

County Council Report for November/December From County Councillor Bill Crooks

Police Briefing

Councillors were advised that the threat level had gone up in England due to the attacks on the Continent and it is now rated as severe.

Police funding for Leicestershire is the 12th lowest in the Country with no change in grant settlement being forecast. The budget gap was £5.7m and we were advised that the Police were to use the last of their reserves.

Re-Organisation had seen the Police move to having 9 areas with an Inspector and a Detective Inspector in each area. It has been reported that they had received 160k - 999 calls and 350k 101 calls in the last six months. Crimes in Hinckley & Bosworth had been the 2nd highest at 12186 and this was only beaten by Charnwood (not counting the City). Violence was the only crime that had increased, and that Leicestershire was extremely high on the list for Hospital Admissions for acts of violence.

We were told that 515 summonses for breach of the COVID-19 rules – 15938 incidents had been reported. Burglaries had fallen through the floor because of people at home.

Court cases are running so late that one person has been given 4 tickets, because they had not been fined for the first incident, they had continued to break the rules. The Police are recruiting 380 new officers, which is being funded by a Government Grant and the increase in their share of Council Tax, so they are now able to replace officers retiring (this had been stopped). A question was asked about lorries breaking weight limit restrictions and we were advised to go onto the Police Website and scroll down to the Road Traffic Section and report infringements.

Adult Social Care

A new system of working with Care in the Community has been trialled which has resulted in an increase in calls managed, with 800 more service users per year being achieved. More care in 'At Home' services and 45 users with learning difficulties being moved out of residential care to supported living, which is more appropriate to their independence and more cost effective. Cases resolved had been reduced from 8 days to 3 ½ days.

The County Council used consultants 'Newton Europe' at a cost of £4.5m excluding VAT which had a clause in the contract that they had to find savings more than that or they would not get paid! They have delivered £11.8m in benefits of which £10.5m at least in savings. This contract has been running for 18 months but has been disrupted by COVID-19. 150 fewer permanent residential placements have occurred which means the list has been halved. In the County, the Council has 171 commissioned care homes, 27 older adult residential nursing homes, 57 working age care homes and one home that does both.

There have been 89 outbacks in Leicestershire homes with 166 deaths to the end of August. Vacancies were at 8% but had risen to 20% in 2020. The latest figures are 16.7%. Temporary admissions had risen from 8 per week to 20. Research has shown people prefer to receive care at home than to go into care. This will gradually see vacancies increase with some homes closing. Working age adults in care are 327 which is a 17% reduction over the last 18 months, and during the same period supported living has risen by 11%. £6.7m has been received from the Government in two lots, £5m of this (as per instructions) went to care homes for infection control. The county has provided £3.5m extra. The latest costs for COVID-19 is some £18m after Government support has been used.

Staffing

Staff have been redirected from services not in use, such as Libraries, to work on things like the Helpline. Services that are public facing have been suspended during lockdown and ways of working have been changed in 113 cases because of the virus.

The council has been setting on staff for an 'Inspired to Care Team' they have employed 60 out of the 2000 applicants.