

PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 23 January 2025

6.00 pm

**Committee Rooms 1-2,
City Hall**

Membership: Councillors Gary Hewson (Chair), Pat Vaughan (Vice-Chair), Natasha Chapman, Thomas Dyer, Adrianna McNulty, Neil Murray, Lucinda Preston, Anita Pritchard and Emily Wood

Substitute member(s): Councillors Liz Bushell and Annie Currier

Officers attending: Democratic Services, Kate Ellis, Simon Walters, Simon Kirk, Emily Holmes and Lara Wells

A G E N D A

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Present: Councillor Gary Hewson (*in the Chair*),
Councillor Pat Vaughan, Councillor Thomas Dyer,
Councillor Adrianna McNulty, Councillor Neil Murray,
Councillor Lucinda Preston, Councillor Anita Pritchard,
Councillor Emily Wood and Councillor Donald Nannestad

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Natasha Chapman and Daren Turner

51. Confirmation of Minutes - 14 November 2024

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2024 be confirmed as a true record.

52. Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee Minutes - 31 October 2024

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 31 October 2024 be confirmed as a true record

53. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

54. Portfolio Holder under Scrutiny - Quality Housing

Donald Nannestad, Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing:

- a) advised that performance data for service areas which came under his portfolio covered the Council's own housing stock, regulation of private sector housing and health
- b) highlighted those major changes since his last report had been the Regulator of Social Housing (ROSH) expanding to cover local authorities from 1 April this year and policy announcements by Government since the July General Election
- c) reported that in terms of Government announcements, the changes in Right to Buy would help, however, in the period between the autumn statement and the deadline for applications to be made under the previous system, over 90 applications were received which was the equivalent to the number which would normally be sold in around two years.
- d) presented his report to Performance Scrutiny Committee providing an insight into key activities and achievements during the past twelve months, covering the following main areas:
 - Homelessness
 - Tenancy Services
 - Voids
 - Housing Repairs
 - Housing Investment
 - New Build
 - Decarbonisation

- Control Centre
- Private Sector Housing
- Health

e) extended his thanks to the team of officers that supported his Portfolio for their hard work, dedication and commitment to supporting the residents of Lincoln

f) invited members' comments and questions.

Question: Why did Park and Carholme wards have the highest number of complaints regarding dis-repair?

Response: Complaints were received from private and rented accommodation. Park and Carholme ward were the two wards with the biggest numbers of private and rented properties which was reflected in the number of complaints.

Question: Who carried out the inspections of City of Lincoln Council properties?

Response: The Council had entered into a contractual agreement with an external contractor to undertake stock condition surveys. A small number of unresponsive surveys would be undertaken by existing City Council employees.

Question: What was the Lincoln Home Standard?

Response: The Lincoln Home Standard was developed locally by the Lincoln Tenants Panel (LTP) to agree to some enhancement of homes. It was being reviewed in anticipation to decent homes round two which included exploring different floor coverings if a property became void. Local enhancement on decent homes was in the process of being reviewed but wasn't yet complete. A report would be submitted to a future Portfolio Holder meeting on the management of homes for customers.

Question: If the inspections were undertaken by a contractor, how much would it cost?

Response: To complete and independent 20% stock condition survey of the stock, it would cost around £137,000.

Following a brief discussion on the matter, Gary Hewson, Chair of Performance Scrutiny Committee raised concerns in relation to health in the city and highlighted that every year the statistics showed that regionally and nationally it was very poor.

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing explained that there were a number of reasons for this but the main issue was due to the lack of support services and NHS funds. The best way to access information currently was through e-gyms as it enabled officers to measure statistics more closely. There also needed to be improvements through the primary care trusts and mental health services.

The Chair concluded the item, and on behalf of the Committee made a recommendation to the Executive expressing its concerns around health and requested that they view the current Health statistics and liaise with the Local MP with a view to receiving suggestions on what improvements could be made locally.

RESOLVED that:

- a) Performance Scrutiny Committee submit a recommendation to the Executive to review the current health statistics and liaise with the Local MP on what improvements could be made locally.
- b) The content of the report be noted with thanks.

55. **Fire Safety Update**

Martin Kerrigan, Fire Safety Assurance Manager:

- a) presented an update to Performance Scrutiny Committee on City of Lincoln Council's (CoLC's) current position regarding Fire Safety to the Housing stock including High Rise Tower Blocks, Supported Housing Schemes and Low Risk blocks only
- b) stated that the main legislation in terms of fire in England was 'The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005', that put a duty on the responsible person to undertake fire risk assessments and ensured general fire precautions were undertaken.
- c) highlighted that in addition, following the fire at Grenfell Tower in 2017 various new pieces of legislation came into force including 'The Fire Safety Act 2021', 'The Fire Safety (England) Regulation 2022' and 'The Building Safety Act 2022', with additional requirements for the responsible person (COLC) to undertake regarding fire safety
- d) referred to the table at 4.3 of his report which outlined the current position regarding Fire Risk Assessments
- e) explained that:
 - The inspection of fire doors continued to ensure compliance with the Fire Safety (England) Regulations.
 - From the regulations there was a requirement for the communal fire doors within the high-rise blocks to be inspected on a quarterly basis and flat front doors to be inspected on an annual basis by best endeavours.
 - The inspections were being undertaken with communal doors next due for inspection in November 2024 and flat front doors next planned to be inspected in February 2025, with letters being sent out to residents for access.
- f) welcomed members comments and questions.

Question: Had all fire doors been located correctly?

Response: A lot of sites had 'fit for purpose' fire doors but a few weren't certified. As part of the inspections, the size, depth, etc was assessed to ensure it was a fire door when it was originally installed.

Question: Were there officers trained for assessing fire doors?

Response: Yes, there were fully trained accredited officers to carry out assessments.

Question: Had all the cladding similar to Grenfell been changed?

Response: There was no flammable cladding on any tower blocks anymore.

Question: Would the position of the Technical Officer be recruited to?

Response: Officers provided assurance that the role had development opportunities. Agency staff were currently carrying out fire inspections, shadowing and mentoring until more permanent measures were put in place.

Question: Could noticeboards be put in the flats to show residents they'd been assessed?

Response: It wasn't possible at the moment. The website was being reviewed but there were restrictions with the current website. Plans were being put in place to expand it and customers would then have access to when their fire door was last inspected and when the last fire risk assessment was carried out including any outstanding actions. There was a slight issue around flat front doors and leaseholders as technically they weren't owned by the Council. Officers confirmed a report would be submitted to Performance Scrutiny Committee in 6 months on options going forward regarding leaseholders.

RESOLVED that:

- a) A report be submitted to Performance Scrutiny Committee in 6 months presenting the options going forward regarding inspection of flats owned by Leaseholders.
- b) The report be noted with thanks.

56. Work Programme 2024-25

The Chair:

- a) presented the draft work programme for 2024/25 as detailed at Appendix A of the report
- b) advised that the work programme for the Performance Scrutiny Committee was put forward annually for approval by Council; the work programme was then regularly updated throughout the year in consultation with the Performance Scrutiny 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 2024/25.

RESOLVED that:

- a) An update report be submitted to Performance Scrutiny Committee on the first meeting of the new municipal year to review the options going forward regarding inspections on flats owned by Leaseholders.
- b) The work programme 2024/25 be noted.

Present:	Councillor Gary Hewson (<i>in the Chair</i>)
Councillors:	Alan Briggs, Liz Bushell, Emily Wood and Loraine Woolley
Independent Person(s):	Mick Barber, Caroline Coyle-Fox, Sean Newton and Debbie Rousseau
Apologies for Absence:	Councillor Pat Vaughan, Councillor Natasha Chapman and Mike Asher

36. Confirmation of Minutes - 31 October 2024

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 31 October 2024 be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a true record.

37. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

38. Performance Monitoring Report Quarter 2 -2024/25

Michelle Hoyles, Housing Strategy Manager:

- a) presented Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee with a report on performance indicators for the Directorate of Housing and Investment (DHI) for Quarter 2 of 2024/25 (July – September) which covered those measures related to the Council's responsibility as a landlord
- b) reported that Lincoln Tenant's Panel had been consulted about this report and had confirmed they had no comments
- c) added that regular monitoring of the Council's performance was a key component of the Local Performance Management Framework and supported its ongoing commitment to continuous improvement of Council services
- d) confirmed that there were a total of thirty-three performance indicators monitored by DHI; an overview of performance for the second quarter of 2024/25, against such indicators was attached at Appendix A to the report
- e) explained that the template for Appendix A included performance 'direction of travel' information to aid interpretation of how performance fluctuated between quarterly reporting periods; benchmarking comparisons would be provided annually at each fourth quarter
- f) reported that during the second quarter of 2024/25, 15 performance measures had met or exceeded their agreed target, four had performed close to target and six had performed below target, the remaining measures were volumetric
- g) highlighted that of the 6 measures performing below target, one was a corporate measure related to call handling in the customer contact centre; this measure 'CS3' related to all calls received by the contact centre, and

therefore included data not linked to Housing services, and was also reported to Performance Scrutiny Committee

- h) confirmed that further, detailed information on the areas highlighted was provided within the report
- i) invited comments and questions from Members of the Committee.

Members discussed the content of the report, commented, asked questions and received relevant responses from officers as follows:

Question: Why were measures for voids still showing as red, although there was now a designated team concentrating on rent collections?

Response: This was down to a loss of rent due to the properties being void for a longer period than expected, rather than a duty of the rent collection team.

Question: The average re-let time in calendar days for all dwellings including major works performed at 48.79 days in quarter 1 and 50.28 days in quarter 2. It was quoted that there were several factors that could influence void re-let times, often influenced by external factors outside of the Council's control. Which internal teams worked to re-let voids as quickly as possible?

Response: The Housing Solutions, Voids Support , Housing Repair Service Support teams, followed by tenancy support were responsible for this area. External factors outside of the Council's control, for example, could be the scene of a crime cordoned off by the police, or high levels of asbestos on site preventing access to the property in a timely manner.

Comment: Instances of voids taking longer to re-let affected rent loss. Reports to Performance Scrutiny Committee summarised reasons for changes in performance figures.

Question: Average re-let time of voids in calendar days for all dwellings excluding major works was not meeting targets set and deteriorating. Did the target need lowering to make it achievable?

Response by Chair: As members we did not set the targets, they were set by officers in consultation with Lincoln Tenant's Panel. However, we wanted them to remain at the same level but improve and it was hoped this would happen.

Officer Response: Delays getting access to void properties could be caused by utility companies having work to carry out first, or tenants having passed on with access delays related to probate/legal reasons. We were trying to maximise the number of properties made available for tenants to move into balanced against housing needs. Transfers were increasing, which resulted in further voids, however, we were moving people into suitable housing for their needs which was good. Sometimes, two to three transfers were achieved out of one void property. There had been an unusually large number of tenancies ended this quarter with 40 sets of keys being handed back in one week. A financial balancing act was required between properties remaining void longer which incurred rental loss, against employment of experienced sub-contractors at extra cost to achieve quicker results.

Question: Why were so many tenancies being ended?

Response: More properties were being brought into stock and there had been an increase in transfers to deal with overcrowding/adaptation needs. We were still in the upper quartile for re-let of housing properties compared with elsewhere in the country and therefore still performing well. These were positive reasons why

tenancies had ended. Less than 1% out of our 7,800 housing stock was void at the current time.

Question: When would the Authority know how many Right to Buy transactions would be processed and how was the loss of these properties going to be recouped?

Response: There had been 90 applications received in the last four weeks. The Housing Revenue Account 30-year business plan proposed to increase its housing stock by 50 additional properties each year. There would hopefully be less losses due to voids moving forward over the next ten years as the short-term deficit ironed out.

Question: What was the maximum amount of discount permitted for Right to Buy transactions?

Response: This sum was £24,000. A consultation period was currently ongoing as to whether new properties should be excluded from the scheme.

Question: What type of properties were popular for Right to Buy applications?

Response: There was a variety of preference across the board.

Question Mick Barber, Chair of Lincoln Tenant's Panel: Was it possible to receive a breakdown on the types of property that were purchased through Right to Buy?

Response: Yes, officers would circulate this information separately to members of Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

Comment by Officers: The following link informed members of the summary wording by the Government in relation to Right to Buy: [Right to Buy: summary booklet - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/right-to-buy-booklet)

RESOLVED that:

1. Further information be provided to members as requested above.
2. The current performance outcomes during Quarter 2 of the financial year 2024/25 to date, be noted.

39. **Financial Performance Quarterly Monitoring**

Adam Oxley, Principal Finance Business Partner:

a) presented a report to Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee with a summary of the second quarter's performance (up to 30 September 2024), on the Council's:

- Housing Revenue Account
- Housing Repairs Service
- Housing Investment Programme

b) provided information on the Council's:

- **Housing Revenue Account** — For 2024/25 the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) net revenue budget was set with a planned contribution from balances of £101,220, resulting in estimated general balances at year-end of £1,030,024, after allowing for the 2023/24 outturn position. The HRA was currently projecting a forecast underspend of £519,410, which would result in HRA balances of £1,549,435 as at the end of 2024/25 (Appendix A provided a forecast

Housing Revenue Account summary). Although the forecast position was an overspend there was a number of significant variations in income and expenditure. Full details of the main variances were provided at Appendix B.

- **Housing Repairs Service** – For 2024/25 the Council's Housing Repairs Service (HRS) net budget was set at zero, which reflected its full cost recovery nature. At quarter 2 the HRS were forecasting a deficit of £17,146 in 2024/25, an improvement of £338,165 since quarter 1, which had subsequently been repatriated to the HRA. Full details of the main variances were provided at Appendix C.
- **Housing Investment Programme** – The revised programme for 2024/25 amounted to £17.650m following the Quarter 1 position. At quarter 2 the programme had been decreased by £0,219m to £17.432m as shown at paragraph 7.2 of the report. The overall expenditure on the Housing Investment Programme at the end of quarter 2 was £5.730m, which was 32.87% of the 2024/25 revised programme. This excluded expenditure relating to Western Growth Corridor, which was currently shown on the General Investment Programme (GIP), to be apportioned at year end (current forecast outturn £1.3m) as detailed at Appendix J of the report. A further £1,091m had been spent as at the end of October 2024, although this was still a low percentage of expenditure at this stage of the financial year, works had been constrained by the availability of contractors and materials, however, new contracts were in place and spend expected to increase by the end of the financial year.

c) invited members questions and comments.

Members of Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee considered the content of the report in further detail, asked questions and received relevant responses from officers as follows:

Question: Were the wider site costs for the Western Growth Corridor approved at Executive on 22 July 2024 funded through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA)?

Response: Yes. This was correct. The HRA owned 79% of Western Growth Corridor land.

Question: How many tenants were on the waiting list for aids and adaptations, which had increased substantially over the last two years?

Response: The budget came from the capital programme. Officers would investigate further and report back to members in due course.

Comment: Developers might wish to take account of the opportunity for new tenants to qualify for help with aids and adaptations on completion of their build.

Response: Aids and adaptations were included within our technical specifications for new builds.

Question: New builds were classified as houses for life?

Response: Yes, together with adaptations.

Councillor Alan Briggs complemented officers on their achievements to bring about a reduction in void loss garage rental income.

RESOLVED that:

1. Further information be provided to members as requested above.
2. The financial performance for the period 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024 be noted with thanks.

40. Acquisition, Disposal and Land Use Strategy Update

Michelle Hoyles, Housing Strategy Manager:

- a) presented a report to update Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee on the Directorate of Housing and Investment's progress on development of a proposed Acquisition, Disposal and Land Use Strategy
- b) shared with the Sub-Committee a 2-page summary, which set out the proposed content and direction for the strategy, in order that feedback from the Sub-Committee could be incorporated into strategy development
- c) invited members of Lincoln Tenant's Panel the opportunity to comment on the contents of the report at this meeting
- d) reported that the Council had a duty as a social housing landlord to demonstrate that its Housing Revenue Account (HRA) delivered value for money to its tenants
- e) described the Council's HRA, as one of the city's largest landowners; therefore, how it monitored its land and property assets had a significant impact on both the financial sustainability of the HRA, and the quality of our neighbourhoods
- f) explained that the proposed strategy would bridge the gap between these policies and the overarching Housing Revenue Account Business Plan by incorporating how the Council would repurpose under-utilised land in this strategy, it would also enable the Council to fully progress its plans to make better use of sites such as garages and other land types that could be redeveloped, or undergo other investment for the benefit of tenants and the HRA
- g) invited members comments on the summary of the proposed content for the forthcoming strategy as detailed at Appendix A to the officers report.

Members welcomed early consultation and involvement in the Acquisitions, Disposals and Land Use Strategy.

RESOLVED that the content of the report be received and noted.

41. Asset Disposal Policy Update

Michelle Hoyles, Housing Strategy Manager:

- a. provided an update to Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee on the Directorate of Housing and Investment's progress on development of its Asset Disposal Policy, which sat underneath the strategy discussed within the previous agenda item

- b. shared with the Sub-Committee an extract from the current draft policy, at Appendix A, which listed the proposed considerations the Council would take into account when deciding whether to dispose of an HRA property asset
- c. advised that Lincoln Tenant's Panel had been consulted on this report and would be involved in greater depth, prior to the full Disposals Policy being presented to the Sub-Committee in early 2025
- d. reported that the Council's HRA was one of the city's largest landowners, and its primary landlord, would from time to time need to consider disposing of land and property in its ownership
- e. advised that to ensure disposals were considered and enacted consistently and in the best interests of tenants, the service was developing an Asset Disposal Policy, a draft policy was almost complete and would shortly undergo consultation, prior to referral to the Sub-Committee in early 2025
- f. reported that a key section of the policy, which proposed the considerations the Council would take account of when deciding whether to dispose of an asset was ready for circulation at this stage, and officers were seeking feedback from the Sub-Committee on this extract to inform the final draft of the policy
- g. highlighted that Appendix A consolidated and clarified the approach the Council already took to asset disposal, which was robust and supported the making of sound decisions about land in HRA ownership; having an Asset Disposal Policy enabled the Council to better demonstrate these decisions were consistent as well as robust, by providing a published framework for decision making
- h. welcomed members feedback on the content of the report.

Members discussed the report in further detail, commented, asked questions and received relevant responses from officers as follows:

Comment: Members of Lincoln Tenants Panel were looking forward to being involved in this piece of work next year, which was progressing well.

Question: Within the General Fund Account temporary accommodation had to be provided under a statutory obligation to pay for suitable accommodation for homeless people, although the full cost was not totally covered by Government contributions. Were we any further forward with dealing with this problem?

Response: The Housing Authority were actively looking at opportunities to renovate existing buildings and also use modular construction types (pod format). We were also looking at leasing opportunities with other housing providers to minimise cost and maximise the needs of households. The long-term solution was to provide people with a permanent home. This was not a quick process which needed to flow through longer-term housing solutions.

Question: Was it possible for plots of land across the city used for student accommodation to be used as temporary housing needs moving forward?

Response: We could make use of surplus student accommodation; however, it was not always suitable for families due to it having shared studio facilities.

RESOLVED that the content of the report be received and noted with further consultation welcomed in due course.

42. Downsizing Policy Update (To Follow)

Paula Burton, Assistant Director, Housing Management, provided a verbal update on the Draft Downsizing Policy, which covered the following main points:

- The Downsizing Pilot Scheme finished in June this year.
- Nine applications were received.
- Five applications had been approved.
- Two tenants had already moved homes.
- One move had been rescinded due to the condition of the property/tenancy issues.
- Another two had been approved but suitable accommodation was still being sought.
- Although two of the approved cases had still to either find a suitable property, or move to one, they had been offered the maximum amount of £18,500 that would be spent from the budget of £80,000.
- Of the cases approved, approximately. £6,500 would be used to clear arrears and other housing related debts.
- The amount of £61,500 remaining from the original budget allocation would support more tenants (beyond those originally identified as in receipt of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) to move to a more suitable, manageable and affordable home, release more larger properties to relieve homelessness and clear significant arrears and other housing debts.
- The next steps for the Lincoln Tenant's Panel would be to have further meetings with officers involved in the process and co-produce an updated policy if the recommendation was for it to continue.
- The written version of the Downsizing Update report would be circulated to members via Democratic Services.

Members discussed and offered comments on the content of the verbal update as follows:

Comment: It was pleasing to hear that progress was being made, although regrettable that many households were not utilising or in need of the larger properties which they were living in. Lincoln Tenant's Panel was looking forward to working with officers to encourage tenants to downsize properties if this was the best option for them moving forward.

Question: Did we notify those tenants on Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) that they were able to downsize and how long were the payments likely to continue?

Response: We already notified tenants in receipt of DHP. An invite would be extended to Martin Walmsley, Assistant Director, Shared Revenues and Benefits, who was responsible for administration of the payment to report into the next meeting with an update on the current scheme.

RESOLVED that:

1. The written version of the Downsizing Update report be circulated to members of Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee via Democratic Services.

2. Martin Walmsley, Assistant Director, Shared Revenues and Benefits be invited to attend and report into Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee on 6 February 2025 with an update on the Discretionary Housing Payments Scheme.
3. The content of the verbal update be noted with thanks.

43. Work Programme 2024/25

The Senior Democratic Services Officer:

- a. presented the work programme for Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee for 2024/25 as detailed at Appendix A of the report
- b. highlighted that the work programme could be further populated in accordance with Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committees requests for topics of discussion and areas of preferred scrutiny to be used as a working document, added to or amended at members discretion at any time during the 2024/25 Municipal Year
- c. confirmed that the work programme included those areas for scrutiny linked to the strategic priorities of the Council and themed housing matters, to ensure that the work of the committee was relevant and proportionate.

Mick Barber, Chair of Lincoln Tenant's Panel requested a wider review be conducted on estate inspections to cover issues such as fly tipping, accountability, Anti-Social Behaviour and wider area issues rather than just the condition of people's gardens and communal areas etc.

The Chair suggested that this topic area be included as an item for consideration at the next meeting of Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee to be held on 6 February 2025.

Officers agreed that a review of estate inspections was welcomed in this timely fashion as a place shaping initiative.

RESOLVED that the content of the Work Programme for 2024/25 be noted, subject to the following additional items to be included on the agenda for Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee to be held on 6 February 2025:

- An update on Discretionary Housing Payments (Martin Walmsley)
- A wider estate inspections review.

Inclusive Economic Growth

1. Building Control
2. Car Parks
3. Commercial Development
4. Contaminated Land
5. Cultural and Events Activities Including:
 - Christmas Lights
6. Economic Development and Growth, including:
 - Western Growth Corridor
 - Sustainable Urban Extensions
7. Heritage
8. Innovation and Inward Investment including:
 - Lincoln Science and Innovation Park
 - Smart City initiatives
9. Markets
10. Planning, including:
 - Central Lincolnshire Local Plan
 - Regional and National Planning Policies
11. Public Realm including:
 - City Centre Masterplan
 - Cornhill Area Redevelopment
12. Regeneration Including:
 - Neighbourhood Revitalisation
 - Community Planning
13. Small Business Support
14. Tourism and Marketing
15. Transport including:
 - Transport Hub
 - Connectivity
 - Infrastructure

Reducing Inequality

1. Anti-Poverty Strategy
2. Asylum Seekers
3. Benefits Advice and take-up, including:
 - Housing Benefit
 - Council Tax Support
4. Community Cohesion Strategy
5. Community Strategies and Policies
6. Corporate Social Responsibility including:
 - Hate Crime
 - Lincolnshire Safer Communities
7. Discretionary Rate Relief Policy
8. Financial Inclusion, including:
 - Adult Learning;
 - Young People.
9. Prevent
10. Public Protection including:
 - Antisocial Behavior
 - Noise Nuisance
 - CCTV
 - Domestic Violence
11. Skills and Training, including The Network;
12. Social Value Policy
13. Universal Credit
14. Welfare Advice
15. Welfare Reform

Quality Housing

1. Affordable Housing
2. Discretionary Housing Payments
3. Estate Management
4. Fleet Management
5. Health and Wellbeing, particularly its links to good quality housing
 - Physical and Mental Health
 - Suicide
6. Homelessness Prevention
7. House Building
8. Housing Investment and Decent Homes
9. Housing Repairs and Maintenance
10. Housing Revenue Account and Landlord Services including:
 - Tenant Engagement
 - Housing Stock Options
11. Lettings and Allocations including:
 - Rogue Landlords
 - Trusted Landlord Accreditation Scheme
12. Rough Sleepers
13. Strategic Housing
14. Supported Housing

Remarkable Place

1. Allotments
2. Cemeteries and Crematorium
3. Community Centres
4. Environmental Contracts including:
5. Refuse Collection and Recycling
6. Highways

7. Open Space and Grounds Maintenance
8. Public Conveniences
9. Cleansing
10. Food Health and Safety
11. Licensing
12. Parks and Recreation
13. Pollution Control
14. Sport and Leisure facilities to promote physical activity

Climate and Corporate Strategy

1. Climate Change (linkage to Local Plan)
2. Low Carbon Agenda
3. Equality and Diversity: Employer perspective
4. Corporate Communications and Media Relations
5. Corporate Strategy including
6. Strategic Plan (Vision 2020)
7. Annual Report
8. Strategic Partnerships
9. Human Resources including:
 - People Strategy
 - Apprenticeships
 - Trade Union Liaison
 - Organisational Culture and Core Values
10. Regional and Sub-Regional Governance Arrangements including Devolution
11. Legal

Customer Experience, Review and Resources

1. Audit
2. Central Support Services
3. Complaints Handling
4. Corporate Reviews
5. Customer Engagement including:
6. Customer Services
7. Contact Centre
8. Democratic and Electoral Services including
Voter Registration
Democratic Engagement
9. ICT
10. Performance including Systems and Process
11. Strategic Information including:
12. Corporate Evidence Bases

13. Lincoln City Profile
14. Asset Management
15. Civic and Twinning
16. Corporate Health and Safety
17. Emergency Planning
18. Finance including:
19. Financial Strategy
20. Financial Position
21. Procurement (excluding social value)
22. Revenues
23. Risk Management and Governance including
24. Insurance
25. Specific Major Projects (Excluding Major Developments)
26. Towards Financial Sustainability including
Commercialisation

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REPORT BY COUNCILLOR JOSHUA WELLS, PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH**Inclusive Economic Growth****Portfolio Holder Report – Cllr Joshua Wells**

This is my first report to Performance Scrutiny as the Portfolio Holder for Inclusive Economic Growth, having been elected to the position in May 2024. The last Inclusive Economic Growth report was in September 2023, so this report will cover some of the work my predecessor, Cllr Naomi Tweddle, had started. I would like to thank her and her predecessor, Cllr Neil Murray, for their diligent work in this role.

1) Charterholme (Western Growth Corridor)

Charterholme was officially launched in December 2024. Two years after it received outline planning consent, we are now building the new community in the heart of our city.

The delivery of the first phase of infrastructure into the site has now been completed. These works included a new signalised junction on Skellingthorpe Road/Birchwood Avenue, a new road into the development, and a bridge over the Boultham Catchwater. The works have been approved by Lincolnshire County Council and placed into maintenance (12-month period), prior to formal adoption.

Planning consent was granted for the development of the first 52 homes on the Council's gateway site in February 2024. Following a period of further technical design and approvals, the works to construct these homes commenced in early November 2024. The first 19 homes on the western side of the access road are on track to be completed by the end of summer 2025. These homes have been designed to a high sustainability standard to minimise carbon emissions and ensure energy efficiency.

Once the first phase of homes have been developed, the new junction and road access will be brought into use for the new residents and as an alternative access for those with private rights currently along Pig Lane, subject to final agreement.

Following extensive discussions with Network Rail and Lincolnshire County Council, the works began on the eastern access in November 2024, safeguarding the Levelling Up Fund grant in support of these works. The technical designs for the eastern access – bridge, junction and works to Tritton Road – were finalised and approved in summer 2024. This a major achievement given the complexity of the infrastructure proposals and the requirements of the stakeholders involved. The contractor, John Graham Construction, has now completed the haul route and the earthworks to allow for the build-up of the embankment, ahead of the bridge construction and installation across the railway. The project is due to be completed by March 2026, which will meet with the funding timescales.

This bridge will provide the opportunity to open the eastern front, which is the Council owned land, as well as the link route through to the southern access as part of a wider package of infrastructure improvements, which will include land raising, drainage and

utilities to prepare this part of the site for housing development. The pace of delivery does depend on whether we, with our partners, can secure forward funding for the infrastructure works. As such, we are working closely with Homes England to secure a financial package, who are expected to make a decision in summer 2025. Meanwhile, design work for the spine route and wider masterplan is underway.

2) Cornhill Market and City Square

Funded by a £5.9 million investment from the government's Towns Fund programme through the 'Be Lincoln Town Deal', £1.9 million from City of Lincoln Council, and additional funding of £918,000 from Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) grant, the major regeneration works for the Cornhill Market were completed at the end of 2023.

The official opening took place on Friday 17th May 2024 – my first engagement as Portfolio Holder – with a weekend of events to celebrate the occasion. The Cornhill Market is home to a variety of traders, for some of whom, this is the first time they have operated a physical stall/shop as part of their business. The Market operates Wednesday to Sunday and offers later opening times tying into the nighttime economy offer in the city.

In September 2024, the Cornhill Market project won the Regeneration and Restoration Project of the Year award at the annual East Midland Property Dinner Awards 2024. Key to the project's success of obtaining the award was the preservation of the Market's original 1930s façade, signs, and clock while incorporating modern enhancements. The modernised space now features an indoor market with bespoke timber stalls, a food court, a new mezzanine, and upgraded public amenities. Additionally, 100% of the waste generated during construction was recycled, and efforts to reduce the project's carbon footprint, including car-sharing initiatives and walking to work, saved over 23 metric tons of CO₂. The refurbishment not only focused on positive environmental impact but also aimed to create a vibrant public space.

The redevelopment of City Square, a key public realm scheme in the city centre, has benefitted from repaving which was designed to accommodate outdoor stalls, al fresco dining and community events, enhancing social and commercial activity. City Square has hosted the following events since re-opening:

- Local 'Produce Pop-up' every Wednesday – local traders selling bread, cheese, fresh fish, seafood and meat, fruit and vegetables
- The Zone – a pop-up youth space for 11-18 years to coincide with the summer holidays, providing music lessons, physical activity, games and opportunities for social interaction
- Axe throwing for the Festival of History
- Lincoln Christmas Lights and Lincoln Ice Adventure

An events and markets plan for 2025 is currently being finalised, which will incorporate events led by the stallholders in the market.

Cornhill Market has featured in the local press extensively, and not always positively. As with any new venture, there have been some issues which we continue to work

through with our partners and stallholders. There has been regular communication with the stall holders and meetings with councillors and officers to plan for the future of the market. As the demands of consumers and businesses change, so does the market. Footfall across the city centre (matched in other parts of the country) has made it challenging for businesses of all sizes and types but we are committed to working with our stallholders to make Cornhill Market a success.

Town Fund

Following the award of £19 million of government Town Fund grant, the Council as the accountable body for the programme in Lincoln, has been working to support the Town Deal Board and the thirteen projects benefitting from the grant funding. The programme needs to be fully spent by March 2025 with delivery completed by March 2026 and we are currently on track to achieve this.

All thirteen projects in the programme have submitted business cases, completed the due diligence process and been approved by the Investment Committee. Summary documents for all thirteen projects have been approved by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (formerly the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC)) as conditioned in the offer of grant. All projects now have funding agreements in place; one project has confirmed it will not be proceeding. All projects have met the key milestones in respect of providing cost certainty to the programme, although one still has some work to be fully priced.

The following five projects were completed in 23/24 and successfully running and in delivery phase, using £9.12m of Town Fund grant towards a total cost of £15.1m.

- **The Drill** – the refurbishment and rebranding of the Drill Hall as a cultural event venue, bar and café was the first project to be completed and has been open for over two years. The project is physically completed, and all Town Deal funds have been drawn down. The Drill has performed well in terms of increasing ticket sales although community use is not as strong as anticipated in the business case and Lincoln College is looking at how to address this. The first cohort of performing arts students who are based at the Drill started in September 2023 with a further cohort starting in September 2024. The café is now run entirely by front of house and catering students, who are supported by Lincoln College employees, many of whom are undertaking their teaching qualifications to support student learning.
- **Hospitality, Events, Arts and Tourism (HEAT) Institute** – the completion of the purchase of the Old Bakery took place in October 2022. The restaurant reopened on in December 2022 and the rooms opened in April 2023. The restaurant, where students work in paid employment, opens Thursday to Sunday with curriculum activity taking place on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. The works to Sessions House were completed in February 2023 and this has greatly improved the quality of facilities available to hospitality students and the overall student experience. The number of students applying for catering and hospitality courses in 23/24 has increased which may have been positively influenced by the improved facilities at Sessions House and the opportunity to work at The Old Bakery.

- **Store of Stories** – works on Beaumont Manor were completed in January 2023 and the new community grocery opened in February 2023. Since the launch of the pilot project in October 2021 the grocery has signed up over 2,500 members. Use of the facilities has increased to an average of nearly 100 members per day with footfall more than this. The use of the cafe increased during the winter as the temperature dropped with many people using Beaumont Manor as a warm, welcome space.
- **Cornhill Market** – Cornhill Market officially opened in May 2024 for trading alongside a refurbished City Square. The Market has been included as a case study in the mid-term evaluation of the programme and this will be developed further to secure feedback from businesses both in the market and in the vicinity as well as visitors. A new restaurant, Turtle Bay, was built as part of the scheme and opened in September 2023.
- **Lincoln City Football Club Community Skills & Education Hub** – work commenced on site in May 2023 and was completed in May 2024. The Hub was officially opened in June 2024 and is now fully operational. All Town Deal funds were expended by the end of 2023/24.

The following two projects are in delivery and expected to complete in the next year. They are receiving £2.24m of Town Fund grant towards a total cost of £6.83m.

- **The Barbican Production & Maker Hub for Creative Industries** – the refurbishment of a grade 2 listed building for use as a creative Hub, which will provide floorspace and a platform for the establishment of start-up and fledgling businesses within the creative sector, in an environment where occupiers can access knowledge, skills and markets within a cluster of like-minded businesses. The grant funding agreement was agreed and work on site commenced in February 2024. Date of handover of the building to the University of Lincoln is planned to be January 2025, with the hub launching in March.

In the meantime, whilst the building work is completed, cultural sector support work funded in part by an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation grant and East Midland's Create Consortium is taking place at other University of Lincoln locations, including the Lincoln Arts Centre. The Barbican website and membership systems have been created in preparation for a launch of the membership programme in the Autumn.

- **Re-imagining Greyfriars** – the business case has been approved and pre-contract conditions signed off. Works commenced on site in September 2024 and practical completion is expected late 2025. An official opening is currently programmed for early 2026. On completion, the building will be managed by Heritage Lincolnshire and they are currently in the process of appointing a Visitor and Operations Manager.

Two further projects are also now in delivery and will continue throughout the programme. They have £2.77m of Town Fund grant towards a total cost of £4.23M.

- **Lincoln Be Smarter** – the project was formally launched at the beginning of 2023 and the grants panel has now met 6 times, approving 35 projects. The project target of supporting 30 businesses has been exceeded. In July 2024, Lincoln Be Smarter (LBS) partnered with Entrepreneur Connect to host an event for local businesses, focusing on artificial intelligence (AI).

Collaboration is ongoing with City of Lincoln Council to design a tailored 'Be Smarter' grants scheme for micro businesses. In addition, workshops are also being developed to cater to the hospitality and wellbeing sectors, ensuring that they address the unique challenges faced by these industries. Funding is to be reallocated across the project to enhance the grant funding pot to enable more businesses to be supported, this project will run until the end of the programme (March 2026).

- **Lincoln Connected** – a project aimed at improving digital access for visitors to the city. Proposals include the provision of a new website, management and wayfinding system along with an annual programme of art and cultural events that build on the success of Frequency Festival and be run each year until the end of the Programme. The project is progressing but has faced a few challenges and delays which has led to a very compressed delivery programme. A Creative Commissioning Advisory Group (CCAG) has also been established to support decision making and guidance across the Lincoln Connected Creative Commissioning Programme.

The new Visit Lincoln website launched in September 2024 and the wayfinding strategy has been completed. Implementation of the six wayfinding pilots is planned to take place in early 2025. Five cultural commissions have been delivered to date including Eulogy which formed part of the city's Halloween and Christmas offer. A 'Light Up Lincoln' event is being planned for completion by March 2025.

Three further projects are currently ongoing, with programmed delivery and completion for 25/26. They have £3.65m of Town Fund grant towards a total cost of £3.65m.

- **Sincil Bank Regeneration – Transport Improvements** – it has been agreed that Lincolnshire County Council will lead on the design and delivery of the Sincil Bank reprioritisation road scheme, whilst City of Lincoln Council will lead on the design and delivery of the gateways (greening/gateway enhancement elements) of the Sincil Bank proposals. The highway works commenced in September 2024 and the greenway enhancements will start in early 2025. Lincolnshire County Council will remain the grantee and will continue to be responsible for reporting progress and outputs into Town Board and Investment Sub-Committee.
- **Tentercroft Street** – during 23/24, the project, a feasibility study into the development of a brownfield site, had not proceeded to any great extent due to market challenges and the high risk associated with bringing forward this site in the current market. The programme for delivery has been updated with activity accelerating in 24/25. It has been agreed by Town Board that the residual funding from Wigford Way and the funding for Tentercroft Street will support a refresh of the City Centre Masterplan as well as delivering the

projected outputs for Tentercroft Street and identifying a preferred way forward for Wigford Way. Work will include stakeholder engagement plan to ensure a transparent and inclusive stakeholder engagement process.

- **Wigford Way** – an initial options report has been prepared for this area of the city which will now be taken forward as part of a new city centre masterplan for Lincoln. The options appraisal for Wigford Way has been completed all options require further traffic modelling work before being fully deliverable. This modelling needs to be considered in the context of wider infrastructure investment including Charterholme and the North Hykeham Relief Road. Residual funds are supporting the review of the City Centre Masterplan including identifying a preferred way forward for Wigford Way.

The following project is not proceeding, it was receiving £0.8m of Town Fund grant towards a total cost of £1m.

- **LSIP** - Lincoln Science and Innovation Park announced they would not be proceeding with their application. The allocated funding has come back to the programme for reallocation and a project adjustment request was submitted in late 2024.

3) UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)

The Council was awarded £2.8 million of UKSPF grant in 2022. This fund was designed to help pride in place and increase life chances for communities through investment in the three pillars of: community and place; supporting local business; and people and skills. Our delivery plan was approved in January 2023 and in March 2023, Executive approved the first projects for delivery by March 2025. The projects are a mixture of proposals from local organisations including previously successful initiatives who's funding no longer exists and those commissioned by the Council to directly address specific needs identified from analysis of the extensive evidence base. As of March 2024, £2,561,069 (89% of the total funding) has been committed, with funding agreements in place and delivery underway across all these projects.

- **Cost of Living Support Programme:** provides support for residents in most need arising from the cost-of-living crisis. The programme is being led by City of Lincoln Council's Revenues and Benefits team, working with local partners including Bridge Church and Acts Trust. The programme is in delivery and allocated expenditure and outputs are on target to be spent and delivered by March 2025. Projects currently include:
 - Cost-of-living community support grant scheme
 - Research commission into cost-of-living support need and access in local non-English speaking communities
 - Voucher scheme for the Lincoln Community Grocery
 - Christmas sacks project
 - Christmas hamper project

- Fuel voucher scheme administered to those suffering from fuel poverty by local community partners
- Supporting the Lincolnshire Financial Inclusion partnership
- Project Compass
- Gap funding to support individuals with household items not covered through the Household Support Fund.
- **Community Grant Scheme Project:** our small grants scheme, City of Lincoln Community Chest, has supported 124 projects across the city. Thanks to our match funders Investors in Lincoln, up to £25,000 was available in each of the 11 wards across the city providing small grants that support and deliver the community priorities in those areas. Over 60 local people including Councillors were involved in the decision-making process for the grants scheme. A final round of grant allocation was completed in summer 2024 and all expenditure and outputs are on target for completion by March 2025.

The grants programme has also facilitated some collaborative working between COLC and the University of Lincoln's School of Creative Arts students who have been following funded groups across the city and documenting their work and projects. In January, a film screening to share this work and celebrate the grants programme is scheduled.

- **No Wrong Door Project:** funding to support the Acts Trust's to develop their existing bespoke triage software, the Restore System, making it accessible to all organisations in the Lincoln area. Organisations can use the triage tools through any web browser on any device to guide beneficiaries through a questionnaire, to develop bespoke personalised support plans, listing all local services relevant to the individuals need.

The Acts Trust provide systems training as well as coaching/befriending training and continue to administrate the system to ensure up to date information is maintained. It is expected that many beneficiaries are economically inactive, socially excluded, low-skilled (including life skills) and many will also be vulnerable to poverty and have accessed some form of food aid.

The No Wrong Door project is led by the Acts Trust working in partnership with various community organisations to enable consistent triage/needs assessment via the Restore System. Funding, which is due to be spent by March 2025, has supported the employment of a project officer to develop the system and train partners in its effective use.

- **Community Hubs Programme – Feasibility and pilot development work:** this includes an energy study into Bud Robinson Community centre; a needs assessment/feasibility study into Ermine Library; and Ermine Library school holiday extension project. Funding has already been provided to enable Ermine Library to extend its opening times in July and August, providing an important community resource for children during the summer holidays. A scoping report to identify wider deliverable proposals is nearly complete which will identify

wider community need in the area and how local assets can be best used to meet those needs.

- **Ermine Community Hub (Joint Venture):** the project is being developed through a consortium of partners led by Bishop Grosseteste University and Alive Church. Proposals include capital and revenue expenditure for improved community facilities and use at Sudbrooke Drive Community Centre and the improvement and extended use of the outside space at Ermine Library. Refurbishment works at Sudbrooke Drive are progressing well and a new meeting room has been formed from two small rooms. The extension for the new storeroom is progressing well and new doors and windows will be fitted in the new year to improve the energy efficiency of the building and provide a more welcoming environment. In addition, a new set of toilets including a second disabled toilet and alterations to existing provisions, will be installed. The main meeting room will be transformed into a café/meeting space to welcome the community in through the work with Alive Church. Delivery plans and funding agreements are in place for community development and delivery is underway. An initial community project steering group was held in August 2024 to scope out terms of reference.
- **Moorland Community Hub:** this project is being led by The Voluntary Centre Services (VCS) and the capital works carried out by COLC. The project will deliver a programme of community activity focussed at Moorland Community Centre, with the aim of fostering community involvement and increasing access to local services and activities. Phase one works to Moorland Community Centre have been completed with 2 new kitchens fitted, remodelling works to the meeting rooms to form a meeting space and an office, security measures to the rear of the building, new lighting and electric heaters. Phase two will be carried out in the new year which will see a new ceiling in the sports hall making it a more inviting space to book following an increase in bookings to the centre through Voluntary Centre Services and local groups.
- **Our Community Bakery:** support for a community baking facility based in Abbey Ward, which aims to develop young people struggling to access active employment through training and support. The Project is being led by Abbey Access Centre and currently being considered to support capital costs.
- **CoLab Futuremakers:** the project is for a pilot 'Future Maker' education programme (aimed at 14-19 yrs) and Changemaker Academy (all ages) providing pre-incubator accredited courses including Level 1 Enterprising Skills and Employability and Level 2 Diploma in Enterprise and Entrepreneurship. These courses will support people to set up creative businesses in readiness for them to expand into local incubator and accelerator support schemes. The project will kick start an ongoing post UKSPF programme of level 1 to level 6 accredited courses and provide incubator space for emerging businesses in the creative industry sector.
- **Age UK:** revenue support for Age UK to provide additional support to elderly residents across the city. Funding for 3 new staff and cost of activities to extend Age UK's befriending and support services for old people within Lincoln.

Primarily based at their centre at Park Street but including working with VSO, Alive Church and BGU on outreach engagement in the priority areas of Moorland and Ermine.

- **Better Together (B2G):** the provision of a tailor made, person-centred, flexible programme of mentoring and coaching (DP), therapeutic garden-based activities (GS), volunteering (GS & AAT) and training, work experience and support into employment (AAT) aimed at people with health conditions that are limiting their wellbeing and liveability.
- **Lincolnshire Growth Hub:** funding support towards continuing the Lincolnshire Growth Hub to provide the continuity in business support developed previously through European funding. This ensures Lincoln businesses have access to a dedicated Lincoln advisor within the Growth Hub. Revenue provided by UKSPF directly impacts the intervention targeted at support measures to drive employment growth.
- **Business Advisor and Business Support:** we have appointed a Business Support Advisor to build capacity in supporting Lincoln Businesses in key growth. A key aim of the post is supporting those who may struggle to start up and/or manage a business, as well as to look at connecting developing and established businesses from the priority sectors to build networks / clusters for economic advantage. This advisor works closely with the Growth Hub and local organisations to maximise opportunities and minimise duplication which informs the Business Support Strategy, for implementation in 2025.
- **EV Training Academy:** a funding contribution towards the capital costs for a local business to develop a new Electric Vehicle training academy in response to supply chain demand. The capital works are now completed, and training has commenced.
- **The Restore Programme:** funding to support the Acts Trust Restore Programme, a programme of training support designed to empower those aged 18 and older to understand and overcome issues of poverty. The Restore Programme consists of course modules designed to support those experiencing poverty, particularly those people who are economically inactive and those with mental health challenges. It also targets people who have had to use foodbanks within the last 6 months, a key indicator of poverty, and engage with referrals from multiple organisations across the city using the Restore triage tool.
- **Make an Entrance:** support for a local mat-making company, Make an Entrance, piloting a business bursary training scheme targeted at young people struggling to access the labour market.
- **UN SDG:** Local Sustainable Development Goals Pioneers project is dedicated to educating, collaborating, and transforming our local community into a beacon of sustainability and supporting entrepreneurial skills development to accelerate our commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), the project is being delivered by a local community interest company, Creative Rebel.

- **NEAT Employment:** funding to support the provision of training and a network of support for 18–29-year-olds for ten months in advance of a three-year funding bid to the National Community Lottery. The Project is being led by Network and is to enable continuity of an ongoing project supporting young adults access the labour market in advance of further funding expected from the National Community Lottery in 2025.

4) Growth Conference

In November 2023 the City Council hosted Lincoln's Growth Conference for the first time since 2019 at Bishop Grosseteste University. The event was well attended by over 150 partners and stakeholders from across the city, representing all sectors.

The theme of the conference was 'delivering a sustainable and inclusive future for Lincoln' and set the objective of bringing together both public and private partners to reflect on what had been achieved in the last three years, changes across the city since the pandemic, current positions/issues, setting out delivery aspirations for the next 18 months to 2025 and a forward look to 2030 ambitions.

The dynamic event offered interactive engagement, themed video footage and presentations from a variety of speakers on key areas of focus such as community, place, climate change, housing and the economy. These presentations provided key information that set the scene for the afternoon workshop discussions. Workshops were facilitated by Council and partner representatives with specific focus areas as follows:

- Tackling Lincoln's health issues
- Re-writing our city centre masterplan
- New strategic housing plan
- Effectively engaging young people in shaping the city

The conference received overwhelming praise for its success in bringing people together to refocus on partnership working and shared ambitions for our city and provided a good basis to start the Vision 2030 process.

5) Regeneration, Innovation and Investment

The council continues to play a key role in supporting the local economy. Alongside millions of pounds worth of public investment in the city, we work with a variety of partners to help them receive funding and facilitate transformation in their businesses.

- **Sincil Bank** – the regeneration of Sincil Bank is our corporate neighbourhood focus and reported on by other portfolio holders. The Town Fund and UKSPF have both been utilised to support improvement schemes in the Sincil Bank area, while other resources have been used to deliver schemes such as the Hermit Mews development. We have completed the build of 11 new, high-quality social rented council homes with an improved amenity space around them on a former council garage site. This includes some replacement parking

for let. All properties are now occupied, and the scheme also includes improved waste collection facilities for surrounding residents.

- **Managed Workspace** – the Council operates both Greetwell Place (79 offices for mixed use) and the creative industries workspace at The Terrace (a mix of 54 offices and workshops).
 - **Greetwell Place** - currently 96% let having been let at 99% on average in the past 12 months, with two of the vacant rooms under offer and one going out to the waiting list which currently stands at 30.
 - **The Terrace** - currently 94% let having been let at 95% in the past 12 months, with two of the vacant rooms under offer and the other remaining one has gone out to the waiting list which currently stands at 49.
 - **Think Tank** – our innovation centre which is 100% occupied and currently managed by the University of Lincoln. The concession contract has ended and we are now in procurement process for this.
- **Lincoln Science & Innovation Park** – since Lincolnshire Co-op and the University of Lincoln created LSIP as a joint venture in 2013, the Council following on from the building of the Think Tank in 2008/9 has continued to provide support for this new innovation cluster as a key part of the economic growth of both the city and Greater Lincolnshire. This year our business rate relief scheme has benefitted a range of these new high-growth and highly innovative businesses. LSIP's total investment to date has now topped over £36m into the Lincoln economy from a range of funding sources alongside its own investment and created over 180 new jobs. Furthermore, the NHS has made a considerable research investment alongside a number of inward investment businesses and start-ups from the defence technology sector resulting in both high-value jobs, skills and investment in the city.
- **Mosaic** – Lincolnshire Co-op's further investment in the recently opened phase 2 of the Digital Hub at Mosaic is welcomed. A number of businesses from both our workspace at the Terrace and the Think Tank innovation centre, operated for us by the University of Lincoln, have expanded into Mosaic to further support the growth of the digital sector and free up space for new start-up and small businesses.
- **Engineering Sector** – the Council is once again sponsoring Spark Engineering Festival which will take place in July 2025. Alongside this we are providing events management resource to help with planning of the event. This event is a great platform on which to promote the engineering sector as a fantastic career opportunity for young people and to showcase the range of world-class businesses and skills that we have to offer.
- **Construction Sector** – we remain committed to working with our local contractors and supply chain partners as we bring forward developments across Lincoln. City of Lincoln Council played a key role at the Lincolnshire

Excellence in Construction event in November 2024 and meet regularly with sector companies to ensure they are aware of the opportunities on offer.

- **Business Enquiry Service** – the Council continues to provide a business enquiry service via our experienced team of advisors. We are currently dealing with 95 live ongoing enquiries ranging across sectors from business start-ups and expansions to relocations and inward investment. The team work with a wide range of local partners and organisations to ensure the right support is received. In the past 12 months, we have made nearly 700 business contacts, of which we have directly supported over 80 businesses with advice and property searches.

6) Tourism and Marketing

The City of Lincoln Council plays a key role in the tourism and marketing sector of the city's economy. There have been significant changes in how the tourism sector works post-pandemic, with organisations having to adapt following a national review led by Nick de Bois (2021) into the destination management organisations framework.

- **Destination Lincolnshire** - The 2021 De Bois Review commissioned by Visit England identified that coming out of COVID the destination management structure was fragile, fragmented and patchy in its effectiveness and required a new approach. This new approach is a tiered structure that creates a national portfolio of Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) at different levels. For Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland this means a new LVEP (Local Visitor Economy Partnership). Destination Lincolnshire has emerged from a range of discussions facilitated by the Visit Lincoln Board and the Greater Lincolnshire LEP Visitor Economy Board as the LVEP. All partners, including ourselves, across Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland have therefore agreed to support an application with a robust business plan to DCMS for Destination Lincolnshire to become the accredited LVEP for the area.
- **Visit Lincoln** – Visit Lincoln, now acting as a marketing brand for the city, has been critical in supporting the revitalisation of the visitor economy post Covid as it was one of the hardest hit sectors. The work done to identify and target the visitor profile has enabled the Town Fund investment into the Lincoln Connected project.
- **Be Lincoln** – Following the council's investment in the creation of the Be Lincoln brand to support the wider promotion of the city, we have over the past year continued to use and promote it in print, digital and social media formats as part of Town Fund and now UKSPF. We are developing plans to continue this across other opportunities nationally.
- **Key Cities** – Lincoln continues to be a member of the Key Cities network that raises our national profile and enables us to contribute and benefit from a range of policy development and best practice for urban areas that supports delivery of our inclusive economic growth ambitions. By working alongside councils who govern over a similar size/demography as the city council does in Lincoln, we can share best practise and promote what the city has to offer. As Portfolio Holder, I have attended two events hosted by Key Cities; the Local Government

Association conference in Harrogate which focused on devolution and a Key Cities conference in Bradford which focused on events and culture's place in a local economy.

- Tourism Excellence Awards – accredited by Visit England, we have also been shortlisted for the following awards at the Greater Lincolnshire and Rutland Tourism Excellence Awards 2024-25, to be announced in February 2025:
 - 'Event/Festival of the Year' Award for the Festival of History.
 - The 'Individual Going Places' Award for our Events and Culture Officer, Lucy Russon.
 - The 'Outstanding Contribution Award' for our Lincoln Visitor Information Centre Manager, Michele Simms.

7) Events in Lincoln

Events in Lincoln, is the brand for the events delivered by the City Council's events team. The overarching aim being to support the vibrancy of the city centre and uphill area by providing an all-year-round cultural experience for visitors and residents that cements Lincoln as a key destination locally, regionally and nationally. The events that the Council's events team have delivered over the last year include:

- Lincoln Festival of History: 3 – 5 May 2024
- Lincoln Live and Live Unplugged: 31 August – 1 September 2024
- Lincoln Christmas Lights: 28 November 2024 – 6 January 2025
- Lincoln Ice Adventure: 7 – 8 December 2024

The team have also provided financial support to:

- Lincoln Cycle GP – 12 May 2024
- Lincoln Pride – 17 August 2024
- Steampunk – 24 – 26 August 2024
- The Big Spook including the inflatable Monsters (Halloween in Lincoln events) – 19 – 26 October 2024
- Small events grant programme (details below)

They have also supported or facilitated several other events through the provision of advice and guidance.

Festival of History

The Early May Bank Holiday saw the city's first Festival of History. It was a three-day, immersive festival, developed and led by the Events In Lincoln team with an aim to

engage residents and visitors in a variety of reenactments, living history, tours, lectures and displays to showcase the city's rich depth and breadth of history, our places and buildings and the stories that go with them.

It was aimed at multiple audiences from young children to the more serious history tourist, with sufficient content for more than a day's visit, encouraging people to shop, eat and stay in the city. It is designed to have the capacity to be developed and grow over the years and to encourage other partners, groups and venues to come on board. To facilitate this, we developed an overarching brand and graphics that others could use and worked with Destination Lincolnshire to package the marketing of the event. The city council's content was free to access in the public realm as was much of the activity. Some partners charged a fee to cover the cost of additional activity they'd put on. Below is a list of some of the activity that was put on during the event:

- The Viking Quarter in Cornhill Square – battling Vikings, a coin mint, shield making and some living history.
- Multi-history reenactments and living history in Lincoln Castle.
- Roman market and living history area in Castle Square.
- Roman gladiator battle zone in St Paul in the Bail.
- The Lincoln antique and Makers' Market in Castle Hill car park.
- The Travelling Medieval Market in St Mary le Wigford church.
- Educational archaeological dig pits and axe throwing on City Square.
- Archaeological display from Allen Archaeology in the Waterside centre.
- Viking reenactments and the Roman dodecahedron at the Lincoln Museum.
- Talks from Lincolnshire Society of History and Archaeological in Lincoln Museum.
- Tours of the Guildhall and Stonebow and Posterngate.
- Lectures in the Guildhall from a Professor of Medieval Studies.
- Victorian living history at the Museum of Lincolnshire Life.
- Mystery plays which coincided with their re-opening weekend event at the Medieval Bishops Palace.
- Display of historic coffee artifacts at Stokes on High Bridge.
- Children's medieval banquet activities at the Cathedral Education centre.

The event was incredibly popular and has the potential for growth and proved to be the anchor event on the calendar.

Some figures from the feedback questionnaire were:

- 86% of those completing the feedback questionnaire were satisfied or very satisfied with the event with a further 10% neutral.
- The most common method of hearing about the event was social media (60%)
- The most common age category of participants was 35-44 followed by 45-54 category.
- The average spend of those who answered the question was £87 per person.
- The most common answer for least favourite aspect of the event is the charges applied to access the Castle grounds.
- 73% of attendees were local residents, 23% were non-local visitors and the remaining 4% were university students.
- 70% of survey participants stated the Festival of History was their main reason for visiting Lincoln city centre.

Lincoln Live

This was the second year of the event. Lincoln Live is a two-day live music event held in Cornhill Square with the music curated by BBC Music Introducing East Midlands, featuring local artists. This year saw the addition of an 'unplugged' stage in St Paul in the Bail. The Cornhill stage provided artists an opportunity to play on a large stage with professional sound and lighting, while the 'unplugged' stage was a smaller acoustic type stage with more relaxed music, complimenting the area. It was a great success with high quality music and fantastic local talent on show, with thousands coming to watch the artists over the weekend.

Of those filling in a feedback questionnaire over the weekend:

- 91% were very satisfied or satisfied with the event and also
- 91% saying the event enhanced their visit to the city centre.

Christmas Lights 2024

This was the second year of the Christmas lights following our £150k investment in 2023 which saw over 95% of the over the street lights redesigned and replaced and the delivery of two 'WOW!' factor lighting installations – the 16metre long comet on City Square and the illuminated central arch at Exchequergate Arch as well as icicle type lighting hung from guttering on the bus station, Central Car Park and around Castle Square. We produced and promoted a lights trail map to promote the several different large lighting installations across the city centre.

Lincoln Ice Adventure

The Ice Adventure saw the return of the ice sculptures across the city centre and uphill. Following feedback from last year we reduced the number of sculptures slightly from

20 to 16 but had more of the larger size sculptures including a live carving of a 2m high Lincoln Imp. 5 of these sculptures were sponsored by local businesses. The weekend also had a variety of Christmas entertainment around the Bail area, a traditional carousel and steam organ and the FFN/Rotary Club gluhwein stall. Unfortunately, the weekend saw Storm Darragh sweep across the country including a number of weather warnings so regrettably, despite a very busy Saturday morning footfall was comparatively quiet for the rest of weekend across the whole of the city centre.

Some figures from the feedback questionnaire were -

- 92% of those completing the feedback questionnaire were satisfied or very satisfied with the event.
- The most common method of hearing about the event was social media (59.7%).
- The most common age of participants is 35-44, closed followed by 45-54.
- The average spend of those who answered the question was £114.30 per person (this rose to £152.88 for those visiting from out of the area).
- The most common answer given for the least liked aspect of the event was 'the weather'. This answer accounted for 68% of responses to this question.
- 56% of attendees were local residents, 31% were non-local visitors and the remaining 13% were university students.

Social Media Statistics

Promoting our events on social media in a variety of ways both before and during the event is essential to ensure we market the event, encourage attendance and positive engagement and promote the Events in Lincoln brand, the City of Lincoln Council and the city as a place to visit. There is strong evidence that a diverse event programme contributes positively to a potential visitor's perception of whether to visit a destination or not.

While social media statistics don't tell us directly whether someone attended an event, they are a very useful indicator of the engagement with the event and the city.

Event	Instagram impressions	Facebook reach	Facebook and Instagram interactions	Reel views
Festival of History	58k	465k	14k	50k
Lincoln Live	37k	294k	14.5k	8.5k
Ice Adventure	79k	371k	6k	32k

The total number of followers of the Events in Lincoln profile on Facebook stands at 46,332 following the Ice Adventure campaign and nearly 5,000 on Instagram.

Footfall at Events

As most of the events we deliver are free to enter events, with no ticketing point and held across multiple locations it is very difficult to calculate exact footfall for those specifically visiting an event. Also, given the nature of our events this wouldn't necessarily be the best measure as even those who haven't specifically visited an event may have had their visit enhanced by our event and chose to revisit the city, the High Street shopping area or the historic Bailgate area again based on that experience. Ultimately encouraging repeat visits – therefore repeat spend somewhere else in the year – is an important outcome from promoting our city as a visitor and tourist destination.

To measure footfall we therefore use the head counting function on specific CCTV cameras in the city centre to get an overall footfall figure in the city centre.

Event	2023	2024
Festival of History	n/a	138,827
Lincoln Live	58,283	101,120
Lincoln Ice Adventure	126,404	TBC
Christmas Lights Switch-on	c.7,000	c.7,000
Christmas period (1 st to 31 st Dec)	815,083	TBC
Total	1,006,770	246,947

Events and Creative Grants Programme

The Lincoln Events and Creative Grants programme was trialled in 2024. It aimed to provide support and investment to new or emerging small-scale events, festivals and performances to support footfall and economic growth within our city centre, supporting the key objective of our Events in Lincoln programme. Grants of between £1000-£2,500 were available through a simple application process.

We received thirteen applications by the deadline in March 2024, of which four met the criteria and applied for the maximum grant of £2,500.

Two of the four events have been delivered successfully:

- Lincoln Dance completed 20 sessions in 5 locations across Summer 2024 engaging 226 participants.
- Michaelgate Uphill Cycling Challenge was held on 11th May as a development event as part of the Cycle GP.

Two of the four events have not taken place and have therefore not received any grant funding.

Overall Budget

The expected outturn of the Events in Lincoln programme is £265,738.

8) Infrastructure

All Inclusive Economic Growth requires high quality, accessible and effective infrastructure. Along with access to affordable funding, poor infrastructure is frequently cited as the biggest barrier to business growth. Whilst the Council does not directly deliver any of this infrastructure, we still have an important role to place in influencing and facilitating investment.

- **Strategic Infrastructure** – working with local authority partners we have actively contributed to updating the Greater Lincolnshire Strategic Infrastructure Delivery Plan setting out the key priorities and opportunities for the area.
- **Transport** – working with local partners we actively support investment in the transport network including through the provision of the bus station and car parks; directing appropriate external funding into improvements in areas like Sincil Bank and developing infrastructure as seen with Charterholme (formerly WGC).
- **Digital Infrastructure** – as part of our digital city ambition, we have been working with partners to attract investment into upgrading digital connection speeds, coverage, accessibility and affordability.
 - Homes and businesses in the Abbey, Glebe, Minster, Castle, Carholme, Hartsholme and Birchwood wards of Lincoln are now able to access faster and more reliable broadband thanks to a new digital network rollout by CityFibre. CityFibre started the Lincoln build in 2022, making the city one of a growing number of locations in the UK to benefit from a full fibre upgrade.
 - Full fibre networks use 100% fibre optics to carry data at very fast speeds. This gives users speeds of up to 2.5 Gbps for upload and download, near limitless bandwidth and reliable connectivity and allows the residents of Lincoln the opportunity to connect to new network providers allowing choice on cost and benefiting from full fibre-enabled broadband.
- **Utilities** – the council works with statutory authorities to ensure that we undertake any required service diversions to maintain supplies to our communities. Over the past year we have been actively engaged with National Grid, Anglian Water, Virgin Media, Kcom, City Fibre, BT Openreach as well as the Environment Agency and the IDBs. We have also engaged utilities consultants SMS Energy to assess feasibility and costs in respect of the new Charterholme site.

9) Planning Policy

Following adoption of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan in April 2023, the focus of the past 12 months has been on the implementation of the plan, the production of supporting guides and documents, the establishment of a robust monitoring framework and roll-out of a Central Lincolnshire Design Guide.

Since the plan was adopted, the Central Lincolnshire team together with officers from City of Lincoln Council have produced several helpful documents to aid both planning applicants and planning officers providing guidance and support to ensure the correct information is provided when applications are submitted. Most notable is guidance produced on biodiversity net gain and climate change as these are the two areas where new requirements for information is needed to be submitted by planning applicants.

A Central Lincolnshire wide design guide is being developed with high-level principles and priorities to be publicly consulted on in spring 2025. A comprehensive monitoring framework has been developed to help support officers and provide a consistent approach to this important area across the Central Lincolnshire partnership.

I was really pleased to see the local plan was awarded the East Midlands Best Plan of the Year at the Royal Town Planning Institute annual awards in June last 2024 and was nominated in the Best Plan of the Year category at the RTPI National Finals in November 2024. This is testament to the hard work and dedication of our Central Lincolnshire planning colleagues.

10) Development Management

Development management continues to provide an excellent service that both safeguards the built environment from inappropriate development whilst allowing important growth and investment in the city.

Some of the schemes approved in the last 12 months (not already noted in the report) include a new Endoscopy Unit at Lincoln County Hospital, a Community Diagnostic Centre at the LSIP site, a new housing scheme was approved on Boultham Park Road and other major housing schemes such as the Student Village at BGU.

The team is now fully resourced with vacancies filled in the last 12 months. The service continues to exceed the nationally prescribed minimum standards and appeal performance remains incredibly strong. The percentage of applications approved also remains high at 94%. This highlights both the quality of decisions taken by the service, as well as the level of negotiation undertaken by officers to ensure the best outcome is achieved, with a solution-based approach.

This service has a very strong reputation for being positive and proactive, both locally and beyond, with an emphasis on negotiation both at pre-application stage and during the formal application process. Outside of the consultation process for each application, complaints about the service itself are minimal especially when considering the team deal with around 1000 applications per year.

Work volumes in the team remain consistent with previous years although changes to the planning system nationally over the past year, such as the requirement of development to achieve Biodiversity Net Gain and the upcoming mandatory Building Safety Levy, makes delivering viable development more challenging in a place like Lincoln. Compromises in securing elements such as affordable housing, NHS and school contributions will be inevitable, but our Development Management team are well positioned to play their role in meeting these challenges.

Central Government have published a response to their consultation on a range of changes to the NPPF which is primarily aimed at boosting and accelerating the delivery of housing and will also likely result in an increase in planning fees to ensure planning services remain well-resourced to meet the challenges ahead.

11) Building Control

Building Control is a highly challenging sector, partly due to the aging profile of the workforce, but more significantly due to the implementation of a mandatory accreditation process for all officers in both public and private sectors. This has expedited the retirement of a huge number of senior experienced personnel across the sector, and this has also affected our own team, although the two remaining officers are both fully accredited. Despite the challenges this very small team is coping well and because both officers are accredited, we are better placed than many local authorities that still don't have accredited officers and are therefore struggling to meet their statutory duty. As a consequence of the pressing challenges in the sector, we are assessing our options for delivering building control to ensure we continue to provide this statutory service.

12) Heritage

Lincoln is renowned for its rich heritage and the city council, as the custodian of these assets, has worked hard to preserve, restore and enhance our heritage. Most of the work we have carried out has been a project as a part of the High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ).

- **The Barbican** – a landmark building at one of the main entrance points to the city, the Barbican was originally constructed as a Gentleman's Club and became the Albion Hotel in 1876. It has been vacant for many years, suffering from decay and becoming unsightly and detrimental to the overall appearance of the area. The building is in the process of being transformed, having been listed Grade II as part of the HSHAZ project. The deterioration has been stopped, work is underway to restore previous damage, and it will soon be given a new lease of life as the Lincoln Creative Hub in partnership with the University of Lincoln and Lincolnshire Co-op.

Works to the building have so far included cleaning the modern blue paint of the portico entrance, removing the black paint from the stone cornice and soffit, refurbishing the sash windows, cleaning brick and stone details, and repairing and reinstating the Corinthian capitals on the entrance. The exterior works are almost completed except for the restoration of the plinth and internally considerable decorative plaster repairs and revealing of historic ceilings have

been carried out with the handover to the University of Lincoln scheduled before summer 2025.

- **St Mary Le Wigford** – the grade I listed church of St Mary Le Wigford is located at a busy intersection on the High Street and forms an important gateway. The loss of the majority of the historic boundary wall meant that the curtilage bled out into the public highway. It was also blighted by an outdated hard landscaped public realm which was a trip hazard. This project saw the rebuilding of the lost historic boundary wall to reinstate the churchyard enclosure and enhance the setting of the church. By replacing the landscaping with grass, we have created a small green, providing respite for the general public which is distinct from the urban context.
- **St Mary's Guildhall** – St Mary's Guildhall and its attendant buildings date from around 1157 and are a remarkable collection of high-status medieval buildings in Lincoln's lower High Street. They have variously been used as the guildhall for the powerful St Marys Guild, a Bluecoat school, maltings and a builder's yard. These buildings have been unused and vacant for decades and were at significant risk due to their dilapidated state. They are also a scheduled monument, a grade I listed building, and therefore a priority project for urgent repairs. The HSHAZ has financed several works to the buildings, including new buttresses to the north range which have enabled the removal of the iron ties which impeded the full use of its ground floor, replacement of the rotten wall plates, a new roof to the Norman House using handmade replicas of the 18th century tiles. We have also commissioned a robust feasibility and options appraisal to consider how to achieve a sustainable future for the building. The yard and the north range are now being rented out to a heritage crafts firm who carry out historic restoration projects throughout the East Midlands and also provide training days.
- **Cornhill Market** – formerly known as Central Market, Cornhill Market is a grade II listed building and like many market buildings nationally, had been in decline for a number of years. A review in 2014 by the National Association of British Market Authorities identified that change was necessary to achieve sustainability over the long term. The HSHAZ programme has provided grants for the refurbishment and repair of the market which has included glazing the blind arcade – providing natural light from City Square and Sincil Street – better connecting the market with the townscape. Other works included relaying the terrazzo floor, repairing the perimeter historic stalls and designing a more coherent and cohesive stall design and layout.
- **Shopfronts** – the HSHAZ programme has continued to fund an extensive programme of repair and restoration of historic shopfronts, primarily 38-44 Sincil Street and 8-10 St Mary's Street. The Sincil Street works have identified and preserved Lincoln's only surviving 19th century "back-to-back" housing, and provided for new sash windows, repairs to the roof fabric, chimneys and dormers, and revealed lost elements including a glazed brick stallriser. The row of cottages between 8-10 St Mary's Street were representative of historically poor townscape in this location and in fact were at serious risk of demolition and redevelopment. Through the HSHAZ funding these buildings have been

transformed, including removal of the modern dormers, the installation of new windows and of course new shopfronts. The HSHAZ shopfront scheme is now completed and funded the restoration and reinstatement of 11 shopfronts in the grant area.

- **Heritage Lincolnshire** – we are in partnership with Heritage Trust for Lincolnshire to deliver 40-42 Michaelgate. This previously single property, let in the past to the National Trust as a holiday home, has been returned to two separate dwellings. A grant from the Architectural Heritage Fund and Historic England's 'Building at Risk' project has financed a comprehensive scheme of restoration and repairs, most notably to the timber frame of 40 Michaelgate where death watch beetle, hidden behind modern cementitious panels, had severely damaged the medieval frame. Other works includes new sash windows, a renewed dormer, a brick buttress to support the timber frame and a small extension. The timber beams have been treated in the traditional manner with a lime wash which will help deter future insect infestation. Heritage Trust for Lincolnshire will manage the two holiday once complete.

The Harlequin on Steep Hill has also benefitted from an Architectural Heritage Fund grant to finance some initial 'opening up' works to better assess areas and causes of deterioration in the building. This was a lesson learnt from 40-42 Michaelgate where the scope of timber repair far exceeded expectations. Works will begin in early 2025 and the condition of the timbers and overall structure will be assessed by specialists as part of that process.

13) Archaeology

- **White Hart** – a proposal for a new swimming pool at the White Hart hotel was approved in June 2024. It was informed by extensive evaluation excavations that revealed evidence of previous phases of medieval buildings along the former frontage of Eastgate. The construction of the pool will be preceded by a full archaeological excavation, and it is anticipated that further discoveries will be made that will provide a much greater understanding of the development of this part of uphill Lincoln during the medieval period.
- **Judges Lodgings** – an extension to the existing Judges Lodgings building and a new building in the car park to its rear has been granted. The evaluation excavation undertaken prior to the grant of permission demonstrated that at least part of the new building will be located within the former medieval defensive ditch of Lincoln Castle. An archaeological excavation will be undertaken to ensure that this important feature is recorded and, where possible, preserved during the construction project. It is likely that information about how the ditch came to be filled in over time will be recovered.
- **Greyfriars** – the regeneration of the former Greyfriars building has made a number of archaeological interventions necessary. Within the building itself works to reduce the floor level have revealed evidence of industrial uses from the 17th to 19th centuries, as well as providing an insight into the configuration of the building during the medieval period, when it formed part of the wider Franciscan Friary complex. Outside the building, preparations for the

construction of the new extension have given an opportunity to see and record parts of the Roman city's defences.

- **Haw Hill** – the second season of the Bishop Grosseteste University training excavation took place in the summer. The main trench focused on the central part of the hill, and it went on to prove to be a very productive location. Remnants of a probable church building from the medieval period were found, and associated with this were at least seven burials. One of these was evidently a priest to a judge from the items buried with him, and several of the others were young children. Analysis of the skeletons is ongoing and it is hoped that next year's excavation will shed further light on this fascinating site.
- **Malandry leper Hospital** – following an interesting lecture on medieval human remains from Dr. Samantha Tipper of Anglia Ruskin University, the possibility of undertaking a community archaeology project on the site of the former leper hospital is being considered. Subject to further approval from the relevant bodies this could be undertaken in summer 2025, and would potentially provide valuable information about the extent and survival of the little known part of Lincoln's history.
- **Arches for HERs Launch** – in September 2024, the Heritage team was invited to speak the Royal Geographical Society in London to celebrate the joint launch of the Greater London online heritage database, and of the new Arches for HERs software platform that powers it. This is the culmination of an eight-year partnership between the Getty Conservation Institute, Historic England and City of Lincoln Council to create a new open source system for recording both built and archaeological heritage, which it is hoped will be used by an increasing number of local government Historic Environment Record offices.

Following the launch of Arches for HERs, the heritage team is working to enable the city's Arcade online heritage database to be upgraded to the new standard. This will allow faster processing of requests, management of officers' casework, and better accessibility for the general public.

- **New Website Heritage Pages** – once the Arcade system has been upgraded, the heritage pages of the city council's website will be refreshed. This will ensure that the most up to date information about the city's heritage services will be available to the public, as well as providing information about how to work with heritage through the planning process.

14) Car Parks and Parking

Our car parking services are a crucial in supporting the role of the city centre as a place to work, live and visit. The council also manages the permits for on-street parking in the Resident Parking Scheme areas.

The councils' car parks are also vitally important in terms of revenue income to the council. Over the years we have invested heavily in these car parks, and results from the recent citizens panel questionnaire show that 65% of residents driving into the city centre prefer to use city council car parks. Broadgate has seen investment with the introduction of space widening to the benefit of all users. Spaces are now similar in

width to those at Central Car Park and the feedback from this has been positive. Work will take place at Central Car Park in early 2025 to add railings to the entrance, refresh the lining, improve pedestrian crossings and install a new payment system to further improve the facility.

Parking income, including pay and display, season tickets and Parking Contravention Notices (PCN's) for 2023/24 was £6.4 million against an income target of £5.9 million. This is a major achievement with all the associated pressures of the cost-of-living crisis and the impacts on the city centre. Utilisation of each car park is monitored closely, as well as the utilisation and pricing strategies of our city centre competitors to ensure the service remains agile and in step with changes in the economy as well as any significant events in the city.

Following the creation of the new zones within Boutham Ward and Park Ward in September 2023, surveys were carried out over the summer on streets to the south and west of the High Street after local councillors reported that commuters and shoppers had been forced into these areas. This extension request is currently with the county council for consideration and to provide implementation costs.

The city council is responsible for identifying, funding, and surveying any new extensions to the Resident Parking Scheme. The county council, as the highways authority, is responsible for the legal approval, with the Traffic Regulation Order process, signs and lines. I have agreed a new formalised process for requests for extensions to existing RPS zones to ensure clarity and consistency and this has been previously circulated to all members.

15) Looking Ahead

As we move into a new financial and municipal year, we will kickstart work on the projects which will inform a fresh Inclusive Economic Growth Strategy for the city with a revised city centre masterplan, a skills plan – feeding into the work of the Greater Lincolnshire MCCA – and start to work on the transport and infrastructure needs of the city to encourage growth over the next decade.

Cllr Joshua Wells

13/01/2025



Scrutiny

Annual Report 2023-24

Introduction

During 2023-24, the City of Lincoln Council continued to operate executive arrangements with its Executive comprising of the Leader of the Council and five other councillors as Portfolio Holders. Most of the Council's decisions are made by the Executive. To improve the quality of the Executive's decisions, Scrutiny Committees remained in place which provided the opportunity for the remaining 27 non-executive councillors to challenge decisions made by the Executive, as well as to help the Executive in reviewing and developing new policies.

This report covers the council year from May 2023 until March 2024.

Background to Scrutiny

The scrutiny committee structure is: -

- Performance Scrutiny Committee
 - Policy Scrutiny Committee
 - Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee
 - Select Scrutiny Committee
 - Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee
-

What Did We Achieve in 2023/24?

The Council appointed the following scrutiny Committees for 2023/24:

Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Chair
Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee	Councillor Calum Watt
Performance Scrutiny Committee	Councillor Gary Hewson
Policy Scrutiny Committee	Councillor Emily Wood
Select Scrutiny Committee	Councillor Calum Watt
Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee*	Councillor Gary Hewson

*The Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee is a sub-committee of the Performance Scrutiny Committee and reports to this Committee on a quarterly basis.

With the exception of the Select Scrutiny Committee, the work programmes for these scrutiny committees were formally approved by the respective Committees in June 2023 and regularly updated throughout the Council year after this time.

The Select Scrutiny Committee meets once each year as the statutory Crime and Disorder Committee, as well as considering any call-in requests made throughout the year.

This report identifies some of the key achievements made by the committees.

Current work programmes for scrutiny committees can be found on the Council's website.

Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee

Between June 2023 and March 2024, the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee met on five occasions and focused on the following topics:

- Low Wages in the City of Lincoln
- Cultural Consortium Update
- Sheltering Our Citizens
- Poverty Truth Commission Update
- Crisis and Acute Mental Health Provision in Lincolnshire
- Care of Veterans in Lincoln
- Youth Engagement Update

In addition to the Council's Executive and its senior and front-line officers, external contributors included:

- Rob Johnson, Policy and Campaigns Officer - Trades Union Congress Midlands)
- Simon Beardsley, Managing Director - Lincoln Business Improvement Group (BIG) & Chief Executive Officer - Lincolnshire Chamber of Commerce
- Caroline Killeavy, Chief Executive Officer - YMCA
- Heidi Walton, Chief Executive - LEAP Housing
- Claire McGonigle, Deputy Chief Executive - Framework Lincolnshire
- Sandra Blow, Operations Manager - Framework Lincolnshire
- Charlotte Brooks, Director for Local Change - Local Motion
- Vicky Henderson, Community Commissioner - Local Motion
- Tinashe Chipawe, Community Commissioner - Local Motion
- Graham Metcalfe, Partnership Manager - Department for Work and Pensions
- Sarah Connery, Chief Executive Officer - Lincolnshire Partnership Foundation Trust (LPFT)
- Christopher Higgins, Director of Operations - Lincolnshire Partnership Foundation Trust (LPFT)
- Frank Barrett MBE - Royal Air Forces Association (RAFA)
- Evelyn Moorland - Royal Air Forces Association (RAFA)
- Ian O'Conner - Royal Naval Association & Royal British Legion

The Committee recorded its thanks to all its contributors and Council staff who stayed for long and sometimes late meetings during the year, and whose contributions were so helpful and enlightening.

The Committee's recommendations concerned a variety of topics such as the consideration of the rate of pay growth within Lincolnshire, the Cultural Consortium -

a significant number of events had been held over the last six to eight months to drive culture within the City, the provision of emergency accommodation in the City of Lincoln, an update on the Poverty Truth Commission and Crisis and Acute Mental Health Provision in Lincolnshire.

The Committee scrutinised the Care of Veterans in Lincoln and noted the progress that had been made with youth engagement.

Discussions also took place around emergency accommodation within the City of Lincoln and the need for a collaborative and holistic approach to this issue.

Performance Scrutiny Committee

As part of the Performance Scrutiny Committee's remit, it held regular 'Portfolio under Scrutiny' sessions, where Portfolio Holders were invited to report on service achievements under their portfolio. Members were then able to ask questions about the performance of these service areas. The consideration of portfolio reports included a list of each Portfolio Holders responsibilities to allow members to focus on the relevant performance information relating to the appropriate member's portfolio.

Performance Scrutiny Committee received the minutes of it's Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee meetings for information.

In addition to the regular scrutiny of portfolio holders, the Committee received reports in the following areas:

- Quarterly financial monitoring to provide members with a summary of actual income and expenditure compared to the revised budget and appropriate allocation of any surpluses to reserves.
- Quarterly performance update reports to ensure regular monitoring of the Council's operational performance as a key component of the Local Performance Management Framework.
- A quarterly review of the Strategic Risk Register - what improvements or issues have been identified.
- A quarterly report on Treasury Management and Actual Prudential Indicators as a requirement of the Council's reporting procedures under regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003.
- An annual report detailing progress made by the Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee.
- An update report on Section 106 contributions.
- Income and arrears monitoring reports providing updates to members on the position with regard to amounts of monies owed to the City Council as of 1st April 2023.
- Revenues and Benefits performance updates providing members with an update on performance in the Revenues and Benefits Shared Service.
- Strategic Performance Measures and Targets 2024/25 - for review prior to being presented to Executive for consideration.

Members took part in the budget review process for the scrutiny of the proposed budget and Council Tax for the 2024/25 financial year and the Medium Term

Financial Strategy 2024-2029, undertaken in two separate stages; firstly all members were invited to a briefing session to afford all members the opportunity to gain a greater understanding and awareness of the Council's financial position, thus aiding further scrutiny of the budget and in the case of the opposition party if desired the preparation of an alternative budget. This was followed by a more traditional scrutiny process undertaken to review in more detail the MTFS and the robustness of the proposed budget options and Council Tax for the 2024/25 financial year. This was undertaken in a committee format as the Budget Review Group with the appropriate governance arrangements in place.

The Committee held scrutiny reviews during the 2023/24 year in respect of:

Lincoln's Citizens Panel Review

A report was presented to members on the Councils approach to refreshing the membership of the Lincoln Citizens' Panel

The membership of the Lincoln Citizens' Panel was most recently reviewed in 2018, and currently contained 722 members. Of those members, 304 continued to actively participate in Panel activities. Currently there was 418 Panel members who had been inactive for more than twelve months. A proposal was put forward for the Citizens' Panel to be reviewed and refreshed at more frequent intervals, with a proportional change of membership either annually or every two years.

Minute Extract - Executive – 24 July 2023 – Purchase Orders

Members received a response from Executive in relation to the comments and concerns raised at Performance Scrutiny Committee regarding purchase orders.

Addressing the Challenge of Climate Change Vision 2025 Progress Report

A report was presented to Performance Scrutiny Committee on the strategic priority contained in Vision 2025 called 'addressing the challenge of climate change'.

This report provided an update on the progress of the group in addressing climate change and its strategic priority aspirations.

Vision 2025 - Remarkable Place Progress Report

This report focused on progress made on the Let's enhance our remarkable place strategic priority, and covered those projects delivered/ being progressed as part of the delivery plan. It represented a high-level summary, designed to give Members a quick overview of the entire programme.

Fire Safety

A report was presented to members on the current position regarding Fire Safety to the housing stock including high rise tower blocks, supported housing schemes and low risk flats.

The report focused on Fire Risk Assessments (FRA) that had been carried out on high-rise and low-rise tower blocks and their review frequencies. A buildings Safety

case was currently underway through the Building Safety Act to be completed by early 2024.

Policy Scrutiny Committee

During 2023/24, the Committee met five times, principally to scrutinise decisions due to be taken by the Executive or Council. The Committee provided its insights and recommendations on a variety of topics, which were suitably reflected in the eventual decision-making process.

The Committee scrutinised the following topics in particular detail:

Proposals for Extension of Existing Public Space Protection Order at Lucy Tower, Broadgate and Lincoln Central Multi Storey Car Parks

The Committee was presented with a report to consider the extension of an existing Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) at Lucy Tower, Broadgate and Lincoln Central Multi-Storey Carparks prior to approval by Executive.

Committee considered the current PSPO that was in place and the prohibited behaviours within the designated areas. They were provided with details of the consultation with both public and partner agencies where five responses had been received which had all called for the PSPO to remain in place. Evidence that had been gathered from Lincolnshire Police, the CCTV team and the Car Parking Team were also presented to committee for consideration.

The committee discussed the contents of the report in detail and supported the proposal to extend the current PSPO without variations to the prohibition or location and referred to Executive for approval.

Waste Collection and Street Cleansing Specifications (For new contracts from 01/09/2026)

The committee were presented with an update on the specification of the waste collection and street cleansing contract prior to commencing procurement. The new contracts would commence on 1st September 2026 and would be realigned and packaged as two separate contracts: waste (which included recycling and other domestic waste streams) and street cleansing, and a separate grounds maintenance contract. Members were presented with a list of material changes that had been made to the specification that were noticeable to service users, there were many other changes that had been made in the interests of cost control, clarity, ease of navigation, ease of operational use and understanding. An all member workshop had taken place and the actions taken to address the issues raised at the workshop and the anticipated cost implications were considered by committee members. It was also noted that the Council required its contractors to pay their staff in accordance with the real living wage as a minimum.

The committee considered the report and a discussion ensued, many questioned were asked and detailed responses received. The committee supported the

proposed specification of the waste and street cleansing contract and referred it to Executive for consideration.

Safeguarding and Protecting Vulnerable People Policy

The committee were presented with the revised Safeguarding and Protecting Vulnerable People Policy for feedback prior to consideration by Executive. The report was an updated version of existing policies and framework to fulfil statutory duties and demonstrate safeguarding competence and compliance following a full review.

The key policy changes were carefully considered by Committee and they supported the updated policy.

In addition to the key topics, the Committee also scrutinised the following items and forwarded its comments for consideration by the Executive:

- Protecting Vulnerable People
- Events and Culture – Christmas in Lincoln 2023 and beyond – Programme of Events
- Lincoln Central Market Policies
- Localised Council Tax Support Scheme 2024/25
- Corporate Document Review 2023
- Proposals for the Extension of Existing Public Space in the City Centre
- Proposal to Increase Fixed Penalty Notices in Relation to Environmental Crime
- Renewal of Regulation 7 Direction of Lettings Boards
- Parks and Open Spaces – Income Policy

Minutes of these meetings are available on the City of Lincoln Council website which includes details about discussions that took place and questions asked by Members and responses received.

The Committee also received regular updates from the Health Scrutiny Committee.

Select Scrutiny Committee

The principal functions of the Select Scrutiny Committee are to meet once per year as the Crime and Disorder Committee; and to consider any requests for the call-in of Executive decisions, which allows scrutiny members to challenge a decision made by the Executive or any of its individual portfolio holders, prior to the implementation. This gives the Select Scrutiny Committee the opportunity to examine a decision where particular concerns have been raised and respond accordingly.

There were no call-in requests during 2023/24.

The Committee sat as the Crime and Disorder Committee on 17 July 2024.

Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee

The Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee is a sub-committee of Performance Scrutiny Committee. It was established in 2008 to increase engagement between backbench Members and Tenant Advisory Panel representatives. The Sub-Committee has continued to meet and tenants on the Committee consider that it has helped them have their say when scrutinising housing matters.

The Chair of Lincoln Tenants Panel provided a regular written report on the panel's continued work on a variety of projects with officers in the Housing Service.

Over the last twelve years the Council had been working with Lincoln Tenants Panel to improve external scrutiny and to meet standards implemented by the Tenant Services Authority.

From April 2010 all social landlords were required to have local offers in place alongside the national standards as set out in the new Regulatory Framework for Social Housing, which was amended with effect from April 2012 although the principles remained the same.

The Committee met five times during 2023/24 and considered many reports which included the following topics:

- Housing Finance
- Scheduled Repairs
- Housing Fire Assessment
- Scheduled Repairs
- Allocations Updates
- Downsizing Policy
- Housing Planned Works 2023-24
- Anti-Social Behaviour Management
- Management of Communal Areas
- Ellie's Memorial Garden
- Repairs Policy
- De Wint Court Post Implementation Review
- Tenant Involvement Strategy 2022-23
- Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2024/25
- Aids and Adaptations Policy
- Estate Inspections- Feedback Process
- Work of Tenancy Sustainability Team
- Review of Empty Garages
- Review of Pet Policy
- Tenancy Policy/Strategy
- Adi's Legacy/Hartsholme Community Garden
- Target Setting 2024/25
- Report by Councillor Donald Nannestad, Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing
- Update on Insurance Claims for Disrepair Claims Lodged
- Tenant Involvement Strategy Action Plan

The Committee also effectively scrutinised Housing performance on a quarterly basis and received regular updates on the progress of the Lincoln Tenants Panel.

Contact Us

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23 May 2024

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Strategic Priority/ Comments
Standard Items		
Financial Performance (Detailed): Outturn 2023/24 Quarter 4	Laura Shipley	Quarterly Report Professional High Performing Services
Treasury Management Stewardship and Actual Prudential Indicators Report 2023/24 (Outturn)	Laura Shipley	Six Monthly Report Professional High Performing Services
Performance Monitoring Outturn 2023/24 Quarter 4	Graham Rose	Quarterly Report-Professional High Performing Services
Strategic Risk Register – Quarterly Report Quarter 4	Jaclyn Gibson	Quarterly Report Professional High Performing Services

20 June 2024 CANCELLED

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Strategic Priority/ Comments
Standard Items		
Confirmation of Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee Minutes	Democratic Services	Regular Report Let's Deliver Quality Housing
Work Programme for 2024-25 - Update	Democratic Services	Regular Report

25 July 2024 (*Monitoring Overview*)

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Strategic Priority/ Comments
Standard Items		
Confirmation of Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee Minutes	Democratic Services	Regular Report Let's Deliver Quality Housing
Work Programme for 2024-25 - Update	Democratic Services	Regular Report
Portfolio Under Scrutiny Session – Reducing Inequality DEFERRED	Portfolio Holder	Annual Session Reducing Inequality
Monitoring Items		
Central Lincolnshire Local Plan Annual Report 2023/24 including Financial Update	Toby Forbes-Turner	Annual Report Let's Drive Economic Growth
Income/Arrears Monitoring report	Martin Walmsley	Annual Report <i>Professional High Performing Services</i>

15 August 2024 (Quarterly Monitoring)

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Strategic Priority/ Comments
Standard Items		
Confirmation of Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee Minutes	Democratic Services	Regular Report Lets Deliver Quality Housing
Work Programme for 2024-25 - Update	Democratic Services	Regular Report
Portfolio Under Scrutiny Session – Climate and Corporate Strategy (now includes Climate Change w.e.f 2025 report)	Portfolio Holder	Annual Session Professional High Performing Services
Monitoring Items		
Financial Performance (Detailed) – Quarterly Monitoring: Quarter 1	Laura Shipley	Quarterly Report Professional High Performing Services
Treasury Management – Quarter 1	Laura Shipley	Quarterly Report Professional High Performing Services
Performance Quarterly Monitoring: Quarter 1	Graham Rose	Quarterly Report Professional High Performing Services
Quarterly Strategic Risk Register Report-Quarter1	Jaclyn Gibson	Quarterly Report Professional High Performing Services

26 September 2024

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Strategic Priority/ Comments
Standard Items		
Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee Minutes	Democratic Services	Regular Report Lets Deliver Quality Housing
Work Programme for 2024-25 – Update	Democratic Services	Regular Report
Portfolio Under Scrutiny Reducing Inequality	Portfolio Holder	Annual Session
Portfolio Under Scrutiny Remarkable Place	Portfolio Holder	Annual Session
Portfolio Under Scrutiny- Climate Change	Kate Bell	Annual Session
Annual Report for Remarkable Place V2025 Theme	Simon Walters	Annual Report
Protecting Vulnerable People Update	Emily Holmes	Regular Report

14 November 2024

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Strategic Priority/ Comments
Standard Items		
Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee Minutes	Democratic Services	Regular Report Let's Deliver Quality Housing
Work Programme for 2024-25 - Update	Democratic Services	Regular Report
Portfolio Under Scrutiny - Customer Experience, Review and Resources	Portfolio Holder	Annual Session
Annual Complaints Report Update	Emily Holmes	Update Report
Monitoring Items		
Financial Performance (Detailed) – Quarterly Monitoring: Quarter 2	Laura Shipley	Quarterly Report Professional High Performing Services
Performance Quarterly Monitoring: Quarter 2	Graham Rose	Quarterly Report Professional High Performing Services
Strategic Risk Register – Quarterly Report Quarter 2	Jaclyn Gibson	Quarterly Report Professional High Performing Services
Treasury Management and Prudential Code Update Report – Half Yearly Report	Laura Shipley	Half Yearly Report Professional High Performing Services
Other Items:		
Budget Theme Group – Nominees	Jaclyn Gibson	Annual Appointment Professional High Performing Services

5 December 2024

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Strategic Priority/ Comments
Standard Items		
Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee Minutes	Democratic Services	Regular Report Let's Deliver Quality Housing
Work Programme for 2024-25 - Update	Democratic Services	Regular Report
Portfolio Under Scrutiny Session – Quality Housing	Portfolio Holder	Annual Session Let's Deliver Quality Housing
Monitoring Item(s)		
Fire Safety Update	Matt Hillman	Annual Report

23 January 2025

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Strategic Priority/ Comments
Standard Items		
Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee Minutes	Democratic Services	Regular Report Let's Deliver Quality Housing
Portfolio Under Scrutiny – Inclusive Economic Growth	Portfolio Holder	Annual Session Let's Drive Economic Growth
Annual Scrutiny Report	Democratic Services	Annual Report
Work Programme for 2024-25 - Update	Democratic Services	Regular Report

20 February 2025

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Strategic Priority/ Comments
Standard Items		
Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee Minutes	Democratic Services	Regular Report Lets Deliver Quality Housing
Draft Work Programme for 2024-2025	Democratic Services	Regular Report
Monitoring Items		
Financial Performance (Detailed) – Quarterly Monitoring: Quarter 3	Laura Shipley	Quarterly Report Professional High Performing Services
Performance Quarterly Monitoring: Quarter 3	Graham Rose	Quarterly Report Professional High Performing Services
Treasury Management : Quarter 3	Laura Shipley	Quarterly Report Professional High Performing Services
Strategic Risk Register – Quarterly Report Quarter 3	Laura Shipley	Quarterly Report Professional High Performing Services
Feedback from Budget Review Group	Laura Shipley	Annual Report Professional High Performing Services
Section 106 Contributions Update	Nicola Collins	Annual Report Lets Drive Economic Growth

13 March 2025

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Strategic Priority/ Comments
Standard Items		
Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee Minutes	Democratic Services	Regular Report Let's Deliver Quality Housing
Draft Work Programme for 2024-2025	Democratic Services	Regular Report
Monitoring Items		
Targets for 2025/26	Graham Rose	Annual Report

Portfolio Under Scrutiny Sessions

Date	Portfolio
25 July 2024	Reducing Inequality
15 August 2024	Climate and Corporate Strategy
26 September 2024	Remarkable Place
14 November 2024	Customer Experience, Review and Resources
5 December 2024	Quality Housing
23 January 2025	Inclusive Economic Growth