



Executive statement 2024

Friday 17 May

Cllr Martin Hill OBE **Leader of Lincolnshire County Council**



2024, our 50th year as Lincolnshire County Council, looks set to be a very busy year, and also one of great significance. Against a backdrop of challenging times in local councils and global instability, we are taking action here in Lincolnshire to bring more certainty for our residents and the services they rely on. Compared to many other local authorities, we are in a strong financial position and, despite our low funding base, we are able to provide a large capital programme for schools, roads and flooding issues.

As well as ensuring we can continue to deliver the services that our residents need and value, we are also able to invest further in flood prevention, highways maintenance, tackling antisocial behaviour and environmental measures, whilst keeping council tax amongst the lowest in the UK.

During the last year, we have re-invested savings made by our service areas on day-to-day spending of around £12m. This included an additional £4m to support flood prevention measures, as well as additional investment in our waste management, essential maintenance work to Cross Keys Bridge in Sutton Bridge and swapping street lighting to more efficient LED lighting.

For some years now, many of our services commission other organisations to deliver work on our behalf. This year we have undertaken 232 procurements, with a value of over £162million. Our new sustainable commissioning strategy means as well as having a positive impact on local residents and communities, it also benefits local businesses, our environment and our economy.

We can take assurance from our external audits that for the last two years there are no significant findings reported in our ability to meet our value for money duty or to remain financially sustainable. This was reflected in February, when we set a balanced budget for the next year, meeting cost pressures of additional demand and inflation across our services, whilst delivering efficiencies.

We continue to be future-focused as we look to use technology and innovation to improve our everyday operations. Our transformation programme continues to drive positive impacts in areas such as our property rationalisation programme which is reducing our office costs.

2024 also marks a significant year as the government has approved our plans for devolution, ratifying both our ambitions and our work to date. There is much still to do before we can set up our combined authority and work towards a mayoral election next year.

At a time when we are looking back over our achievements not just for the last year, but the last 50 years, I'm confident we are also planning an exciting future for our county.

Cllr Patricia Bradwell OBE

Children's services and safer communities

I am delighted that the Ofsted inspection, which took place in April 2023, brought about an overall 'outstanding' judgement for our children's services. The judgement report concluded that Lincolnshire continues to provide outstanding services for vulnerable children and their families.

In July last year, Lincolnshire was formally announced as one of only three initial national Families First for Children Pathfinders. The Pathfinder Programme is sponsored and managed by the Department for Education (DfE) and the award of this status recognises the highly regarded services we offer to children and families. It also brings approximately £5.7m of new funding to Lincolnshire over the duration of the programme.

The county council continues to invest in providing additional school places to meet the needs of local communities. This year, over £7m is being invested into mainstream schools to create over 200 new school places.

Our Children in Care Transformation Programme has continued to improve the outcomes of our most vulnerable children. Supported by the DfE, we have opened two additional Ofsted registered children's homes, Robin House in Lincoln and Riverhead House in Louth.

We successfully launched our Family Hub Programme through our children's centres. The programme aims to enhance our early years services to ensure that all parents and carers can access the help they need, when it's needed.

The Health Visiting Service continue to offer families 'face to face' contacts in their homes and in our children's centres. The service has introduced a new role for Lincolnshire and successfully recruited 12 children's nurses who will support delivery of the healthy child programme. The service also supported the training of six student health visitors, all of whom qualified and were offered permanent posts.

The council has been awarded funding to expand the existing Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs). The new funding will cover around 21 educational settings located within the East Lindsey (North) area, including Louth. This means that even more children and young people in Lincolnshire will have access to mental health and emotional wellbeing support.

Recognising the very damaging affect that antisocial behaviour can have on individuals and communities, the council is investing an additional £1 million to support the future delivery of





targeted early intervention and prevention, community engagement and enforcement activity. This will see the council working alongside police, social landlords and district councils to reduce levels of antisocial behaviour across Lincolnshire.

The council is a key contributor to the Stay Safe Partnership. This is an initiative that brings together a range of agencies to deliver preventative education for primary and secondary schools and academies across the county.

Age-appropriate workshops cover a range of safety matters such as healthy relationships and online safety. These sessions are designed to increase the critical thinking skills of children and young people, to help them make safer choices.

Additional financial investment in the 2022/23 academic year enabled the team to expand its reach and positively impact more children than ever before. As a result, the partnership delivered sessions to 20,978 secondary students and 17,762 primary students.

In 2022, legislation through the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act (2022) introduced a new legal duty for all UK authorities to work collaboratively with other partners to “prevent people from

becoming involved in serious violence, both as victims and perpetrators”.

In Lincolnshire, partners have capitalised on the existing Safer Lincolnshire Partnership as a governance structure, and the Serious Violence Core Priority Group was created to drive targeted activity and address serious violence.

Over the next three years, £690,000 of government funding and £2,310,000 from the Police and Crime Commissioner will fund projects to address serious violence within our communities. This includes initiatives targeting those carrying weapons, through the use of portable metal detectors in bars and clubs.

Cllr Wendy Bowkett

Adult care and public health

I'm proud to say that our Adult Care Services are continuing to work towards finding the best outcomes for Lincolnshire residents. There's plenty of success and progress seen over the past year.

In November 2023, Lincolnshire hosted a successful 'Ageing Well' conference, while our family weight management and healthy lifestyle services continued to grow in 2023-24, with take-up more than quadrupling.

Outcomes are extremely encouraging, with 70% of children who complete the programme reducing their BMI, increasing their activity and improving their diets.

The council's Day Opportunities service continues to support and invest in our workforce, as highlighted by an apprentice programme covering 12 roles.

Over 650 people benefit from 'drop-in' sessions in Lincolnshire. The service has also provided support to go on holiday, with over 320 overnight breaks as part of our creative offer. There's also regular weekday support at Butlins in Skegness, which was open to both people who draw on the service and wider communities, and access to an outdoor pursuit centre in the Lake District.

The Day Service also continues to operate the Quad restaurant in Lincoln that employs people with learning disabilities, with volunteering remaining a strong aspect of the service, with 146 people each month taking part.

The council has commissioned 'SHINE Lincolnshire' to deliver the new Mental Health and Wellbeing Community Investment Fund. The total investment into the voluntary sector amounts to approximately £1.5 million.





Some £210,000 has been secured from the Department for Work and Pensions to continue to deliver Local Supported Employment (LSE). Launched in November 2022, LSE supports school and college leavers aged 18 to 24 who are autistic and/or have a learning disability. By February 2024, the initiative had supported 45 individuals, with 10 now in paid jobs.

A physical disabilities specialist team pilot was launched in January 2024. This is to help young people who have a physical disability or adults with acquired brain injuries to improve their experience as they prepare for adulthood.

A whole family, holistic approach, allows the young person and their parent carers to access clear points of engagement with informed and knowledgeable practitioners.

The Gainsborough community development work has progressed well, working with the West Lindsey Dementia Support Group. This connection has meant advice and information is shared at an earlier stage in a person's dementia journey. It is being extended to the Mental Health Partnership meetings where local groups and services share developments for the benefit of the community.

Successful collaboration work with Lincolnshire Community Health Services' occupational therapy colleagues in the southwest of the county has been expanded to the east and northwest of Lincolnshire. This collaboration encourages people to have the skills and confidence to self-manage aspects of their care, which is shown to improve people's wellbeing.

The hospital discharge teams have been extremely challenged by the 41 days of industrial action to date by junior doctors and consultants since March 2023. They have worked closely with NHS colleagues to minimise the negative impact on people.

In September 2023, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) requested that the Lincolnshire system focused on four high impact interventions – intermediate care, virtual wards, acute respiratory infection and frailty. Adult Social Care has fully engaged with partners to achieve positive outcomes in all these areas, using active recovery beds, home based reablement, a St Barnabas Community Care Nurse Specialist and working in partnership with the voluntary sector.

Services continue to work closely with the voluntary sector, referring to and hosting Age UK Community Connectors. They offer benefits advice and manage the Home Discharge Recovery Scheme, who support with deep cleans or additional equipment. We have also recruited a second St Barnabas Community Care Nurse Specialist to support Lincolnshire residents in hospital who are in the last 12 months of their life.

Cllr Lindsey Cawrey **Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue, emergency planning and culture services**

Over the last year, our fire crews and control staff responded effectively to a variety of emergencies. This included prolonged severe weather events from storms Henk and Babet. The fire service and emergency planning teams supported the community with advice and preparations in higher risk areas and with a response by crews and officers to inspect and remove flood water where possible.

Emergency planning and business continuity teams also led co-ordination of the Local Resilience Forum flood response operations. Learning has been captured from the de-briefs, and will be used to further develop plans on how all agencies respond to similar events in future.

A full inspection of Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue was carried out by His Majesty's Inspectorate and reported on in November. The report was positive in all areas and was judged as providing a good





operational response to emergencies and multi-agency major incidents.

There were also two areas of positive practice that have been highlighted in how we provide and fund our co-responding service and how our 'assured level of risk' modelling is used to provide resources where they're most needed.

Although progress has been made in two areas – our inspection plan for non-domestic premises and how we ensure equality, diversion and inclusion are embedded in the service – it was noted that more needs to be done in these areas. We will be welcoming the HMI inspection team back in July to assess progress against the remaining recommendations.

Our Community Risk Management Plan has been developed and launched through extensive internal and public consultation. This sets out our priorities for the next four years against the

assessed current and future risks within Lincolnshire.

In September, we hosted the national United Kingdom Rescue Organisation annual rescue challenge, which saw fire and rescue services from across the UK and abroad showcase the latest operational techniques. With rescues from the heights of Lincoln Cathedral, an event village within the grounds of Lincoln Castle, water rescues on the Brayford and vehicle rescues at The Lawns, the festival attracted significant crowds over the long weekend and was seen as a great success.

King Charles III visited the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, based at RAF Coningsby, where he met World War Two veterans, volunteers and staff.

The Lincoln Castle Illuminated experience at Christmas was a roaring success in 2023, with nearly 25,000 people enjoying the event.

VisitEngland named Lincoln Castle grounds among the top 20 most visited free attractions, with over 660,000 visitors the previous year.

At the Usher Gallery, we're currently installing new lights and blinds that will allow more natural light into the gallery spaces, whilst protecting the artworks. This will create a much brighter and more welcoming atmosphere for visitors, and for weddings at the Usher.

The gallery continues to be a popular choice for couples looking to tie the knot in the city, with 19 ceremonies held in 2023. A wedding at the Usher affords couples more space for guests and a unique venue for their special day as well as photographs.

Later this year we will also be changing all the artwork on display in the Usher Gallery. We received some really positive feedback from the public about the kinds of art they'd like to see on display, and the rehang will showcase the best of the county's art collection to encourage more people to visit the city's art gallery.

The library service has continued to thrive, exceeding pre-covid levels at times, seeing a 20% increase last summer and with over two million issues. This was partially due to a phenomenally successful Summer Reading Challenge with over 3,600 children participating across the core and mobile libraries.

Cllr Richard Davies

Highways, transport and IT



Roads and transport are without doubt the main subjects residents talk to us about as county councillors.

We are facing an uphill battle in maintaining our roads, with reduced government funding and increasing costs. However, as a council we have continued to allocate additional funding from our budget.

We have increased highway maintenance expenditure in Lincolnshire, up from £102 million in the last financial year to £112 million for 2024/25. Based on this level of funding, it is anticipated that infrastructure can be maintained, while accelerating improvements of our unclassified roads. Since 2019, the amount of unclassified roads in a poor condition has been reduced by 125 miles.

We have repaired 38,856 individually recorded potholes in the past year, but when combined with our reactive patching fixes, the number of potholes repaired increases to more than 100,000.

Over the past six months, the highway service dealt with a number of challenging weather events that pulled the service from programmed work to reactive delivery. The impact of storm events was significant and has continued to disrupt normal service into 2024.

In response to the challenge presented by successive storms, we have increased our drainage spend by £1.8m, doubling our off programme jetting resource. Four additional teams that are able to identify and fix small to medium size drainage projects are now on contract.

We are undertaking a full review of how transport services operate, looking for improvements where we can, whilst making the 'Home to School' transport system more simple to deal with.

That said, we have still managed to arrange school journeys for over 19,000 children – a real accomplishment in such a large rural county.

Our demand responsive Call Connect service is another big positive with the scheme carrying over 290,000 passengers in the last year. We want to improve this service even more with our new App-based booking system which continues to be supported by the £2 fare cap for single journeys.

We have successfully gained government funding that will see new EV chargers for Lincolnshire residents, especially in selected on-street parking areas as part of the pilot scheme.

Some rail services have been restored since the reductions caused by the pandemic and we continue

to lobby for further improvements. In May 2023, the hourly semi-fast service was re-instated between Lincoln and Nottingham. We are now pushing the DfT to fully recover the stopping service between Lincoln, Hykeham, Newark North Gate and Newark Castle and Nottingham.

The North Hykeham Relief Road project is progressing through a major milestone of seeking planning approval, which will hopefully be granted in May 2024. We are planning to start the advance works on the ground in late 2025, before starting in earnest in early 2026 with a three-year build period.

Our £20m Levelling Up Highways Improvement Programme is progressing very well. The Marsh Lane



roundabout and Boston Active Travel improvements are already complete and congestion busting works are underway with the Springfield roundabout in Spalding which has just hit the halfway mark. This rapid progress will mean all works will be completed before the funding spend deadline of March 2025.

Our IT team have delivered a substantial volume of change in the past year. We have implemented a revised IT strategy and have approved the approach to the re-procurement of IT services.

Significant improvements to the maintainability and security of our data networks are underway and the programme to deliver key systems replacements for Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue is in progress.

Project Gigabit is part of the government's Building Digital UK programme of work to upgrade rural premises to gigabit capable broadband in areas where it is considered to be non-commercially viable by providers.

This project has broken down the UK into what they refer to as 'Lots'. The county of Lincolnshire is broken down into three separate Lots. Lot five, now awarded to CityFibre, covers just over 3000 premises in the south of the county. Lot 10, now awarded to Connexin, will upgrade around 14,000 premises across the West of Lincolnshire. Lot 23, covering the remainder of Lincolnshire and moving up to East Riding, has gone to tender and we expect close to 37,000 premises will be upgraded.

Cllr Sue Woolley

Registration and coroners, Integrated Care System and NHS Liaison

The Coroner's Service has seen significant change over the last 12 months. Lincolnshire received ministerial approval to create a Greater Lincolnshire Coroners Service, which began work on 1 April, 2024. It's one of the largest coroners areas in the country.

In supporting bereaved families of Greater Lincolnshire, I would like to formally announce the appointment of Jayne Wilkes as Area Coroner. Jayne, who joined the team in January 2024, brings with her a wealth of legal and coronial experience.



Significant refurbishment of the Coroners Courts at Myle Cross is underway and is due to open this summer. It will provide improved facilities for families and the public attending coronial courts.

The service has also seen significant performance improvement, greatly reducing the number of 'open' and 'over 12-month' cases.

The Registration Service continues to experience high demand, especially with ceremonies. Some



2,500 marriages, civil partnership and citizenship ceremonies took place in the last 12 months. The service continues to develop its offering, with over 100 venues now available for residents to choose from. We also have over 2,400 future ceremonies already booked.

The development of our digital platform has seen over 13,000 appointments booked online last year. In addition, we have introduced online payment options, which have proven to be extremely popular.

The Integrated Care System (ICS) in Lincolnshire continues to develop at pace. Following a review by all partners, an updated Lincolnshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS) was approved by the Health and Wellbeing Board in March 2024.

In parallel, the interim Integrated Care Partnership Strategy has been refined and updated to reflect the new JHWS. The final version of the ICP Strategy, approved in March, sets out the five

strategic enablers the ICS will focus its efforts on to deliver the shared ambition 'for the people of Lincolnshire to have the best possible start in life, and be supported to live, age and die well.'

Lincolnshire's ICS raised its profile during 2023, providing an opportunity to influence national guidance and policy. In September, Lincolnshire took part in a research project with the ICS Network and the Local Government Association into how Integrated Care Partnerships are working.

This was followed with participation at a Ministerial Panel Discussion with colleagues from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). In November, Lincolnshire hosted a successful visit by representatives from the DHSC, organised at their request to learn more about how partners from across Lincolnshire's health and care system are working together to meet the needs of the county's various communities.

The growing complexity of people's needs, coupled with an ageing population, means partners in the Lincolnshire system need to develop new ways of working to deliver as much care as possible in community settings.

Cllr Richard Butroid

People management, legal and corporate property

Our property team continue to work with council service teams and partners to ensure we have the right facilities in the right locations for staff and residents.

Our recently completed property strategy outlines how we are planning for the future, whilst ensuring efficient use of our buildings.

By disposing of property we no longer require, we have generated £10.5m this year that will be reinvested in capital schemes.

We have continued to deliver exciting new property projects, including investing £100m into the county's special schools, constructing and refurbishing two children's homes, and working with the Department for Education to develop a new £76m secure children's home in Sleaford.

We are refreshing our adult day centres, developing our heritage assets, and reviewing our properties across the county to look at the council's needs.

We continue to maintain and repair around 500 council properties and 136 schools to ensure that we have a safe and compliant portfolio. Each year we undertake around 6,500 reactive repairs





across our entire estate and the past year saw our contractors engaged in delivering over 41,000 tasks in preventive and planned maintenance, ranging from servicing and replacing boilers, to disposing of rubbish from our various sites.

We continue to strive to make the council an attractive employer to new and existing staff and over the past 12 months, we have seen a gradual decline of sickness absence to below the council's benchmark with an average of 7.50 days per year.

Staff engagement has also improved with an additional 293 employees responding to the 2023 staff survey, along with an overall staff engagement rating of 74.7/100, which is regarded as 'strong'.

The council's best score was support from an employee's line manager at 82.1 and employee empowerment and recognition at 77.1. The areas for development, whilst high scoring, were health and wellbeing at 70 and organisational leadership at 70.3.

This year saw the launch of Lincolnshire Public Law (LPL) the council-owned trading company for public sector legal services. The focus of LPL, acting through the in-house legal team of the county council, is to provide specialist legal support to the public sector across the region.

Cllr Colin Davie

Economy, environment and strategic planning

Across the county, we continue to support around 140 small business tenants in our five business centres, innovation centre and commercial units.

This now includes the Hub at the South Lincolnshire Food Enterprise Zone – the council’s first innovation centre that opened only 20 months ago and has already reached 50% occupancy. Private investment in land at the FEZ continues with land sales on site following our own investment and development.

Our Business Lincolnshire Growth Hub continues to provide advice to start-ups and growing businesses, including specific support in key sectors such as manufacturing, hospitality, agriculture and digital.

Our adult learning teams help residents develop their skills and increase employability, such as through the Multiply numeracy programme, which also provides workplace grants to champion numeracy.

We continue to promote Lincolnshire in a tailored way to inward investors, supporting growth and attracting new businesses.

Visitlincolnshire.com has seen a 61% increase in web traffic, with new walking and experience content added this year. The site promotes countywide tourism, attracting visitors and inspiring them to extend their stay.

We’re continuing to champion the importance of Lincolnshire’s countryside and the food that we produce. We have called for food production to be taken into account as part of the planning process to protect these areas that are vital for the visitor economy, the environment and the nation’s food security.

I’m also pleased that the Lincolnshire Agricultural and Horticultural Forum will relaunch in May to champion the voice of Lincolnshire farmers and growers more effectively and to act as a channel to government on rural issues.



Lincolnshire continues to be an area that renewable energy developers have in their sights to bring forward extensive areas of land for solar development. During the past 12 months, the council has been actively involved in five planning examinations, objecting to these schemes on the basis of loss of our most versatile agricultural land and visual impact, particularly where schemes are grouped together in a small geographical area.

The first decision is expected to be issued by the Secretary of State in May for Mallard Pass and then three more decisions are expected for these Nationally Significant Infrastructure solar farms during the summer.

This year has also seen National Grid bring forward a scheme for 140km of overhead lines and around 420 pylons to run down the eastern side of the county. We strongly objected to the first round of consultation that took place and we will actively work to ensure that all other options are considered, as we have made clear that overhead lines and pylons are not the right option for this part of Lincolnshire.



The historic places team has continued to work with a number of partners to ensure the county's Historic Environment Record is as up-to-date and accessible as possible. The Lincolnshire Heritage Explorer website has been a great success and has had visits from across the globe.

We now have a range of schemes to deliver carbon reduction across the county, in line with our Green Master Plan. This includes solar panel installation on building roofs on some of our council-owned farms, and developing opportunities to use waste heat from industrial sites within the horticulture sector.

We're also continuing our successful zero carbon parishes project, which has delivered carbon reduction at Heighington, Ruskington and Saxilby. This involves measures such as installing LED lights and solar panelling at community buildings.

We have also been developing the council's fourth Carbon Management Plan – due to be published shortly – outlining our plans for decarbonisation of council buildings and infrastructure, energy usage and transport.

We allocated a further £6m this year for more flood alleviation schemes to help protect households and businesses, along with an enhanced programme of cleansing of highway drainage systems. We continue to work with the Environment Agency, Anglian Water and the drainage boards to ensure water is managed appropriately.

The King's visit in July 2023 underlined our credentials as a leader for the natural environment and we are proud that the first King's Series of National Nature Reserves was allocated on the Lincolnshire coast at Theddlethorpe and Saltfleetby to be known as the Coronation Coast National Nature Reserve.

Cllr Daniel McNally

Waste services and trading standards

This year marks a significant milestone, with Lincolnshire County Council's waste services celebrating the 10th year of a partnership with FCC Environmental in the running of the Energy from Waste Facility.

This facility has continued to perform above expectations and to date has handled 1.8million tonnes of waste that would have otherwise been sent to landfill, and supplied 800,000 megawatt hours of electricity to the national grid.

We have continued the roll-out of the separate purple-lidded bins for paper and card recycling in South Kesteven. Combined with the districts already collecting separate paper and card, Lincolnshire collected over 15,000 tonnes this year. The quality of the material is exceptional at 98.5% pure fibre, and the paper mill processor continues to report this is the highest quality material presented to them by any authority in the country.

We have worked hard to promote the 'Right Thing Right Bin' campaign to improve the quality of our mixed dry recycling. The average contamination rate was 31% before this project started, and this has now fallen to 14-16%.

Trading Standards continue their work to tackle illegal tobacco and vapes. Over the last 12 months, 31 closure orders in partnership with Lincolnshire Police have been issued.

During the raids, over 10,500 illegal vapes, over 233kg of illegal hand rolling tobacco and over 127,000 illegal cigarettes were seized. These all failed to meet important consumer protection legislation and were often found to be sold to underage children.

To reduce demand for vapes, workshops are being delivered in education settings in Lincolnshire, and over 5000 pupils have attended a workshop this year. The sessions explain the laws around vaping as well as the health aspects of using them. This work was highly commended at last year's Chartered Trading Standards Institute's Hero Awards.

Enforcing the law about allergens is another priority for the service and a training video has been produced for all those providing food for children, including holiday clubs, schools and nurseries.

The safety of e-scooters has been under the spotlight following fire incidents around the country. Trading Standards secured a prosecution against a Lincolnshire trader for selling dangerous e-scooters. During a test purchase, officers found 30 unsafe e-scooters for sale, and testing on five



of these revealed that they had counterfeit plugs and fuses, presenting a risk of electrocution, fire, or even exploding.

Lastly, our team continue their work to prevent fraud and scams, with a further award from the Chartered Trading Standards Institute for our scams officer's work with victims. Last year he supported 88 people who either experienced or were at risk of fraud.





Lincolnshire
COUNTY COUNCIL
Working for a better future

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