

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 6 November 2018

6.00 pm

Committee Room 2, City Hall

- Membership: Councillors Bob Bushell (Chair), Naomi Tweddle (Vice-Chair), Kathleen Brothwell, Sue Burke, Chris Burke, Gill Clayton-Hewson, Helena Mair, Lucinda Preston, Alan Briggs, Christopher Reid and Hilton Spratt
- Substitute member(s): Councillor(s) Gary Hewson
- Also in attendance: John Stewart (Residential Landlord Association)
- Officers attending: Democratic Services, Simon Walters, Angela Andrews, James Wilkinson, Daren Turner, Simon Colburn, Kieron Manning and Andrew McNeil

AGENDA

SECTION A	Page(s)
1. Confirmation of Minutes - 28 August 2018	3 - 8
2. Declarations of Interest	
Please note that, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, when declaring interests members must disclose the existence and nature of the interest, and whether it is a disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI) or personal and/or pecuniary.	
3. Terms of Reference	9 - 10
4. Introduction from the Chair	
5. Housing Supply - Intelligence from Key Witnesses	
a) John Stewart – Residential Landlord Association	
• Private Sector Housing Supply	
b) Kieron Manning – Planning Manager	
• Development of Housing	
c) Simon Colburn – Assistant Director for Health and Environmental Services	
• Upcoming Changes Re: HMO's	

d) Andrew McNeil – Assistant Director for Housing Investment and Strategy

- Public Sector Housing Supply

6. Debate and Next Steps

7. Work Programme 2018/19

11 - 20

- Present:** Councillor Bob Bushell (*in the Chair*)
- Councillors:** Alan Briggs, Chris Burke, Sue Burke, Gill Clayton-Hewson, Helena Mair, Lucinda Preston and Hilton Spratt
- Also in Attendance:** Helen Oliver (Citizens Advice Bureau)
- Apologies for Absence:** Councillor Naomi Tweddle, Councillor Kathleen Brothwell, Councillor Christopher Reid, Angela Andrews, Turner and Martin Walmsley

10. Confirmation of Minutes - 3 July 2018

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2018 be confirmed.

11. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

12. Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference for the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee were noted.

13. Impact of Welfare Reform Overview - Jay Wilkinson

Jay Wilkinson, Strategic Development Project Manager:

a) presented a brief overview of the local impact of welfare reform which covered the following topics:

- Commonly cited challenges of Universal Credit.
- The scale of Universal Credit in Lincoln.
- Findings from the National Audit Centre.
- Impact of Universal Credit on council tenants.
- Feedback from the DWP (Department of Works and Pensions) on Universal Credit payments.
- Evidence from the Council's Universal Credit Support Team, Welfare Advice Team and Revenues and Benefits Team.

b) invited members questions and comments

Members raised the following questions:

Question: Was the rise in Housing Benefits claims only a temporary measure?

Response: The City of Lincoln Council were working with the DWP to try and quicken up the process.

Question: If other benefits were being claimed, would the individual still receive them until their application for Universal Credit has been processed?

Response: No they wouldn't.

Question: When the old system was in place, was dealing with people who were unable to read and write common then?

Response: Not necessarily. More applications had been received this time which increased demand. The new application form had to be filled in online and the information required was more complex.

Question: Were people worse off financially since Universal credit had been introduced? Had people been waiting longer for their benefits on the new system?

Response: Yes, there was a longer waiting period and in that time arrears built up so it was hard to identify which proportion were down to Universal Credit.

Question: Could there be a change in policy to improve the situation with Universal Credit?

Response: It was a national issue so it would be difficult for the City of Lincoln Council to change anything at present. Collaboration with Revenues and Benefits and the Housing team could be improved.

Question: How did Universal Credit help people get back into work?

Response: It supported people working different types of hours.

Question: How would people manage their finances from one month to the next?

Response: Officers were working with the Credit Union to manage payments, support individuals with budgeting issues.

Question: Who made the decision on whether somebody was vulnerable or not?

Response: Direct debits were encouraged through managed payments in partnership with DWP and the Housing Officer. A trusted partner could find alternatives around payment because of vulnerability.

Question: How many people in Lincoln would eventually be put on Universal Credit?

Response: It was calculated that 10% were currently on workless benefits.

Question: As a council tenant, could you transfer your claim over to Universal Credit or would a new application need to be applied for?

Response: Anything such as a name change or change of address would require a new application to be made.

Question: Where were the additional funds coming from to help with capacity? Who was paying for it?

Response: A small amount of funding was supplied by the DWP and the City of Lincoln Council were subsidising the rest as there wasn't enough money to cover the cost.

Question: How much in additional costs would it be to roll out Universal Credit?

Response: Angela Andrews had commissioned a piece of work as part of the Vision Group to look into the costs.

Question: Members referred to errors within the process of Universal Credit and asked if the additional housing costs be explained?

Response: Due to the complexity of it being down to the individual to fill out the application form, support, advice and guidance was key to ensure that it was completed correctly. This resulted in a total of 42 minutes that was being spent with each individual to fill out an application form.

Question: How could the information be made clearer to individuals?

Response: A quarter of applicants were council tenants. Officers were looking into the matter, however there would need to be further engagement with tenants to look at what could be improved.

RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted.

14. Intelligence from Key Witnesses

Helen Oliver, Chief Officer at the DWP (Department of Works and Pensions):

- a) provided members with a brief introduction of herself and her role within the DWP
- b) explained that as an organisation they dealt with a number of different issues which included the following:
 - Welfare and Debt.
 - Eligibility and entitlement – 30% of customers they dealt with had mental health issues.
 - Volunteers and frontline staff struggled supporting people making advanced payments due to them being vulnerable.
 - Rent Arrears and advanced payments – a lot of tenants were in rent arrears before their application for Universal Credit was made which resulted in them spiralling into more debt.
 - Tenants weren't always paid at the time they should have been and were placed in the wrong group, this resulted in repeat arrears and potential sanctions being issued.
 - The more complex issues and challenges that the DWP were faced with included language barriers, mental health and homelessness. These issues were difficult to resource due to a reduction in staff and services.
- c) Invited members questions and comments.

Members asked the following questions:

Question: Vulnerability and management of payments seemed to have progressively got worse since Universal Credit was introduced, why was this?

Response: Groups were struggling to present themselves which led to issues being surfaced. Due to resources diminishing there were less support workers available so individuals were expected to manage themselves.

Question: What did people who were vulnerable or had mental health issues do if they were sanctioned?

Response: There were the options of crisis payments, food banks and vouchers. The Citizens Advice Bureau tried to help as much as possible with providing support and appeal decisions if deemed unfair.

Question: What was the process with regards to using the Foodbanks?

Response: An individual would obtain a voucher and have an assessment. They would engage in an advice process to establish why they were applying for a food voucher and to ensure they did not keep coming back for them. A referral was then made to the Foodbank.

Question: What had been the impact from PIP (Personal Independence Payments) being cut?

Response: The demand remained the same. The grant for Lincolnshire County Council for income maximisation funding was cut which meant that home visits were no longer provided and tribunals and appeals weren't escalated to the same level as before.

Question: With regards to the people that used the Foodbanks, were they in genuine poverty? Were the payments being assessed?

Response: Officers went through the individual's income and expenditure and advised them to cut back on things where necessary to save costs. The majority of people that required support from the CAB were in absolute poverty.

Question: How much funding had the CAB lost?

Response: The CAB had lost £40,000 in funding and £300,000 had been cut across the County.

Question: Were people who visited the CAB all Lincoln residents?

Response: The CAB had an Open Door Policy so would accept any individual in any situation.

RESOLVED that the verbal report be noted.

15. Work Programme 2018/19

Jess Cullen, Democratic Services Officer:

- a. presented the draft work programme for 2018/19 as detailed at Appendix A of her report
- b. advised that the work programme for the Community Leadership Committee was put forward annually for approval by Council; the work programme was then regularly updated throughout the year in consultation with the Community Leadership Committee and its Chair

- c. reported that items had been scheduled in accordance with the existing work programme and officers' guidance regarding the meetings at which the most up-to-date information could be reported to the committee; the work programme also included the list of portfolio holders under scrutiny
- d. requested any relevant comments or changes to the proposed work programme for 2018/19.

RESOLVED that the work programme 2018/19 as detailed at Appendix A to the report be noted, subject to the following additional topic:

- City Centre Environment

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TERMS OF REFERENCE – COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Purpose of the Committee:	
1.	To actively promote and strengthen the City of Lincoln Council’s community leadership role of speaking up for the people of Lincoln on any matters which affect their well being.
Terms of Reference:	
1	To engage and consult with Lincoln residents to assist the Council in being fully aware of their issues, concerns and aspirations so these inform the policies and decision making of the Council, giving particular attention to the needs of disadvantaged groups.
2	To engage with all relevant stakeholders including all public, private and third sector organisations, seeking to promote effective partnerships for meeting the needs of the City.
3	To exercise the powers granted to the Council by Parliament for the scrutiny of the decisions of external organisations or groups whose decisions appear to have an impact on the people of the City of Lincoln and seek to influence these in the interests of local people.
4	To enhance the transparency of local decision making by enabling elected members to have the opportunity to hold service providers to account for their performance.
5	To scrutinise any emerging legislation which directly impacts on people in Lincoln, seeking to exert influence on behalf of local people.
6	To respond, in collaboration with the Council's Executive to any Government or other external consultation process ensuring that the Council's voice is heard on all matters affecting the well being of the City.
Membership:	
1.	The Committee will consist of 8 Elected Members.

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COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

6 NOVEMBER 2018

SUBJECT:	DRAFT COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2018/19
REPORT BY:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TOWN CLERK
LEAD OFFICER:	JESSICA CULLEN, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To present the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2018/2019 and Executive Work Programme for 2018/2019.

2. Background

2.1 The 2018/19 work programme for the Committee is attached under Appendix A, B for Members' consideration.

3. Recommendation

3.1 That Members suggest ideas for the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee work programme in 2018/19.

Lead Officer: Jessica Cullen, Democratic Services Officer
Telephone 873387

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Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee Work Programme – Timetable for 2018/19**12 June 2018 - Deferred**

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Strategic Priority/ Comments
Work Programme for 2018-19 Update	Democratic Services Officer	Regular Report

3 July 2018

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Strategic Priority/ Comments
Work Programme for 2018-19 Update	Democratic Services Officer	Regular Report
Scrutiny Annual Report	Democratic Services Officer	Annual Report

28 August 2018

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Strategic Priority/ Comments
Work Programme for 2018-19 Update	Democratic Services Officer	Regular Report

6 November 2018

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Strategic Priority/ Comments
Work Programme for 2018-19 Update	Democratic Services Officer	Regular Report

18 December 2018 (Special Meeting to look at UC Support)

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Strategic Priority/ Comments
Work Programme for 2017-18 Update	Democratic Services Officer	Regular Report
Annual Scrutiny Report 2018-19	Democratic Services Officer	Annual Report

8 January 2019

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Strategic Priority/ Comments
Work Programme for 2018-19 Update	Democratic Services Officer	Regular Report

5 March 2019

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Strategic Priority/ Comments
Work Programme for 2018-19 Update	Democratic Services Officer	Regular Report

Suggested topics

- Impact of Welfare and Reform – (PIP)/Advice
- Supported Housing
- Integrated Communities
- Health Inequality
- Transport and Inclusive Growth
- Social Mobility
- City Centre Environment
- Education Standards

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EXECUTIVE WORK PROGRAMME

October 2018 - September 2019

NOTES

1. The Leader in consultation with the Chief Executive and Town Clerk prepares an Executive Work Programme to cover a period of twelve months.
2. The Executive Work Programme contains matters which the Leader has reason to believe will be the subject of a key decision during the period covered by the Plan or Executive decisions which are likely to be taken in private.
3. A Key Decision is one which is likely:
 - a) to result in the Local Authority incurring expenditure which is , or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Local Authority's budget for the service or function to which it relates; or
 - b) to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising 2 or more wards in the area of the local authority.
4. Whilst the majority of the Executive's business at the meetings listed in the Executive Work Programme will be open to the public and media organisations to attend, there will be some business to be considered that contains, for example, confidential, commercially sensitive or person information.

This document serves as formal notice under the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 that certain items in the Executive Work Programme will be considered in private because the item contains exempt information under Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it. If an item is to be considered in private this will indicated on the individual decision notice.

If you have any queries, please telephone 01522 873387 or email democratic.services@lincoln.gov.uk.

EXECUTIVE WORK PROGRAMME SUMMARY

Date of Decision	Decision	Decision: Summary	Decision Taken By	Key Decision	Exempt Information
29 October 2018	New Housing Development Progress Report	To consider progress on new housing development	Executive	Yes	Private
29 October 2018	Localised Council Tax Support Scheme - 2019/20	Executive is asked to resolve the following: - 1) Consider the proposed City of Lincoln Council's Localised Council Tax Support scheme for 2019/20; for public consultation and scrutiny. 2) Consider the proposal to continue the £20,000 a year Exceptional Hardship fund for 2019/20 to top up Council Tax Support awards in appropriate cases – to be funded through the collection fund.	Executive	Yes	Public
29 October 2018	Tentercroft Street Masterplan	To consider the content of the Masterplan	Executive	Yes	Private
26 November 2018	De Wint Court – Cost Plan	To authorise procurement exercise based on detailed consultant cost plan and request delegated authority to enter into contract with a successful supplier if the tender return is within the stated cost envelope.	Executive	Yes	Private
26 November 2018	Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy	To endorse the strategy, as developed by the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership.	Executive	Yes	Public

26 November 2018	Appropriation of Land	Approval of the appropriation of land between the General Fund and HRA	Executive	Yes	Public
07 January 2019	Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2019/20	1) Review consultation responses relating to the Localised Council Tax Support Scheme for 2019/20; 2) Consider the proposed City of Lincoln Council's Localised Council Tax Support scheme for 2019/20	Executive	Yes	Public
07 January 2019	Collection Fund Surplus/Deficit - Council Tax	To consider the estimated balance for the Council Tax element of the Collection Fund and the surplus or deficit to be declared for 2018/19.	Executive	Yes	Public
21 January 2019	Collection Fund Surplus/Deficit - Business Rates	To report the estimated balance for the business rates element of the collection fund and the surplus or deficit to be declared for 2018/19.	Executive	Yes	Public

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