

Will provide verbal update where appropriate at the meeting.

30mph speed extension.

Following refusal by LCC Traffic Regulation Orders team to Cllr Smith's email request to extend the 30 mph restriction beyond Penfield Nature Reserve, I arranged for the Highways Manager for the south of the county to visit the site with me where I made the strongest case on safety grounds particularly regards protection for wheelchair users and babies and toddlers in pushchairs accessing the park along a 60mph stretch of country road.

While sympathetic to safety concerns, the Highways Manager was confident the Penfield Park entrance was too far out of the built-up part of the village - some 300 metres - to be considered to be included within the 30mph restriction.

Given the safety concerns = and the fact that LCC themselves previously lowered the kerb at the Park entrance to encourage disabled access, I have since shared my frustration on the inflexibility of the speed limit policy directly with the Chief Executive at a regular one-to-one meeting I have secured as a Group Leader.

I also took the opportunity to personally lobby the Executive member for Highways (Cllr Richard Davies) following the September meeting of the Executive last week. He was willing to consider the possibility of signage along the lines of 'Langtoft welcomes careful drivers' or a suitable 'slow down' message to be installed along with the 'gates' proposed for the vicinity of the entrance to Penfield Park. I have re-contacted the Highways Manager to pursue this possibility.

Village 'gates' proposal.

I have passed the plans to the Highways Manager who informs me that a form will need to be completed seeking consent for the gates to be installed within the highway [verge] at each of the four road entrances to the village. Work to be by approved contractor and funded by Langtoft Parish Council...Forms Requested – not received yet.

Replacement of Bollards, East End.

I visited East End with the Highways Manager who confirmed that the demolished white bollard on the verge side opposite the church was not an LCC installation and would not be replaced by LCC.

Cemetery signage on A15.

I showed the Highways Manager the potentially hazardous narrow parking area by the Cemetery and requested suitable signage. He thought LCC would grant consent subject to form-filling as above but expected the parish council would have to fund the signs...

Deepings Leisure Centre.

As the parish council will be aware, Deepings Leisure Centre was closed by SK more than two years ago due to poor maintenance leading to a leaking roof. Following closure, the then Council Leader reiterated his 2019 election promise to build a £20 million replacement facility. Later the Council instead agreed to spend £10 million on a refurbishment rather than the new-build as originally promised. However, following rises in interest rates a year ago, the Council resolved not to carry out the renovation work and instead handed the keys to the owners of the building – Lincs County Council.

LCC have now invited bids from interested parties to re-open Deepings Leisure Centre.

It is understood that the Deepings community group set up to save the leisure centre have submitted a bid.

Last week I attended a meeting with Sir John Hayes MP for South Holland and the Deepings, as well as Chief Execs and Leaders of LCC and SKDC and reps from Deepings Academy Trust.

It is hoped a decision on the future of the building will be made by LCC before Christmas.

Wider Lincolnshire issues.

MIGRATION UPDATE

Homes for Ukraine

Since the Homes for Ukraine scheme launched on 14 March 2022 Lincolnshire has welcomed more than 1,300 Ukrainian guests to join their hosts across the County.

The Scheme is still live with new applications received every week.

Some guests are successfully starting to move to other areas of the UK either into independent accommodation or with a new host. The majority are choosing to stay in Lincolnshire where they have settled into the community, many have children in school and started working.

More than 160 family groups and individuals are now living independently in the County; whilst 250 family groups and individuals are residing in hosting arrangements. The rest have moved to other areas, moved abroad or returned to Ukraine.

Afghan Resettlement

In Spring, the government announced plans to end the use of bridging hotels across the county that temporarily housed around eight-thousand Afghans. On 14 May 2023, the government issued formal notice to more than 150 Afghans housed at The Urban Hotel in Grantham to vacate the hotel by 25 August.

South Kesteven District Council has been working with 27 Afghan families housed at the Urban and it is understood as many as 25 of these families have now found alternative accommodation and moved out of Lincolnshire – many to the Birmingham area.

Asylum 'Dispersal'

Following the government announcement in March 2023 that surplus military sites will be used to accommodate asylum seekers, RAF Scampton near Lincoln was identified to house up to two-thousand single, adult males in portacabins on the runway which began arriving earlier this month. They will be housed in mobile 'portacabins' (eight to each unit) with meals and shower facilities in separate accommodation. The portacabins began arriving in the past couple of weeks and the first arrivals are expected in the coming days.

The scheme will more than double the current population of the village of Scampton (1,358).

Home Office recently staged information sessions for selected local residents to which media were denied any access.

HO have stated the camp will be an 'open' facility with regular buses provided to nearby Lincoln.

West Lindsey District Council is pursuing legal action seeking to prevent the use of the site.

Meanwhile, 282 asylum seekers are currently being housed in Stoke Rochford Hall in the hamlet of Stoke Rochford (pop. 230) near Grantham. Children attend a range of primary schools in nearby villages and secondary schools in Grantham.

'Devolution' plans/Greater Lincolnshire

Negotiations ongoing between the Home Office, Lincs County Council, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire unitary authorities to create a Greater Lincolnshire Combined Mayoral Authority.

The aim is to secure funding and powers that will help to accelerate growth across our key sectors such as food, energy security, ports and logistics.

Text for a deal is being drafted with DLUHC officials and numerous government departments, setting out the initial offer with a clear intention for further devolution in the future.

Briefing sessions have been offered to Leaders of the seven District Councils covering Lincolnshire including SK but District Councils will not have a veto on the plan...

Work is ongoing to ensure effective governance arrangements – there are ongoing questions over representation by district councils.

It is expected Government's offer will be finalised and published this Autumn and a public consultation launched before the end of 2023.

RAAG Crisis

All Lincs schools currently being surveyed for presence of 'light-weight' concrete – so far all clear.

Childrens Services Ofsted

Lincolnshire County Council children's services recently again rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted.

Phil Dilks

County Councillor for Deepings East Division.