

MEETING OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**TUESDAY, 25 JANUARY 2011 10.30
AM**



GROUP MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor Robert Hearmon
Councillor Trevor Holmes
Councillor Ken Joynson
Councillor Mrs Rosemary Kaberry-
Brown

Councillor Bob Russell
Councillor Mrs Judy Smith
Councillor Mike Williams

OFFICERS

Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Lucy Youles)
Principal Democracy Officer (Jo Toomey)

14. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs Bosworth, Helyar and Higgs. Councillor Holmes sent an apology for lateness.

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Williams declared a personal interest in agenda item 10, the update on further education at Stamford College, because he is a Governor at Grantham College.

16. ACTION NOTES FOR THE MEETING ON 28 SEPTEMBER 2010

The notes of the meeting held on 28 September 2010 were approved as a correct record of the meeting.

17. UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Performance Report – Quarter 1 performance with focus on customer first

The report detailed complaints about the water temperature in the swimming pool. Consequently, the water temperature was adjusted to

thirty degrees. Since then no further feedback or complaints have been received.

Stamford Cellar Bar

At the Committee's previous meeting, Members requested an update on the proposed closure of the Cellar Bar in Stamford Arts Centre. The Council had undertaken public consultation on the proposal, the results of which were being analysed. It was anticipated the results could feed into the Committee's next meeting.

18. LINCOLNSHIRE POLICE

Chief Inspector Lee Pache, Lincolnshire Police's Chief Inspector Community Safety for South Division (South Kesteven and South Holland) was welcomed to the meeting. He spoke to the Committee about multi-agency policing of the night time economy and changes to Lincolnshire Police's structure.

Policing Model

- The force was required to make savings of 20% over a four year period, leading to a reduction in police officer and staff posts.
- Lincolnshire Police would go from three divisions (South, West and East) to a whole force model. Local policing will be managed through four district areas, each led by a Chief Inspector.
- Chief Inspector Mark Housley will take responsibility for the Kesteven district, comprising South Kesteven and North Kesteven.
- The force will structure itself around themed areas: neighbourhood policing, response and patrol, serious crime and protective services.
- Day-to-day management of neighbourhood policing teams was expected to remain with inspectors. From April 2011, the number of neighbourhood police constables in Lincolnshire will increase from 55 to 184. Officers will be attached to specific wards and concentrate on non-emergency calls; focusing on local-area problem-solving and investigation. This should increase local visibility particularly in rural areas.
- Response and patrol will be carried out by a smaller team of officers who will respond to emergency incidents and arrest offenders, who will be handed over to neighbourhood policing officers or the volume crime team to investigate.
- Funding for PCSOs was guaranteed for the next three years. Members were concerned that the hours worked by PCSOs did not match the times when communities had most concerns. Working outside contracted hours was an individual's choice.
- It was unclear what partnership-based funding would be available for the next financial year.
- In response to a Member's question, Chief Inspector Pache said there had been reductions in some aspects of paperwork, however a

certain amount was necessary to ensure the successful prosecution of offenders.

- To increase visibility, officers were issued with blackberries, so they could complete certain functions without returning to the police station.
- Lincolnshire Police and all the district councils in Lincolnshire would move to a single anti-social behaviour case management system. This would prevent duplication between agencies and provide a better-informed picture across the county.
- There had been a large increase in the number of special constables.
- Lincolnshire Police's community safety activity would be centralised. The unit would have responsibility for the Neighbourhood Watch function.
- Lincolnshire Police were developing an Estate Strategy, which would be used to define the usage of police stations across the county.

Multi-Agency Policing in the night-time economy

- Lincolnshire Police, together with South Kesteven District Council form two partners on the South Lincolnshire Community Safety Partnership (CSP). The CSP covers crime and disorder and community safety issues across South Kesteven and South Holland.
- Partnership structures were being reviewed in the context of organisational restructures. It was anticipated that partnerships would change to reflect new boundaries, however, it was unclear what any new partnership structures would look like.
- South Lincolnshire CSP has thematic groups covering key local priorities, including Violent Crime and Substance Misuse. This group takes a particular interest in the multi-agency response to night-time economy issues. This will continue until any new structure takes effect.
- Operation Hornet is Lincolnshire Police's main tool for policing the night-time economy and incorporates hi-visibility policing in town centres. This often includes a wide variety of partners.
- Police officers are in regular contact with CCTV operators using Pubwatch radios. This allows operators to alert officers of potential flashpoints. Chief Inspector Pache emphasised the value Lincolnshire Police placed on the provision of CCTV and gave examples of its effective use.
- Grantham had an active Street Pastor scheme. This was being replicated in Stamford.
- As part of a pilot scheme in Grantham, running until March, 2011, the County Council commissioned two street wardens, both CRB checked and registered with the Security Industry Authority (SIA). They live within and know the local area. Lincolnshire Police's Licensing Team had responsibility for ensuring Street Wardens behaved appropriately and reporting any concerns to the SIA.
- Chief Inspector Pache reported that both crime categories: assault with injury and assault with less serious injury, recorded decreases in Grantham and Stamford. The total amount of recorded crime within

South Kesteven had also reduced.

The Chairman thanked Chief Inspector Pache for attending the meeting and briefing Members and encouraged him to use the Committee to support local policing.

19. UPDATE ON FURTHER EDUCATION AT STAMFORD COLLEGE

11:53 Councillor Holmes entered the meeting

The chairman welcomed Andrew Patience, the Principal of New College, Stamford to the meeting. Mr Patience had been invited to talk to the Committee about further education provision and subsidised transport.

Further education provision

- New College, Stamford has approximately 1,900 16-18 year old students, 1,000 adults, 300 14-16 year olds and 200 higher education students.
- Roughly half of the students who attended the college came from outside the Stamford area, including bordering counties.
- Based on assessment results in the 2009/10 academic year, the college was amongst the top 10% of further education colleges across all academic levels.
- Students accessing higher education at the college were either participating in programmes run by the college and validated by a university, or as part of a franchise where universities provided degrees that are taught on campuses remote from their hub. Stamford delivers a combination of verified and franchised courses. This includes a partnership with the University of Lincoln. These arrangements ran to the end of the 2010/11 academic year.
- Funding pressures and cuts led partner universities to withdraw verified and franchised programmes from September 2011 for first year students. Second and third year students would be able to complete their degree at Stamford College.
- Members expressed concern that this withdrawal would impact on students who could not travel away to university, including those with caring responsibilities and those who want to study part-time whilst working. Losing this provision could also deter students from poorer backgrounds entering further education.
- Studying at Stamford College provided a cheaper option than conventional universities. Consequently, withdrawal of these courses was expected to impact on the number of local people in higher education, particularly with the 2012 increase in tuition fees.
- The college also provided access to education for people living in areas with poor rural transport, including towns and villages across the south of the district and in South Holland, where residents may struggle to get to University towns and cities.
- Through the local MP, Mr Patience had been in correspondence with

the Minister for Higher Education. His response explained that universities were autonomous corporations who were not subject to existing directives, and could not be compelled to behave in any particular way. The response also stated that the government was reviewing this ahead of 2012 in-line with the increase in tuition fees.

- Current arrangements mean course validation can only be undertaken by universities. However, changes were underway as the exam board Edexcel had developed its own degree programme.
- Many students who have studied at Stamford College have gone on to find employment in the local area. Loss of these courses would mean a reduction in skilled workers and affect local economic development.

Committee members were concerned about the potential impact of the withdrawal and recognised that this would be replicated across Lincolnshire. They suggested that the issue's profile should be raised within other districts. Members suggested a key way to raise this awareness was submitting a motion to Council on 3 March 2011. Councillor Hearmon agreed to put forward the motion and Councillor Russell agreed to second it.

Recommendations

- 1. To put a motion before Council to raise awareness about the withdrawal of the University of Lincoln's support from local colleges**
- 2. To send a letter to the University of Lincoln expressing the concerns of the Committee and asking them to review their approach**

12:30 Councillor Williams left the meeting

Transport

Mr Patience went on to speak to the Committee about the ways in which Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) were proposing changes to their transport arrangements from the next academic year onwards.

- For the 2010/11 academic year, students were expected to contribute £202 a year for transport to and from college. An LCC consultation proposed raising this contribution to £390. While this was a sharp increase, Members recognised that the change brought Lincolnshire to the level of other councils.
- Mr Patience explained the withdrawal of the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA). Without the EMA students may be unable to afford increased travel costs.
- LCC had proposed changes to the 'three-mile' rule where subsidised transport was provided for students living three miles away from their nearest college that provided the course they wanted to study. Instead the county has been divided up into nine districts. Students

will only receive subsidised travel to colleges within their district regardless of whether it provides the course they wanted to study. This will not affect students who are part-way through courses.

- The Principals of four Lincolnshire Colleges were in correspondence with Lincolnshire County Council.
- A public consultation event will take place at the Guildhall Arts Centre, Grantham on Thursday 3 March 2011. Other consultation events are being held in Lincoln and Louth.

Councillors were concerned that students would lose the freedom to choose where and what they study. Members agreed that they should seek to raise awareness of the proposals, and that Councillor Hearmon should submit a second motion to the Council meeting on 3 March 2011. The Committee also wanted to write to the County Council to express their concerns about the proposals.

Recommendations

- 1. To put a motion before Council to raise awareness about proposed changes to subsidised transport for further education**
- 2. To send a letter to Lincolnshire County Council expressing the Committee's concerns over the proposal that students only receive subsidised transport to prescribed colleges**

12:45 Councillor Russell left the meeting

20. BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS - QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE FOCUS ON QUALITY LIVING

This item was deferred until the Committee's next meeting on 22 February 2011.

21. REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

Councillor Williams proposed the disbanding of the working group that explored night-time economy issues. This was agreed.

22. WORK PROGRAMME

Members considered items for the work programme. Crime and disorder and the Quality Living performance review were on the agenda for this meeting. Scrutiny of budget proposals was placed on the agenda for the meeting on 30 November 2010. The cancellation of that meeting and the budget timeline meant the Committee did not have the opportunity to scrutinise proposals.

Two new items were raised for consideration at the meeting 22 February 2011:

- Partnerships
- Developing the effectiveness of scrutiny

23. REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Councillor Hearmon had attended the County Council's Scrutiny Committee and the Health Scrutiny Committee. The Health Scrutiny Committee met in Stamford to consider the impact of the development of Peterborough City Hospital and Stamford Hospital, together with service provision in the area.

24. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting was closed at 12:52pm