

## **Cllr. Ian Carrington – Lincolnshire County Council & North Kesteven District Council**



### **Latest News December 2023**

#### **Devolution**

You'll have seen headlines about proposals for devolution in Greater Lincolnshire. There has been a lot of misinformation about this, sadly some if it intentional. So to be clear, this is NOT about local government reorganization. Existing parish, district and county or unitary councils would stay in place with the same democratic mandates. And existing funding streams, including levelling up funds, would continue.

What would change would be the introduction of a Greater Lincolnshire elected mayor, clearer communication with central government and greater Lincolnshire control over key aspects such as transport, skills and the economy.

Plus £24 million per year extra investment in capital and skills programmes for 30 years (£720 million in total), and £28 million extra in Year One for capital schemes with £2.2 million earmarked for North Kesteven.

I don't think the scheme is perfect – I don't see the need for an elected mayor. But if the price of the extra funds is a mayor, then I am not going to rush say no to some serious new money for Lincolnshire. Our county has not enjoyed fair funding in the past, and this is a way to help re-set that balance and have more control over our own budget and our own futures.

I voted at the County Council in support of a public consultation on the proposal, so what do you think? More details can be found on the LCC website at [Devolution – Lincolnshire County Council](#) where there will be a link to the consultation from 4th December to 29<sup>th</sup> January.

#### **Floods**

I've spent a huge amount of time this past month on the aftermath of the Storm Babet floods. In addition to discussions at the LCC Environment & Economy Committee which I chair, I was a substitute member and acting vice chairman of the Flood & Water Management Committee when it met to launch a deep and thorough inquiry into what happened and how we can improve what we do. It will be rigorous, honest, constructive and self-critical.

It's crystal clear to me that we have a new pattern of weather, with four '1 in 100 year' events in just the past two decades. So I believe we need to be looking not only at better ways of doing what we already do, but at new and innovative ways of

planning for flood events. That means honest evaluation and cooperation between all levels of local government, water and drainage authorities **and** national government. To that end I brought together our two local Internal Drainage Boards and local MP Dr Caroline Johnson to make sure our Westminster representative had first hand knowledge of the immense pressures on drainage systems in our area.

And along with my LCC and NKDC colleague Cllr Lindsey Cawrey I held a public meeting for all those affected by the flooding with LCC officers, the Environment Agency and drainage boards in attendance. Most parishes in my patch were affected, but Heighington and Washingborough were hit especially hard. A primary school flooded out, homes flooded out, farmland turned into Lake Washingborough and disruption to the roads.



Heighington (and parts of Washingborough) also suffer from ground water flooding, the most difficult and challenging form of flood risk to deal with. So I've arranged for expert LCC officers to visit the villages and affected homes and include these communities in LCC's ground water flooding programme which is seeking solutions.

And I'm bringing together our county council experts with Heighington primary school staff to look in detail and what can be done for a building which has flooded several times in recent memory. In truth it should not have been built on that site. But it was built, and it's our job to try and protect it and to try to stop the disruption to the children it serves and their families.



None of this is easy – in fact some of it is very difficult indeed. But that just means we must try harder.

If any parish council wants to raise local issues with me, or provide information or experiences which would be useful to the inquiry, please get in touch.

### **Preparing for the next time**

Without pre-judging the LCC inquiry, there's one thing I'm already convinced of: we need to maximise the involvement of parish councils and local communities in planning for future flooding. Some parish councils already have emergency plans, some don't. I'm asking every parish council to have an up-to-date emergency plan Especially if any part of the parish is at risk of flooding. If need be, just do that bit!

There's plenty of help available. For advice and a template plan check out the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum's [Resilient Communities Programme - Lincolnshire Resilience Forum](#). And Lincolnshire County Council offers further advice for parishes and community groups – just email [LincsEP@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:LincsEP@lincolnshire.gov.uk) .

Listening to the parishes in my patch and fellow county councillors across wider Lincolnshire it's clear that having an up-to-date emergency plan local people to implement it made a real difference during Storm Babet. Not everything worked as it should have done, including communications with such groups from LCC and other authorities, and we need to learn lessons from that.

But as the Resilience Forum's own website asks: '*no electricity, no telephone, no utilities, nowhere to go...what to do?*'. Well, the answer begins by having well informed, well prepared and empowered local people in place in their communities.

## **Winter Weather**

Winter has well and truly arrived, with ice and snow marking the beginning of December. Lincolnshire County Council maintains over 5,500 miles of roads, and gritting crews cover an extensive network with salting and (when necessary) snow plough runs.

This service covers all A and B roads, and also routes to main villages, schools and hospitals. For more details see [Winter road management – View gritting routes - Lincolnshire County Council](#). And for a really useful zoomable map showing every gritting route, click on [Location Centre 4.7.1](#) and zoom in to your part of the county. When the gritting operation is active you can find regular updates on X/Twitter – just search for @LincsCC\_roads

## **Energy projects**

As a member of the planning committees at both LCC and NKDC I must be careful not to pre-judge any individual planning application. But I remain extremely watchful about some major potential schemes, some of which would be decided by central Government and some locally.

Let me be clear – we need clean renewable energy. But in looking at sites for new generating capacity we need to be very careful about the impact on local people, local communities, local countryside and local roads. I will continue to work closely with residents' groups, parish councils and planners to scrutinize schemes which come forward very, very closely indeed.

## **Lincolnshire rated 'good' for adult social care services**

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) has reported on its pilot assessment of LCC's adult social care services.

The report is one of five pilot local authority assessments of how councils meet their care act duties. Earlier this year, the CQC was given new responsibilities to assess how local authorities meet these duties, with Lincolnshire volunteering to be part of the first wave of pilot assessments.

The great news is we have been rated as providing a 'good standard' of support for adult social care.

The assessment process allowed us to showcase what we do here in Lincolnshire inspectors have highlighted much good practice.

This includes not just meeting people's immediate care needs, but LCC's focus on preventative healthcare and improving the quality of life of people living in

Lincolnshire. They recognised our commitment to promoting people's independence and encouraging them to develop their own skills, so they can maintain their independence and therefore have less need to call for formal care and support.

The CQC can see that we are taking issues of local inequalities and geographical challenges very seriously, with strategies in place to ensure all people in our communities have access to the care they need.

It's especially good that they highlight LCC's workforce as committed to understanding people's needs, reflected in what people told them. And our commitment to promoting people's independence and the diverse range of services managed by a strong leadership team has also been recognised.

## Highways

As ever, if you see anything which needs attention please report it via <https://www.fixmystreet.com> or the LCC website at <https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/faults-maintenance>

## Eligible people urged to get 'winter strong' and book covid-19 vaccinations before the deadline

Eligible people who wish to take up the offer of a covid-19 vaccination are being urged to do so whilst they still can before Friday 15 December.

GP practices and community pharmacies across Lincolnshire are continuing to offer both covid-19 and flu vaccinations. Appointments can either be booked direct with your GP practice or using the National Booking Service [HERE](#) or calling 119. For a list of the community pharmacies and a map showing their location, visit NHS Lincolnshire ICB's 'grab a jab' webpage [HERE](#) or visit [HERE](#).

## Rural business grant

The Rural Business Grant supports rural businesses to invest in sustainable growth. It's part of the Government's Levelling Up program and is administered by North Kesteven District Council.

Applications are currently open – the minimum grant is £5,000 and match funding is required. If you think you – or someone you know – might benefit, you can find more details here: [Rural England Prosperity Fund business grant | North Kesteven District Council \(n-kesteven.gov.uk\)](#)

## Business advice

And for business advice and assistance (for small or large businesses, rural or urban) see [Business NK – North Kesteven | The place to invest | The place to grow](#) and sign up to the free business NK newsletter.

Lincolnshire County Council also has a business advice service – see details at [Business advice service – Lincolnshire County Council](#) and there's further help at the Business Lincolnshire website <https://www.businesslincolnshire.com>

**And finally...**

May I wish everyone a very happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year!

**Cllr IAN CARRINGTON**

**Potterhanworth & Coleby Division, LCC**

**Chairman, Environment & Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee, LCC**

**Heighington, Washingborough & Canwick Ward, NKDC**

**Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Housing, NKDC**

Email: [cllri.carrington@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:cllri.carrington@lincolnshire.gov.uk)

Email: [cll\\_ian\\_carrington@n-kesteven.gov.uk](mailto:cll_ian_carrington@n-kesteven.gov.uk)

Facebook: [Councillor Ian Carrington](#)

X (Formerly Twitter): [@CllrCarrington](#)