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MEDIA RELEASE

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Retailer invests £2m into local services

Lincolnshire Co-op customers are enjoying improvements to their local food stores and post offices, following a **£2m investment** in six outlets over the last six months.

This work is part of the co-operative's cyclical refresh programme, which will see work take place at different trading outlets every year, with approximately **£4m** being invested annually.

The programme started **18 months ago**, and around **£6m** has already been invested into **39 outlets** across food, pharmacy, funeral, travel and post offices.

As part of this, **Billingham Food Store and Post Office** have benefitted from a **£490,000** transformation, bringing a refreshed look and new products and services for customers.

Red Bull and **frozen Coca-Cola machines** have been installed, and new ranges have been introduced, including **COOK frozen meals** and **Country Choice hot food**.

The food store colleagues also have a brand-new **staff room**, and there's now an **in-store bakery unit** where hot food can be cooked.

The society offers a **Love Local** range, which supports local businesses. Shoppers can find products like Lincolnshire Sausage Rolls from **Pocklington's Bakery** in Louth and coffee beans from **Lincoln Tea & Coffee**.

A new '**Your community shop**' fascia has been installed outside the food store, and customers can continue to use the pre-existing community unit to donate essential supplies to their local food bank, **Sleaford Community Larder**, and recycle **soft plastics and batteries**.

Energy efficient solutions have also been implemented in the outlet, like **LED lighting** upgrades, **insulated door curtains** in the warehouse refrigeration rooms, and **CO2 refrigeration**.

The **post office** has also benefitted from a renewed look, including new signage and shelving.

Hazel Blackburn, Billingham Food Store Manager, said: *"We're delighted with the refurbishment of the store and the services we're now able to deliver, including hot food, and our customers are enjoying a range of new products, like COOK frozen meals.*

"I can't thank my team enough for their dedication during the refresh. Our store remained open, and colleagues took this in their stride and worked hard to continue to deliver exceptional customer service."

During a cyclical refresh, services are reviewed and equipment is replaced, helping the business to strengthen customer satisfaction and loyalty with modernised outlets.

Andy Warman, Lincolnshire Co-op's Chief Commercial and Transformation Officer, said: *"Refreshing our food stores ensures we're meeting the needs of local communities by extending product ranges, providing new services and achieving even better customer service.*

“We’re delighted with the positive feedback our colleagues are providing, which inspires new ideas as we progress through the programme. We’re focussed on delivering a plan which simultaneously benefits our business, colleagues and customers.”

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Notes to editors:

1. **Lincolnshire Co-op** is an independent co-operative society. Its purpose is to bring together ideas, energy and resources to make life better in communities. It has around 300,000 members and 2,900 local colleagues in Lincolnshire and the surrounding counties and an elected board of directors who oversee the business. The society provides **valued services** and supports the **local economy** from outlets across its trading area including food stores, filling stations, post offices, travel branches, funeral homes, a florist, a crematorium and community libraries. It also cares for people’s **health and wellbeing** through its pharmacies and support for a network of wellbeing walks. Local good causes benefit through its Community Champions scheme and together, colleagues and members also look after the **local environment** through volunteering.
As well as its trading outlets, Lincolnshire Co-op owns properties, from flats and houses to commercial premises. The society brings land and buildings back into use to create attractive environments. With Lincolnshire Co-op as landlord, rents stay local and are invested in schemes that benefit the community.