calls and provided cover across the county as normal, with between 31 and 41 fire engines available.

I would like to express my thanks on behalf of our Council and Lincolnshire people to those members of staff who continue to work normally throughout this dispute, and, in particular, those who have put in a great deal of extra work in the planning to maintain effective fire cover during strike periods.

Wholtime Fire Stations

There is now a wholtime crewed fire engine operating in Sleaford. The fire engine and crew are housed in a temporary facility off East Road pending the development of a new fire station to be built in Sleaford in 2015/16. The retained fire engine will continue to operate from the existing fire station in the town.

A wholtime crewed fire engine will begin to operate from Louth when the new members of staff required finish their training in January 2015. The fire engine will initially be housed in a temporary fire station, whilst the new station is developed on the same site. The crew will be able to provide quicker response times in the town and immediate surrounding area and give more timely support to neighbouring retained crews.

Ambulance Project

Following a successful bid to DCLG in 2013, Lincolnshire FRS is breaking new ground with its joint venture with East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS) and Lincolnshire Integrated Emergency Services (LIVES). Building on the success of the FRS co-responder work, firefighters at Long Sutton and Woodhall Spa have undergone advanced training and now attend co-responder calls in a fully equipped ambulance. This allows the co-responders, under the direction of a paramedic, to transport patients, where appropriate, to hospital in a significantly shorter time than was previously possible. The scheme will be extended shortly to Stamford Fire Station.

The project will run for a 12 month trial period after which its effectiveness will be evaluated.

Long Service and Good Conduct Medals

The Long Service and Good Conduct Medal is awarded by Her Majesty the Queen to men and women who have served for 20 years in the Fire Service. On 21 November the annual presentation was held at the Epic Centre, and 7 members of Lincolnshire FRS received their medals from the Lord Lieutenant.

In addition, Lincolnshire County Council certificates were awarded to 16 members of staff in recognition of 30 years' service and an award for over 40 years' service was made to Phillip Patrick of Horncastle who joined the fire service in February 1973.

A crew from Skegness received a Chief Fire Officer's Commendation for their actions at a flat fire in Skegness which saw 6 people (and a dog and a cat) safely rescued from a burning block of flats

Emergency Planning and Business Continuity

The service won its fourth national resilience award for the 'Safe Havens' project working with schools and encouraging pupils to plan for their school's use as a safe haven during a local crisis. This has proved to be a simple but effective way to strengthen community resilience.

Working with the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum (LRF), the service has helped to make preparations in line with Government priorities for emergency incidents including the outbreak of Ebola in the UK (which is assessed as a 'very low' risk). Proportionate planning has ensured that partners have tested their plans to deal with potential threats to public health.

Trading Standards

There have been some high profile court cases in the last quarter culminating from the work of Trading Standards to protect Lincolnshire from rogue traders, whose actions have included dishonest dealing, from selling and repairing disability aids to counterfeit goods, including cigarettes. The offenders are currently either serving sentences in the community or in prison, and will be made to pay back the proceeds of their crimes.

Trading Standards officers continue to provide advice to the public to help them protect themselves against 'scams' and dangerous goods. They also provide guidance to reputable businesses who seek to sell safe and good quality goods and services within the law.