



<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Cabinet
<b>DATE:</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> December 2021
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Lincolnshire Women's Concordat
<b>PURPOSE:</b>	To support the recommendation made in response to an invitation from Lincolnshire's Police and Crime Commissioner to join the Lincolnshire Women's Concordat.
<b>KEY DECISION:</b>	N/A
<b>PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	Councillor Nick Worth
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	N/A
<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	Peter Hunn (Community Safety Manager)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	All
<b>EXEMPT REPORT?</b>	No

## **SUMMARY**

Reducing offending is a priority for the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership (SLP), of which South Holland District Council is a member. Recent work has contributed to a greater understanding of female offenders, leading to the development of a Lincolnshire Women's Strategy, which outlines what can be done to help prevent entry into the criminal justice system, and improve support for those already in it.

To help achieve this, a Lincolnshire Women's Concordat has been introduced. The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Lincolnshire has written to all Chief Executive Officers with an invitation to participate in the concordat. This report provides a summary of the key information to inform members about this work, what it will entail, and ask for support with the recommendation made.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

That members agree to sign up to the Lincolnshire Women's Concordat and commit to the requirements set out within.

## REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

This is a key piece of work to support both national and local strategies to improve outcomes for women and girls at risk of entering, or those who have already entered, the criminal justice system. As a member of the SLP, it is recommended that South Holland District Council participates in the Lincolnshire Concordat to maximise the outcomes that can be achieved in Lincolnshire.

## OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Acknowledge the hard work that has been undertaken by the Reducing Offending Core Priority Group (ROCPG) but decline to sign up to the Women's Concordat.

## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. The SLP currently has four priorities: Domestic Abuse, Anti-Social Behaviour, Serious and Organised Crime, and Offending/Reoffending. The latter is being managed by the county level ROCPG.
- 1.2. In early 2020 the ROCPG commissioned a piece of analytical work to improve understanding of female offenders in Lincolnshire. Lincolnshire Action Trust (LAT) subsequently secured funding from the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) to support the creation of a woman's strategy in respect of offending (Appendix A). Development of the strategy incorporated the voices of women who had recently left the criminal justice sector.
- 1.3. The Lincolnshire strategy aims to deliver the outcomes set out in the MOJ's Female Offender Strategy published in June 2018 (Appendix B).
- 1.4. The MOJ has led on a national concordat on 'Women at Risk of contact with the Criminal Justice System' (Appendix C). This identifies how partner agencies should work together to recognise and respond to women's needs, encouraging partnership working. It is not intended to replace existing arrangements, if they are working well, but to develop, and improve existing support for females.

## 2. REPORT

- 2.1. To drive delivery of the Lincolnshire Women's Strategy (and outcomes sought by the national strategy) it has been agreed that a Lincolnshire Concordat is needed. The PCC for Lincolnshire has written to all Chief Executive Officers, inviting them to participate in a Lincolnshire Concordat (Appendix D and E).
- 2.2. As set out in the letter: *'The aim is for all services and agencies to unite to interrupt the pathways that currently lead women into the criminal justice system by delivering the services they need in ways they have told us works for them'*.

- 2.3.** The Lincolnshire Concordat sets out how agencies should work together to improve outcomes for women and girls at risk of entering, or who have already entered the criminal justice system.
- 2.4.** Women who had recently left the criminal justice system were heavily involved in shaping the Lincolnshire Strategy, helping to identify key themes that should be applied by all services, as set out below:
  - 2.4.1.** Behaviours had been shaped by isolation, family problems, debt, addiction, and untreated mental ill-health.
  - 2.4.2.** Their traumatic experiences in childhood had resulted in coping strategies associated with crime, with disastrous outcomes for themselves and others.
  - 2.4.3.** They experienced a lack of support, inadequate continuity of care and failure to adopt mental health and trauma informed approaches.
  - 2.4.4.** Fractured or lost family relationships had heightened their need for support.
- 2.5.** The SLP is mindful that women-specific services that are delivered in areas like Lincolnshire (in geography and population), are lacking in in the county, to the disadvantage of women and girls.
- 2.6.** By signing the concordat, this will show a commitment to this work, and to making necessary changes to organisational business plans, strategic priorities, and budgetary allocations. For commissioners of services, it will need close inspection of service thresholds and access that at present exclude women and girls.
- 2.7.** The delivery of this strategy will be led by the ROCPG, and an annual report will be produced, hosted on the PCC's website alongside the Lincolnshire Women's Strategy.
- 2.8.** This concordat will ensure that all services and partners work together to support women and girls, and will promote the delivery of the strategic priorities which should result in:
  - 2.8.1.** Fewer women coming into the criminal justice system.
  - 2.8.2.** Fewer women in custody (especially on short term sentences) and a greater proportion of women supported in the community successfully.
  - 2.8.3.** Better conditions for those who are in custody
- 2.9.** Council Leaders across the South and East Lincolnshire Council's Partnership have been briefed on the concordat and have agreed, in principle, to sign up to it. This report seeks agreement from members to support this proposal.

### **3. CONCLUSION**

- 3.1.** This report seeks to formally consult with members on a letter from the Lincolnshire PCC inviting South Holland District Council to participate in the Lincolnshire Women's Concordat. This will support delivery of outcomes set out in the national and county women's strategies.
- 3.2.** The report outlines that working in partnership to deliver services that women and girls need will help to interrupt pathways that lead them into the criminal justice system.
- 3.3.** As a partner of the SLP and the priority work streams, participation in the Women's Concordat is encouraged to maximise the outcomes for females in Lincolnshire.

## **EXPECTED BENEFITS TO THE PARTNERSHIP**

The recommendation supports the aims and ambitions of the South and East Lincolnshire Council's Partnership in terms of working collectively, opportunities for joint commissioning, and improving the quality of services provided to local people.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

### **SOUTH AND EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL'S PARTNERSHIP**

Each of the Sovereign Councils are committed to the concordat and therefore the South and East Lincolnshire Council's Partnership will demonstrate a commitment to making necessary changes to organisational business plans, strategic priorities, and budgetary allocations. Commissioners of services will need to closely examine service thresholds and access to services, that at present exclude women and girls. This work will be co-ordinated as a Partnership response across the three Councils.

### **CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

None

### **STAFFING**

None

### **CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

None

### **DATA PROTECTION**

None

### **FINANCIAL**

None

### **RISK MANAGEMENT**

None

### **STAKEHOLDER / CONSULTATION / TIMESCALES**

Consultation has been undertaken with the Leaders of the South and East Lincolnshire Council's Partnership. All lend their support to signing up to the Lincolnshire Women's Concordat.

### **REPUTATION**

None

### **CONTRACTS**

None

### **CRIME AND DISORDER**

None

## EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY/ HUMAN RIGHTS/ SAFEGUARDING

The Lincolnshire Concordat is focussed on the needs of women and girls. This may be perceived as singling out a specific group at the exclusion of others. However, whilst there are far fewer females in contact with the criminal justice system, evidence shows that the females who are in it have a higher prevalence of needs, including mental health issues, substance misuse issues and previous experience of abuse and trauma. The concordat therefore aims to support these specific needs with the services that are on offer in Lincolnshire.

## HEALTH AND WELL BEING

None

## CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

None

## ACRONYMS

SLP - Safer Lincolnshire Partnership

PCC- Police and Crime Commissioner

ROCPG – Reducing Offending Core Priority Group

LAT – Lincolnshire Action Trust

MOJ – Ministry of Justice

## APPENDICES

Appendices are listed below and attached to the back of the report: -

<i>APPENDIX A</i>	<i>Lincolnshire Women’s Strategy: Supporting Women and Girls at Risk of Entering the Criminal Justice System</i>
<i>APPENDIX B</i>	<i>Female Offender Strategy 2018</i> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/female-offender-strategy">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/female-offender-strategy</a>
<i>APPENDIX C</i>	<i>National Concordat on women in or at risk of contact with the criminal justice system</i> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/concordat-on-women-in-or-at-risk-of-contact-with-the-criminal-justice-system">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/concordat-on-women-in-or-at-risk-of-contact-with-the-criminal-justice-system</a>
<i>APPENDIX D</i>	<i>Letter from Police and Crime Commissioner, Marc Jones to Chief Executive Robert Barlow.</i>
<i>APPENDIX E</i>	<i>Lincolnshire Concordat Pledge</i>

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers as defined in Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the production of this report.

## CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THIS REPORT

A report on this item has not been previously considered by a Council body

<b>REPORT APPROVAL</b>	
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