

Present: Councillor Jane Loffhagen (*in the Chair*),
Councillor Kathleen Brothwell, Councillor Liz Bushell,
Councillor Bill Bilton, Councillor Sue Burke, Councillor
Helena Mair, Councillor Lucinda Preston, Councillor
Alan Briggs and Councillor Christopher Reid

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Naomi Tweddle, Councillor Jackie Kirk and
Councillor Hilton Spratt

30. Confirmation of Minutes - 5 November 2019

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 17 February 2020 be confirmed.

31. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

32. Social Isolation - Update from Executive

Graham Watts, Democratic and Elections Manager, reported that the Executive had approved the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee's recommendations as part of its Scrutiny Review into Social Isolation, commending the review as an excellent piece of work.

The update was noted.

33. Integrated Communities - Overview

Graham Watts, Democratic and Elections Manager, presented the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee with a scoping document for a Scrutiny Review into Integrated Communities. It was reported that the review would seek to investigate:

- what additional support, if any, Neighbourhood Boards required in order to be more effective;
- the outcomes and benefits achieved as part of the Sincil Bank Regeneration project, together with lessons learnt and the impact on the community to date;
- successful examples of integration across the city and how these could be implemented elsewhere;
- hot spots in the city where there were challenges associated with integration and how these could be addressed.

The scoping document was noted.

34. Ben Barley - Voluntary Centre Services

Ben Barley, Chief Executive of Voluntary Centre Services, was invited to address the Committee as part of evidence gathering for the Scrutiny Review into Integrated Communities. The following points were noted as part of his presentation:

- there were links between this review and the previously undertaken Scrutiny Review into Social Isolation from the perspective of the services delivered by his organisation;
- in terms of social prescribing, as reflected in the Social Isolation Scrutiny Review, this had moved into a model where funding was provided directly from General Practitioners. This made it easier for his staff to be better integrated and help get referrals through;
- there were seven Neighbourhood Boards in Lincoln located in Abbey, Birchwood, Boultham, Ermine, Moorland, St Giles and Sincil Bank. These Boards had been longstanding ranging from ten to fifteen years;
- the Voluntary Centre Service spent a year supporting Neighbourhood Boards following the City Council's reorganisation of their provision in the city in order to ensure that all seven could continue to operate. This support had ceased just over a year ago but additional funding had been secured via a Big Lottery Grant which meant that support could still be put in place, albeit at a slightly lower level;
- a network of all Neighbourhood Boards in Lincoln was in place since April 2019 which sought to ensure that they worked together and share good practice. It had helped arrange a variety of events, such as family fun days, coffee mornings, remembrance events and litter picks, for example;
- resilience was one of the largest challenges facing Neighbourhood Boards as they tended to rely upon one or two key people which, for the individuals concerned, could be quite overwhelming. It was difficult to get people to take up these roles and elected members from the City Council had been really supportive. It was acknowledged, however, that these roles needed to be undertaken by members of the community rather than by elected members;
- attracting a younger cohort of people to take up roles was something that Voluntary Centre Services continued to encourage in order to keep Neighbourhood Boards sustainable. It was hoped that a recent campaign would be successful in attracting younger participation;
- the Council's through its Home and Your Lincoln publications had helped promote the work of Neighbourhood Boards, but it was acknowledged that more needed to be done;
- there were peaks and troughs across the city with regard to how well Neighbourhood Boards were operating.

The Chair invited members of the Committee to ask any questions or make comments.

Question

It was always difficult when volunteers were relied upon for such important services, however, there were such wonderful volunteers out in communities willing to provide support. It was not always possible for people to volunteer, however, for a variety of reasons. Were there any other avenues, such as Colleges for example, that could be targeted through advertising to attract younger people and families into these community roles?

Response

One of the main barriers for young people was that they did not want to attend board meetings. These had therefore been renamed in some cases as 'Community Action Groups' or something similar in an attempt to remove the formality associated with board meetings which for some young people could be quite intimidating or perceived as boring.

Question

The Abbey Neighbourhood Board was usually well attended by elected members with three or four members of the community also usually in attendance at meetings. How did Neighbourhood Boards currently engage with the community?

Response

There were a range of different tactics currently used to attract people to participate, but changing the name of board meetings to something more meaningful and engaging may make a difference, ensuring that it represented something relevant that mattered to them. An important aspect regarding their sustainability, however, was ensuring that people regularly attended meetings rather than solely using them as forums to raise a single issue on something and not engage with other aspects of the Board.

Comment

Neighbourhood Boards should perhaps consider holding more celebration events, which could be low cost events on green spaces in communities.

Response

The Neighbourhood Board at Ermine had done this fantastically and, over time, members of the Board had come together to hold two successful family fun days and were now considering what future events could be put in place.

Comment

The same problems with a lack of engagement were prevalent at the Birchwood Neighbourhood Board. A series of leaflets had been developed through engagement with students which would be sent to every property in the area to raise awareness of the Board. People tended to forget that the Board was there so it was hoped that these leaflets would remind members of the community of its existence in order that they had the opportunity to participate and shape it for what local people needed or wanted.

Comment

The term 'Community Action Group' sent a much more positive and approachable message out to people which could attract more participation and contributions from the community.

Question

Had any work been undertaken with Childrens' Centres?

Response

Work had been undertaken to look into whether a young network of people could be established, linking in with establishments such as Childrens' Centres. This raised questions as to how it could be properly supported and who would take responsibility for it. This had previously been attempted in St Giles, however, at that time it proved to be unsustainable.

Question

What happened in those areas where there were no Neighbourhood Boards? How did things get started in those areas without such a body?

Response

The network currently in place was already in the process of working with other areas of the city, such as Hartsholme for example, which was at a very early stage of discussion and development.

The information collated as part of this item was noted.

35. Jane Kilby/Emma Blackburn - Lincoln University

Jane Kilby, Employability and Campaigns Manager at the University of Lincoln Students' Union, and Emma Blackburn, member of the University of Lincoln Students' Union, were invited to address the Committee as part of evidence gathering for the Scrutiny Review into Integrated Communities. The following points were noted as part of their presentations:

- the Students' Union was a charity and separate from the University of Lincoln;
- students had historically lived in the Carholme Road area which had led to difficulties and a change in dynamics of the people living there. A lot of work had been done to change the perception of students and make them better integrate into the existing community, particularly in the West End, with noise and anti-social behaviour being examples of the main problems reported;
- in recent years the University of Lincoln, supported by the Students' Union, had been educating students, helping them consider the fact that moving into a community came with additional responsibilities. This was sometimes not properly considered by individuals who, having moved out of student accommodation and into a house of multiple occupation in the West End, had not appreciated that families with young children or elderly people were in very close proximity;
- other initiatives had been developed, such as the 'Move Out May' campaign, aimed at those students leaving their accommodation at the end of term and promoting a responsible approach to moving out. This was in response to lots of complaints having been received regarding parties and disordered waste, furniture or other items dumped in front gardens of properties. The scheme would be rolled out again this May;
- a lot of work in partnership with the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Team and Police had been undertaken to work on the issue of noise complaints, which had significantly reduced as a result;
- the Students' Union were regular attendees at meetings of the Carholme Community Forum;
- students also lived in the Monks Road and Sincil Bank areas of the city, however, there were in lesser number in those areas and not as many issues had been reported, perhaps due to the transient nature of other people living in those areas;
- the Students' Union was now sitting on the Sincil Bank Community Board;
- the Students' Union was keen for students to feel like they were part of the communities where they lived by breaking down barriers and leading on schemes such as community volunteering and 'Make a Difference Week'. This was a whole week made up of various one-off volunteering activities designed to support the community;
- the Students' Union campaign network looked after the main diversity groups and held various awareness events and activities throughout the year. Even though these activities or events were organised by students, they broadly impacted people in communities who had participated in a number of them throughout the year. This was an excellent example, therefore, of community integration.

The Chair invited members of the Committee to ask any questions or make comments.

Comment

There were a number of initiatives in Park Ward that students may wish to become involved with, together with the Residents' Association in Sincil Bank and the Community Board which they may find of interest.

Response

Students were already involved in some schemes in the Sincil Bank area but the further opportunities, particularly the Residents' Association and Community Board, were noted.

Comment

Lots of students remained in the city after their studies, so integration into the community was an important issue. Residents in these areas also had a responsibility to integrate with their student neighbours and perhaps make them feel welcome as part of the community.

Response

The Students' Union was aware of historic issues, particularly in the West End, which was why there was such a big drive to educate students about the communities they were moving into. A 'Meet the Street' initiative had been attempted in the past, but smaller pop-up events or activities sometimes had more of a successful impact.

Comment

The support provided by the University of Lincoln and Students' Union in respect of the West End and wider Carholme Ward was very impressive. Activities such as MacMillan coffee mornings were relatively simple to hold and had big impacts in terms of bringing people together for a worthwhile cause, so large community events were not always the answer. Students should also know that elected members were available to them as members of the community as well, should they have any issues that they needed addressing.

Comment

It was not always students who created problems when moving out of properties at the end of term, but landlords too. Sometimes landlords were responsible for dumping waste and unwanted items at the fronts of properties and the perception would be that it was the students who were to blame. It was important that landlords were reminded of their responsibilities to the community, which the City Council would be able to assist with.

The information collated as part of this item was noted.

36. Sian Wade - Active Faith Network

Sian Wade, Network Co-ordinator at the Active Faith Network, was invited to address the Committee as part of evidence gathering for the Scrutiny Review into Integrated Communities. The following points were noted as part of her presentation:

- there were approximately 350 projects across the city organised by the Active Faith Network which could come under the bracket of Integrated Communities. Some of these, which were also reported as part of the previous Scrutiny Review into Social Isolation, were noted as follows:

- 'Safe Families' – similar to Homestart with the idea being that a group of volunteers could be placed around a child to help them feel part of their community;
 - 'Assist' – a scheme involving churches in Fiskerton, Reepham and Cherry Willingham providing a free confidential be-friending service for anyone over the age of 18 on issues such as anxiety, depression and other mental health conditions, which residents of the city could also access;
 - 'Level Up' – a scheme providing English lessons which had led to a range of connections;
 - 'Butterflies in the Shed' – a scheme for groups of men and women to learn new skills;
 - 'Eden Project' – a scheme taking place in St Giles comprising a team of volunteers to revitalise the Methodist Church which had seen very positive engagement from young people and was a very good example of breaking down barriers and community integration;
 - 'Welcome Boxes' – a scheme aimed at people moving into the city from other countries which provided information on how to connect with services such as schools, doctors and places of faith;
 - 'Night Time Crisis Cafes' – a new scheme funded by the NHS as part of the mental health spoke initiative to provide support to people and help them re-connect with the community at times of crisis. The first would be opening in the Portland Street area twice a week from 10pm until 2pm but it was anticipated that more would be opened up across the city;
 - 'Bridge Church' – a facility in the Sincil Bank area following close liaison with the NHS and the City Council's Neighbourhood Team to provide a drop in facility throughout the week.
- Neighbourhood Boards had been really important to the organisation and it was appreciated that faith groups across the city should be more engaged with them moving forwards.

The Chair invited members of the Committee to ask any questions or make comments.

Comment

There was a common perception that churches or other places of worship tended to be attended and supported by older people.

Response

Alive Church, for example, had good engagement with young people, a lot of which were from the University of Lincoln.

Question

How did people access the 'Welcome Box' scheme?

Response

There was a Welcome Box website where the necessary forms could be completed, including those associated with GDPR. Schools and other institutions were targeted in order to reach as many people as possible.

Question

How did residents know about the work of the Active Faith Network?

Response

A lot of the projects were very local level and had relatively high levels of participation. Working through grassroots organisations, such as schools, had proven to be very successful.

Comment

All elected members had non-political leaflets that they produced to advertise their local ward surgeries. There was an opportunity to advertise some of these projects and events on the reverse of the leaflet, which in most cases were delivered to the majority of properties in the ward. It would also be extremely useful for the Council to include these projects and events on its website to help publicise them.

Question

Regarding the night time crisis cafes, would access to this facility be on the basis of NHS referral?

Response

This was a brand new initiative and a 24 hour crisis line with the NHS was already in place. Work had been undertaken in partnership with the emergency services to develop a referral process solely dedicated to mental health crisis. This would be on the basis of a professional referral to start with, but anyone could access the 24 hour crisis line which itself could lead to a referral. This would be a non-clinical service predominantly volunteer based, the training for which was extensive and already underway.

The information collated as part of this item was noted.

37. Work Programme 2019/20

Graham Watts, Democratic and Elections Manager, presented the work programme for the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee.

The Chair reported that the Council's Policy Scrutiny Committee had suggested the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee gave consideration to the impact of the closure of the Monks Road Walk-In Centre on residents of the city. It was agreed that a representative of the Clinical Commissioning Group be invited to address the Committee and provide an overview of the impact on residents.

With regard to the Integrated Communities Scrutiny Review, it was suggested that the following be invited to a future meeting to provide evidence as contributors to the review:

- Councillor Rosie Kirk, Portfolio Holder for Reducing Inequalities;
- Councillor Donald Nannestad, Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing;
- Paul Carrick, Neighbourhood Manager, City of Lincoln Council;
- the YMCA;
- Age UK.

Members agreed to continue with the development and circulation of a survey to residents to assist in the collection of evidence as part of the review. This would seek to address how engaged people felt they were in their communities, using schools as a potential method of circulating the survey to as many people as possible.

The update was noted.

