

## **City of Lincoln Council Neighbourhood Working Strategy – 2013-2018**

### **Introduction**

This strategy sets out the City of Lincoln Council's approach to Neighbourhood Working. It is revised in the light of financial constraints and the capacity of the teams employed directly on the programme.

### **Purpose of the Service**

**'To improve the quality of life for Lincoln residents ensuring service providers are more responsive to neighbourhood needs especially in communities which experience the most disadvantage, where need is greatest'**

It aims to do this by giving more power to local people to shape service improvements, enabling them to influence decisions that affect the area they live in. It ensures effective partnership working at neighbourhood level to improve the physical environment and the quality of life for people living in the area.

From January 2012 a new model for the programme was developed and tested within the authority, with partners and with communities across the city. It focuses on three outcomes:

- Strengthening accountability to local people,
- Prioritise activity aimed at reducing poverty and disadvantage with an emphasis on the economic disadvantage element and
- Providing community leadership at neighbourhood level

This is achieved by following a core 7 step pathway, based on the 'Big Local' model and driven by the neighbourhood teams (appendix a):

1. Getting people involved
2. Exploring a shared vision for the neighbourhood
3. Form the Neighbourhood Partnership / Board
4. Gather evidence base for the Neighbourhood Plan
5. Delivering the Neighbourhood Plan
6. Assessing impact and review action plan
7. Review the neighbourhood plan and partnership

This approach is key to supporting delivery across the council's key strategic priorities in terms of facilitating engagement, influencing service design and delivery to make it acceptable and effective in the most disadvantaged areas.

## **Strategic priorities** (Appendix b)

The neighbourhood working programme promotes understanding and engages local partners and residents in ensuring the specific needs of these communities are addressed across the strategic priorities. There is a particular focus on tackling poverty and disadvantage, emphasising the economic elements, for example skills development and work readiness initiatives, supporting people with applications, CV development etc, negotiating priority recruitment arrangements and trying to remove barriers to employment e.g. transport.

They also work with local people to improve the most deprived areas (often council estates) in terms of the wider neighbourhood environment. This in turn enhances the housing landlord function by working with tenants and targeting them for involvement in neighbourhood boards and other initiatives with a view to improving the area as a whole. The community caretakers target communities of council properties to ensure that the wider environment is clean and, in conjunction with partners e.g. the police, safe.

Neighbourhood teams can facilitate targeting, engagement, enabling residents in those most disadvantaged areas of the city to influence the design and delivery of projects and services aiming to deliver against these priorities.

## **Core Values**

The service is underpinned by the following core values (appendix c):

- Fairness for all
- Learning from experience
- Participation
- Sustainability
- Self determination
- Working and learning together

## **Core Objectives for the Neighbourhood Teams**

The following core objectives for the neighbourhood teams provide focus for their ongoing delivery:

1. To build the capacity of the neighbourhood boards enabling them to;
  - Understand and interpret the data, information and intelligence turning this into a needs assessment
  - Prioritise the needs within their local area and develop a neighbourhood action plan designed to address priorities
  - Review progress and performance against the plans, holding partners to account for delivery of their actions
2. To have a physical presence in the area and identify, recruit and support residents, enabling them to play a full and active role in a neighbourhood board which is representative of the local community and where residents have a key role in the decision making process.
3. To influence service providers to ensure that they are targeting areas of greatest need (be it health issues, crime, traffic, income, activities for young people, street scene concerns etc) and help them to design service delivery methods, approaches and measurement which maximise effectiveness within deprived and disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Ensure that services are held to account by neighbourhood boards for this delivery

Whilst objective 3 above drives the Neighbourhood programme in an area to meet identified need with partners, the NM's in each area will also have a specific focus on the following:

4. To engage key partners in the neighbourhood boards ensuring that local economic activity (as a key underlying determinant for health and wellbeing) is identified as a priority and that opportunities for both key skills development (and/or confidence building) and income maximisation are available to residents within the area.
5. To improve the general look and feel of defined areas (i.e. street scene) not only through the proactive use of the Community Caretakers for resolving immediate environmental issues, but also by adopting the Team around the Place approach, identifying and working with partners and different service areas to remove the causes of repeated environmental problems, e.g. Graffiti, fly-tipping, etc.
6. Work with the police and anti-social behaviour team to reduce the incidence and prevalence of anti-social behaviour and hate related crime e.g. racist and homophobic issues. To more generally work with the local community to improve community cohesion in the area.

## **The Mechanics of Neighbourhood Working**

## **Neighbourhood Working Project Board – City of Lincoln Council**

The neighbourhood working project board is the internal mechanism for managing the programme, removing barriers to delivery and securing senior manager support for staff working at neighbourhood level. The role of the board is to:

- Receive and review the neighbourhood plans, endorsing the council commitment to activity
- Balance the competing needs of communities to ensure that resources are targeted to those who are in greatest need
- Explore ways in which the council can work more effectively to address unmet need
- Hold service areas to account for delivery against the plans and for their response to local communities
- To refer issues of performance to either the community leadership scrutiny committee (external) or Performance Scrutiny (internal)
- To champion the engagement of partners in the neighbourhood boards

## **Local Neighbourhood Board**

The vehicle for delivering this is to establish a neighbourhood board in each area which is responsible for identifying local needs and working as a partnership to respond to those needs.

Each board is made up of the local residents and organisations who operate locally or who have a remit to address the priorities identified. The board is supported by the neighbourhood manager

The first core stage is the preparation of the local evidence base, which is brought together by the neighbourhood manager working with the board. It integrates both qualitative and quantitative evidence, including resident and service provider perspectives. This document essentially identifies the needs of the local area.

## **Neighbourhood Action Plan**

The above needs are then debated and addressed by the Board. This leads to the formulation of a set of priorities and solutions which are presented in the form of a three year Neighbourhood Action Plan. The Local Neighbourhood Board has responsibility for monitoring delivery of the neighbourhood action plan overall and in particular holding to account those organisations committed to activity within the plan to ensure it is delivered.

### **Local Neighbourhood Teams**

There are three local neighbourhood teams, each made up of:

#### **A Neighbourhood Manager**

The Neighbourhood Manager develops partnership working and resident involvement in local decision making by establishing and supporting the Local Neighbourhood Board. They have the responsibility for exploring the needs of each community and the ways these can be addressed by working and learning together. They therefore have responsibility for producing a Neighbourhood Plan for each area.

Once developed the manager then has a role of supporting the board in monitoring delivery of the Plan, through a mixture of further capacity building in the local community, gaining commitments for action from partners and developing/bidding for funding for new initiatives to meet the needs.

#### **A Neighbourhood Administrator**

The Neighbourhood Administrator is responsible for keeping the neighbourhood informed and up to date with what services are available. In addition to their administrative duties, they compile local newsletters and keep the social media up to date.

#### **A Community Caretaker**

The Community Caretaker spends most of their time out on the streets looking out for environmental issues, such as dog fouling, graffiti and fly tipping, so that they can be reported to the relevant department or organisation. They are also able to provide residents with information, encouragement and the tools to report problems themselves.

### **Scope, strengths and opportunities of the current Service**

There are currently three core teams working on the programme. The teams are split into the North, Central and South areas of the city. Coverage is as follows:

## **North team**

### **St Giles**

- Well established team in St Giles in dedicated building
- Well established board
- Neighbourhood Action plan requires refreshing and is scheduled to be complete by June 2013
- The team provides a focal point in the heart of the community for tenants to access services

### **Ermine**

- Some initial preparatory work has taken place.
- Weekly Meet the Street Surgeries have been set up in the Ermine Community Centre where partners including Benefits Advice, Ward Councillors and Police attend to deal with any tenants issues
- An Ermine specific website has been developed in partnership with Castle Academy
- Profiling work and initial relationship building is underway

### **Glebe Park**

- Neighbourhood Manager chairs the Glebe Park Residents Association

## **Central Team**

### **Abbey and Tower**

- Established board may benefit from some development and broader membership
- Preparation work underway for survey to inform Neighbourhood Action Plan
- Neighbourhood Agreement in place
- Established base on Belmont Street (There may be an opportunity to re-negotiate the base through regeneration led by partners)

### **Sincil Bank area**

- Established board
- Support from community development worker (Development Plus) located with Lincoln City Football Supporters Trust
- Team around the Place pilot project is established in the area
- Neighbourhood Plan\*

### **Carholme**

- Support for Community First Panel
- Neighbourhood Plan\*

\* Neighbourhood Development Plan – work is at an early stage on the Neighbourhood Development Plan and the area being defined currently includes elements of Sincil Bank, Carholme, St Catherine's and a small area within Boultham Ward. This is resident led and supported by a Principle Planning Officer who will engage with the central neighbourhood team where appropriate.

## **South team**

### **Birchwood**

- Embryonic Board established as Big Local Partnership
- Boundaries and process are determined by Big Local who are providing £1million for the area
- Neighbourhood team will work with and support the Big Local process and are a key member of the steering group
- Supporting a Land Audit being undertaken on behalf of the Big Local Partnership
- Some discussion has taken place regarding the establishment of a community land trust in the area

### **Bracebridge (Park ward)**

- Established Neighbourhood Board
- Neighbourhood Plan to cover part of the area\*

### **Moorland**

- Established neighbourhood Board may benefit from some development and strengthening the pool of resident members
- Base in community centre
- Neighbourhood Plan recently updated and refreshed – providing focus
- Potential a mental health project

### **Jarvis House**

- Initial scoping and consultation work

## **Way Forward – 2013/14 and beyond**

While there is a long term aspiration for all city residents to have access to a neighbourhood board, the current financial climate and the capacity of the teams require the City Council to prioritise.

The programme will therefore be focussed and targeted in those areas of greatest need. This has been identified through analysis of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation and those areas where work has started with need identified.

In particular, building on work that has started in Ermine, we aim to set up a new Neighbourhood Board by September 2013 with the development of a Neighbourhood Action Plan by March 2014. The Moorland Action plan has just been updated and the St Giles and Abbey plans will be updated by the end of May 2013.

The map (appendix d) attached shows the areas to be covered. It includes:

- the 10% most deprived lower super output areas (IMD),
- those just outside that 10% but due to their geographic proximity need to be included as the same community, plus
- Ermine, Manse Estate, Jarvis House, Sincil Bank and Tower where a level of need has been established or a specific piece of work has started.

The core changes which will be taking place in the programme are:

- Accelerate the move into Ermine East and West
- Maintain and strengthen St Giles, Abbey and Tower, Sincil Bank, Bracebridge, Moorland and Birchwood
- Withdraw from Glebe Park, Carholme, Hartsholme Estate and Bracebridge Lowfields as there is insufficient level of need (compared to other areas of the city) and therefore we are unable to resource

An exit strategy will be produced and implemented for the latter areas above.

## **Resource implications**

These changes will be accommodated within existing staff and financial resources.

A formula which represents an appropriate contribution from the Housing Revenue Account to reflect the number of council homes within each neighbourhood has been developed. This contribution from the Housing Revenue Account will reflect the Council's duty as a Landlord under the Neighbourhood and Community Standard of the Regulatory Framework which requires the Council as a social landlord and Registered Provider to: *"co-operate with relevant partners to help promote social environmental and economic wellbeing in the areas where they own properties."*



The delivery of neighbourhood working outcomes also depends on close co-operation and support of colleagues from within the council as well as partner organisations, both at neighbourhood and strategic levels.

The team are developing and / or strengthening close working relationships with the tenants' liaison team, recreation leisure and healthy lifestyles team, community services and housing teams.

The closer working relationship with tenancy liaison will ensure a synergy between estate agreements which focus on improving the housing landlord function and the wider neighbourhood action plans which address neighbourhood issues affecting the quality of life and environment of residents.

Partner organisations are involved in the local neighbourhood boards and members are encouraged to feed needs and activity up through their organisation to ensure fair delivery in those areas of greatest need.

### **Partnership Arrangements**

In addition to the council's internal board a wider partnership will be established which will share some of the internal board's terms of reference, and will also seek to address issues and remove blockages which are specific to the organisation or as a partner;

- Receive and review the neighbourhood plans, endorsing organisations commitment to activity
- Support the involvement of staff in the neighbourhood level partnerships and hold each other to account where commitment is not forthcoming at strategic or operational neighbourhood level
- Develop joint solutions to more complex problems where any one organisation cannot bring about a significant change
- Balance the competing needs of communities to ensure that resources are targeted to those who are in greatest need
- Explore ways in which the partners can work more effectively to address unmet need
- Hold service areas to account for delivery against the plans and for their response to local communities

These terms of reference are suggestions and require negotiation with the relevant partner organisations. The precise mechanism by which this process will work is to be developed in conjunction with those partners.

## **Evaluation of the Service**

The following measures will be used to establish the effectiveness of the service:

### Partnerships

- Providing support/advice to partners (inc internal teams) (main info flow from us to them)
- Engagement/consultation with partner agencies (main info flow from them to us)
- Brokering partnerships
- Signposting/referring partners
- Co-ordinating partnership projects
- Involvement in funding applications

### Residents

- Providing support/advice to residents (This is direct from our teams, as opposed to Benefits Advice, Councillors or CAB)
- Engagement/consultation with residents
- Signposting / referral of residents
- Environmental issues reported
- % reported issues resolved
- Number of Community Plans in operation

### Satisfaction Measures

- No of Compliments

- No of Complaints
- Satisfaction measured via survey

## **Reporting**

The programme will report:

- Quarterly into the Neighbourhood Working Project Board
- Quarterly into the Lincoln Tenants Panel
- Twice yearly into the 'Value for Money' focus group

And by exception as required.

## **Appendix a – Neighbourhood Working Pathway**

### **Step 1 – Getting People Involved**

Identify and nurture key residents

Spread the word about neighbourhood working

Introduce neighbourhood working to key partners

### **Step 2 – Explore a shared vision for the neighbourhood**

Identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the neighbourhood

Explore 'easy wins' or projects that will help to form working relationships between partners in the area.

Provide listening opportunities – walkabouts, events, and visits to groups

### **Step 3 – Form the Neighbourhood Partnership / Board**

Constitute partnership of key stakeholders who share a vision to improve the neighbourhood

Promote effective collective and collaborative working

Commitment established for resident led, multi-agency partnership to tackle issues

Identify key channels of communication to residents and other stakeholders

### **Step 4 – Gather evidence base for the Neighbourhood Plan**

Neighbourhood Survey or focus groups to gather evidence around resident priorities and underlying causes of issues. This will also involve other front line workers and their experiences.

Ensure all perspectives within the community are considered.

Build a neighbourhood profile of statistical and other data

Drafting agreed 3 year plan to form priorities framework for work of partnership

### **Step 5 – Delivering the Neighbourhood Plan**

Draft underlying action plan and begin delivery of short term goals.

Identify gaps or issues for escalation to Neighbourhood Working Project Board.

Celebration of visible wins and promotion of positive messages to improve community confidence.

Work to increase volunteering and momentum towards change – support & develop individuals to contribute effectively to communities.

**Step 6 – Assessing impact & review Action Plan**

Critically assess the impact of the Neighbourhood Plan and record learning points

Collect evidence of community strengthening – new groups / activities.

Develop a culture of informed and accountable decision making.

Challenge oppressive or discriminatory actions or ways of working.

**Step 7 – Review the neighbourhood plan and partnership**

Capture measurable outcomes from Neighbourhood plan.

Evidence of visible change – within environment or statistical data.

Incorporate learning from partnership when return to step 4.

## **Appendix b**

### **Reduce poverty and disadvantage**

Working with, and on behalf of, the most vulnerable members of the community to provide access to a range of financial inclusion opportunities to tackle low income, help people out of worklessness, reduce educational disadvantage and improve health equalities through access to a wide range of leisure opportunities.

This priority will also seek to improve community cohesion and deliver specific interventions at the neighbourhood level to tackle issues of most local concern.

The challenges presented by this priority are so wide ranging, it has been split into a range of themes:

- Create a sustainable and resilient economy
- Maximise income
- Improve health and wellbeing to increase average life expectancy over ten years
- Maximise skills and educational attainment
- Improve community cohesion

### **Seek to increase the supply of affordable housing**

To use the council's role as housing provider, strategic housing authority and strategic planning body to increase the supply of affordable housing to rent or buy.

### **Improve the council's housing landlord function**

As landlord of a significant number of homes within the city, we will work hard to improve all aspects of the council's landlord function, whilst maximising the opportunities available to secure a more financially sustainable future to look after council homes.

### **Reduce Lincoln's carbon footprint**

To reduce the carbon footprint of the council's own activity to make financial savings from reduced energy use. Use this as a platform to provide community leadership and lead a

drive to reduce, with partners, the city's overall carbon footprint. In particular, we will focus our effort on reducing the fuel bills of the poorest people in the city and reduce fuel poverty.

### **Develop a fit for purpose council**

To redefine the purpose and shape of the council, securing its long term financial and democratic sustainability, so that it is fit to meet the changing needs of the community that it exists to serve.

## Appendix c: Values underpinning the neighbourhood working programme

### Lincoln Neighbourhood Programme

The Neighbourhood Team in Lincoln are committed to the following values for Neighbourhood Working. We would invite residents, community groups and agencies to join us in this commitment when working with us in partnership.

#### **Fairness for All (Social Justice)**

We will challenge  
oppressive and  
discriminatory actions and  
attitudes.

#### **Learning from Experience (Reflective Practice)**

We will always be open  
to constructive  
suggestions as to how  
things can be done  
better.

We will do what we can to  
keep others informed &  
updated.

#### **Participation**

We will seek to recognise & challenge  
barriers to resident involvement.

We will develop ways for residents to take  
part in decision making.

#### **Self Determination**

(Community Decision Making)

We will value the concerns or issues  
raised by communities and raise  
awareness of the choices available.

#### **Sustainable Communities (Ensuring our work has lasting benefits)**

Supporting communities to develop their skills

Supporting local groups and organisations

#### **Working & Learning Together**

Sharing good practice and  
learning from each other.

Informed &  
accountable decision  
making.



## Appendix d

