

## Appendix 8 – NW consultation 2 – responses.

Responses
<p>As debated by us on the budget this response example rises the current approach. It provides cash and support for favoured areas and there is no mention at all for areas such as Hartsholme which have established set ups. This continues input and services to some and not others .</p>
<p>The Board were happier with the updated consultation and felt their views were taken into consideration. Everyone was supportive of the proposed support on offer. The following comments were raised:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Neighbourhoods - this new model provides an opportunity to revisit the areas covered by each board. For example, could this board cover the area to South Park roundabout</li><li>2. Form an identity - This new model has the opportunity to ensure that it is truly community led</li><li>3. Accountability - A long discussion was held about the ongoing support from the City of Lincoln Council and other public sector organisations. It was suggested that a tier above the boards be created to ensure that link between neighbourhood and decision makers</li></ol>
<p>Can you tell me if the Carholme Forum is classed as one of the Neighbourhood Boards and if so will it qualify for the support mentioned in the proposal including the £1000 grant. If the Forum is not one of the boards do you know why there is no board in the Carholme area?</p> <p>Be glad of clarification on this</p> <p>(Responded that Carholme Forum would not be eligible for the £1000 a year grant)</p>
<p>My experience of working locally in both community and professional roles has indicated the usefulness of the Neighbourhood office in Belmont Street.</p> <p>In regard to future financing to keep the office open and functional, ,this could be achieved by having two existing council officers based at Belmont St. but carrying out their normal City Hall work from there.</p> <p>As a former contractor working closely with the former Home Secure Officer and others, I know that this arrangement has worked satisfactorily in the past, when these officers stood in for the regular assistant when he/she has been absent.</p> <p>This would not seem to be a difficult way of solving the problem, thus enabling the community to keep this useful and important facility.</p>

I hope consideration will be given to this and other suggestions before any final decision is made.

Response to revised consultation Proposal March 2017

1.Improve the governance and administrative resilience of the Boards.

Who will ensure any improvement is up to speed and acceptable? How will the volunteers be expected to cope with the rules and expectations of the Council?

2. Upskilling of the community representatives on the Boards.

Who will upskill the volunteers and take responsibility? When and where would this upskilling be undertaken? Bearing in mind that the volunteers we have already, and likely to get in the future, have medical and mobility problems, as well as being elderly. Who will take responsibility to ensure the upskilling is continued to an acceptable level, with volunteers of varied mental and physical abilities, and time constraints?

3.Attracting and developing volunteers within the area to support the work of the local Board.

How will you be attracting volunteers? How will you ensure the volunteers you do attract, will be of the type and caliber that will actually work for the Community? So many groups/organizations and agencies are having to rely on volunteers now, as funding has been cut. A dedicated, paid worker would be under the control of the Council and be able to give the time necessary to ensure time and resources are used to best effect. The Boards need younger people, as most of the Board members are retired and elderly with medical and/or mobility problems.

4. Providing each Board with the ability and confidence to help them identify the needs and desires of the local communities.

At this present time, the Neighbourhood Team on St. Giles are already doing a very good job, as per the expectations of the Government, with identifying the needs and desires of this local community (Action Plan). They also have the knowledge and expertise to be able to refer any queries to the relative agencies and Council departments. All of this knowledge and expertise will be lost! How can the Council in its wisdom justify the waste, when it will end up costing far more in benefits and life altering situations for local residents by getting rid of the present Team?

*It is assumed that ALL the records and files relating to each individual Neighbourhood Board, will be transmitted to the Chair of each Board. This includes, minutes, agendas, action plans as well as contact lists for City and County Councils.*

5.Identifying long term funding opportunities.

I would really like to know just where this funding will be coming from, as, if there is so much out there why doesn't the Council get hold of it to continue funding the Neighbourhood Teams that are already in place and running effectively? The time involved in applying for funding from other sources, takes an enormous amount of time and commitment. I know this from personal experience, and there are no guarantees of actually getting any finding.

Support (financial and non-financial) on an ongoing basis for Neighbourhood Boards.

The £1000 per Board, on the face of it appears to be OK, but costs are rising all the time. Postage rates are rising by leaps and bounds, and although many people do have access to the internet and can perhaps be contacted via e-mail, not everyone has a computer or internet access. The small community groups with few and/or elderly members, will need help to cover their costs, as room hire will only cover 1 year, and I know at least one group who are unable to take on the responsibility of being key holders for the Community Centre. How will they fare?

In conclusion, it is still felt that this whole exercise is against the best interests of the local residents of this community of St. Giles. We also believe this consultation to be just a matter of ticking boxes, as decisions have already been made. This is at odds with the Government's promises and expectations for people with mental health issues, and community involvement in general.

St. Giles was a no-go area when we moved here in 2002. The Neighbourhood Team working with the Council and all other agencies, turned that around, to make St. Giles a pleasant place to live. It will be a waste of the 8 years of hard work put in by the Team and agencies, when it reverts back to what it was, as I am sure it will. This will all cost the Council far more in monetary terms.

I understand the need for regular review of all expenditure. Most residents broadly welcome it to protect themselves from rises in CT.

The period of implementation of change is the area that is too short for the people that I represent. I think that Abbey has more ability to manage some of the admin. than say St Giles, judging from recent meetings. St Giles has a greater social strand to its work than Abbey, and is highly valued by the community and should continue to be supported until the community is more confident. Diversity of St Giles group is unrepresentative of the community.

Over the past four weeks, I have held discussions with the Bracebridge, Sincil Bank and Abbey Neighbourhood Boards, presented to Lincoln Tenants Panel and a volunteering network.

Many of the comments have been similar to that which we received in the first round of consultation – Why Sincil Bank? Why the drastic cut in the number of areas etc

We held a long conversation at the Abbey Board, the general consensus of the board was that they are still not happy with the proposal, the board felt that there were similar issues in Abbey to Sincil Bank – transient community, high crime,

unemployment, high levels of fly tipping etc. The board would not be happy to lose Belmont Street, Mary from Green Synergy suggested that this could be kept if the neighbourhood team moved into their office under Pelham Bridge.

The board did feel that the support of the third sector would be beneficial although there was scepticism regarding the length of support. A couple of members who are residents but also representing charities based in the area were extremely upbeat about the proposal. Although it was a fairly negative discussion, there were some positive discussion around engaging with the community

The views from Bracebridge Neighbourhood Board were a lot more positive, they have always felt that with a small amount of support they will continue to meet as a board.

My own personal view is that there needs to be a tier of support that sits above the board. This senior group needs to review any issues coming from the neighbourhood and give a definite commitment from COLC that we are still committed to working in neighbourhoods

I think the revised proposal does not really alter most of my responses and concerns I gave in my first consultation response.

I am however pleased to see some additional support outlined for boards, I do feel if community groups currently use your existing spaces for free this commitment should be maintained not just for the first year but beyond.

Also in terms of the objectives for the boards with NW going and no council employee working with the boards directly we need to set as an objective that they become empowered to take responsibility for community cohesion and resolving community issues themselves. Yes they as part of this will hold agencies to account but they need to resolve things themselves as a community without local agencies as well and promote the community cohesion agenda in these areas, some of which still have significant cohesion issues that I fear could not now be addressed.

As previously stated the Police fully understand the financial position of the Council but still have a number of concerns about the withdrawal of NW in certain areas and the impact it will have on the Policing service delivered in these communities.

Can you just clarify what the 7 areas are that have neighbourhood boards and the frequency of their meetings please?

Given that senior staff tend to cover a larger area, will these be managed as a whole to ensure minimum cross over for senior

staff attendance. Do these groups ever meet to discuss their timetables too or has this been managed in the past by NW?

Other than that, it all looks good going forward

Thank you for your invitation to comment on your latest proposals for Neighbourhood Working in Lincoln. I am encouraged that the Council has paid some attention to the responses to the earlier consultation and has taken some time to formulate a way forward. I note, however, that the central idea within your proposal has not changed and that the new proposals seek only to find a way of easing the current pattern of working out. Whilst this is helpful, it does not change the situation that the work of the Neighbourhood officers has been key in our community (the Ermine estate) in a number of ways:

Providing sustainable and sustained networks of communication which can only work by a consistent presence on the estate

Being a local focal point of action, advice and encouragement

Acting as an advocate for the locality

Developing local skills over a period of time – this needs consistency of input and effort and is not a short term fix

Showing the commitment the Council has to deprived communities in the city.

It is clear from your revised proposal that the Council is already committed to a particular course of action (ie to sweep away the Neighbourhood Working team), but as I have indicated above, I do feel that this is a short sighted policy. I understand the need for the Council to make savings, but in a community such as the Ermine Estate, where the Council has invested very little over the last twenty years (and what has been invested has been for short term projects which come and go and make no impact) sustainability and sustainable relationships are key.

It is unclear from your proposal who the “third party” organisations will be who you will use to encourage local boards, how they will be commissioned and what role the local boards will have in this decision. You may not be aware that this has been tried before using the voluntary sector and it did not work – it was the equivalent of putting a sticking plaster on a wound rather than trying to heal it from within. The reason it did not work is that that staff from the voluntary agency involved were unable to build relationships within the time constraints and soon withdrew leaving the local situation unsupported and demoralised. Everything very quickly fell apart. Because of the lack of sustained community development in the past, local people need to be able to trust the professionals, and this trust can only be built up over a period of time.

It is not clear from your proposals what the terms of reference for the “third party” would be and how they would be selected for the task, and the proposal that Council staff would be committed to supporting meetings by attending when required is frankly

ludicrous. Again, my experience over 20 years on this estate, has shown that such input has been patchy to say the least and that the ability of the local board to follow up actions with Council staff has not worked in any way.

Your proposal has as its starting point an assumption that local boards with appropriate short term support can sustain the level of activity, energy and accountability that the Neighbourhood Working project has in place. It is my experience over many years on this estate that this is a false assumption to make in our context. The strategy you are suggesting has been tried before and it has not worked and I am far from confident that it work this time. The infrastructure that Neighbourhood Working provides is the glue that holds a lot of things together locally; once this is taken away, I do not think your alternative proposals will be sustainable either in the short or long term.

Thank you for your recent invitation to comment on a revised proposal. I welcome the opportunity to comment before this is consulted on externally, given the potential impact on resources in sections other than Neighbourhood Management that parts of this proposal now suggest. A transfer of working burden as it were.

In broad terms I and my teams welcome and are supportive of the outline proposal to focus resources on one area. We assume this to mean focusing on the area deemed by members to be that most in need of support. We note that ultimately, should suitable improvement in that area be achieved, then there is the potential for the resources to be moved to the area next in line for assistance. This approach affords the opportunity for constant improvement in the city through flexibility and targeting of resources, and should any of the areas we are having to withdraw from now deteriorate, then there is the very real possibility that they might eventually benefit from this kind of flexible support. On the basis that this approach targets resource where it is most needed, given the difficult financial position the authority finds itself in, there is much to commend this proposal.

However, whilst supporting the targeting of resources we have now noted that the aim is still to offer not just continued support for the area we are having to withdraw from, but that we are encouraging them to develop in such a way as to ensure they are effective at “holding the council and other agencies to account”. I feel that this is unfortunate language and as we should really be seeking to work with such community groups, as resources permit, then statements such as this, which are repeated in the document, are unhelpful.

The statement on “upskilling the community representatives on the boards” is supported, although I wondered if this might require some qualification. Combined with the view given in the previous section I wonder if it might be possible/appropriate to amend this slightly to say such as “efficient and effective at taking a strategic approach to neighbourhood development, so as to work constructively with other agencies to achieve positive results for the community”. The emphasis here being in both

encouraging them to take a strategic approach to issues, and working with other agencies, not 'holding them to account'.

Of particular concern is the statement that attendance at board meetings would be by way of key staff at a senior level. This I am sure has arisen from frustration that such attendance, although often a misguided request, has not always been possible or appropriate in the past. I am sure that I do not need to remind anyone that these services have taken significant cuts themselves over recent years, including reductions in senior staff. As such we simply no longer have resources available to support such promises, which as they stand are unlimited. Encouraging such aspirations would, in my view, ultimately be counterproductive both for the services, as staff are drawn into more meetings, and for the council's reputation as increasingly we no longer have the resources to meet the aspirations expressed. The only way this could be achieved would be through either additional resources being given to these services areas, or by organised reductions in the workload. Neither of these seem realistic possibilities in the current economic climate.

I would therefore respectfully suggest that an alternative approach might be appropriate, one that was almost how things operated in many areas before the advent of paid neighbourhood management services. At that time local community groups would see their local councillor/s as their conduit to the council, and they would not always expect to be able to get a senior officer to attend meetings. The local councillor would both take on the views of the community via such meetings, but also act as the council's representative, able to feed in developments/constraints on behalf of the council. The ward member would obviously seek to raise any concerns with the Portfolio Holder if strategic, or through customer services if it is an operational request. This approach would help to support members' standing in communities and embolden their positions.

Today's limited resources mean that we must be careful not to promise what we know we won't be able to deliver, and also that we think carefully about where every hour is spent. A look at the way other districts have pulled back from the historic parish council system locally, for the same reasons of resource difficulties, is an obvious example. Liaison between districts and parishes is now arguably at an all-time low in my experience, with exceptions only being where the parish council is able to take up a function previously offered by the local district. Even then the support is limited. To be blunt senior officers meeting in the evenings to talk about an overflowing litter bin or a bin which is often left out is not good use of resources, and counter to the new culture that the council is trying to develop, where officers at the correct level are empowered to deal with issues directly. The examples given do not require an evening attendance by a senior officer, but simply a call to customer services. There may be something of a learning or "upskilling" message within this that we need to get through, but that message must start sooner rather than later if we are to be successful in reducing distractions from our recently published vision.

With regard to the amended proposal.

On behalf of Quit 51 I would be grateful for the alternative venue to enable me to continue to offer our services. I will await more information on this.

MRNI submit that there are two main objections to the proposal.

1. Refocussing all efforts on Sincil Bank area with minimal support to Abbey and other areas with greater use of volunteers.
2. Closure of the Belmont Community Office.

The proposals are simply not viable. Firstly we do not have sufficient volunteers to carry out the work we already do. There is no reason to believe that this will change significantly, no matter how much promotion is given to recruitment. Where is the evidence that this is realistic?

*Upskilling existing volunteers* is simply management speak and means very little but assumes that the existing volunteers have the time, ability, and even the desire to undergo such a process.

If the City Council think that we have plenty of such volunteers then they are even more out of touch than we thought! Organisations such as MRNI have been short of suitable volunteers throughout our twenty year existence and recently this has become critical. We do not have the ability to continue to publish "Abbey News" nor do we have the ability to publicise residents' meetings which need almost a door-to-door campaign.

In the case of MRNI, our core group of 7 members has five over the age of 70, one of whom is actually over 80. Attempts at finding suitable replacements have so far proved negative.

The possibility of long term significant funding assumes that the board members wish to take this responsibility. The proposal to provide support of £1000 a year is not defined. For how long, administered by whom, on what terms, and what accountancy will be needed?

Some years ago the Board held a series of small meetings with Service Heads to try to obtain a commitment to set their strategy to work in response to local needs rather than providing what they think is needed. In several cases this commitment



was given by officers but has never produced a positive outcome, and more work is needed. If a successful relationship could be built in this regard, it would result in less work for City Hall but a significant cultural change would be needed.

The proposal mentions several alternative organisations to take on some of the work done in the local office. We wonder just how much research has been done to support such a view. Development Plus is one mentioned. They are in the process of closing their Croft Street premises! Lincoln College are notable for their lack of interest in such matters and attempts over the years have repeatedly failed. Abbey Access Centre is hopefully open again on a long term basis but it came perilously close to closing and their staff are unlikely to be able to make much of a contribution to local affairs.

Please do not think that the Neighbourhood Board will continue without support from the council. It simply will not happen. The work already done has been, we believe, valuable to the council and must have saved effort by officers. At present the police use the Board as their "Police panel" for consultation purposes although we understand that this is a statutory requirement, it also will fail.

In recent years, Paul Carrick has sought and obtained sources of funding and helped organisations to make applications. Community First was such an initiative resulting in over £100,000 injection into Abbey activities. Without him and the office such an option is just not open to us. Paul has identified a considerable number of funding sources and helped the relevant organisations with their bid for such funding. For a small group to try this unaided is a daunting prospect.

We believe that so much has been put into Neighbourhood Working in our community that the Council cannot simply walk away in the manner suggested. Residents have come to rely on help from the Belmont Office on all manner of issues such as ASB, contact with local police, fly tipping and advice on benefit issues, even if only for initial signposting.

We already know that residents are reluctant to make contact with city hall or report issues via 101 telephone services. Reporting levels are already very low and this change will mean an even lower reporting level. It is all very well to say that information is available on the City Council website for instance. That website is almost silent where telephone numbers are concerned and seems totally concentrated on email contact.

It must also be remembered that Abbey Ward has a considerable Eastern European population which can be difficult to engage. The Belmont office has been of value here also and while it is not the only means of contact, we need every opportunity in this matter.

The Police use the office as a local base in return for a small annual rental. It is difficult to see where they could be based if the office were to close. They have made a considerable commitment in security and communications and we cannot afford to lose this police presence when community policing is already under pressure. Crime and ASB are both seriously under recorded already and areas such as the Arboretum and Abbey Park attract a number of undesirable vagrants to the detriment of the area and use of the parks.

The continuance of the Belmont Office is vital to the residents of Abbey Ward. The fact that it has only been open on a limited basis for the last twelve months is simply down to lack of staff and any suggestion that usage has declined is simply misleading for this reason.

There are residents in Abbey, as there are elsewhere, to whom going to the local office is a major effort. A visit to City Hall is beyond them in such cases. They need a face which is familiar and which they can trust.

We understand that the annual running cost of the office is less than £5,000. Hardly a significant amount in the nature of things. Why not make use of the facility by actually transferring a small number of staff to make Belmont Office their base? They could deal with local queries as part of their duties.

Similarly there is no realistic prospect of operating the office by volunteers only without much more consideration of the issues involved.

There is the suggestion of selling the building to raise funds. Before asking to what purpose those funds would be put, we believe that this may not be possible. The office was purchased as part of the Renewal Area initiative which was funded from European sources. We were told at the time that if the office were to be sold, then that money would have to be returned.

We now hear that it is possible that any money raised from the sale of the Belmont Office would remain within Neighbourhood Working. In other words Abbey Ward loses and Sincil Bank gains from our loss. This is totally unacceptable and may be illegal under EU rules?

Since the Renewal Area was launched almost twenty years ago, we have had firstly Frank Hanson and then Paul Carrick who have both proved invaluable and both have worked far beyond their official brief in both effort and hours. Their commitment has made an enormous difference. In recent months, Paul has been less effective because his efforts have been spread over a much larger area.

To withdraw Neighbourhood Working from Abbey Ward, and other areas, will result in the City Council becoming even more remote from the residents it is supposed to serve. To save a relatively small amount of money will have the greatest detrimental effect on those most in need of support. We do understand the disastrous effect of the reduction in Government funding but we believe that every effort should be made to reverse this decision.

We certainly do not object to a review of Neighbourhood Working but it is regrettable that local groups and organisations were not involved in such a review. Together they have a wide range of local knowledge and experience but they have been totally ignored. This appears to us to show a considerable degree of contempt for all their efforts over the years. Initiatives such as Street Champions need a base with professional support.

The proposed strategy contains phrases such as “Strengthening accountability to local people”, Prioritise activity aimed at reducing poverty and deprivation” and Providing Community leadership at neighbourhood level”. This simply replaces a system which works and has provided benefits with pure management-speak. Meaningless and vague at best. We have no confidence in such a so-called strategy.

If the Neighbourhood Working area were extended to include that part of Abbey Ward centred on Monks Road between Greetwell Road and the River Witham, there could be considerable benefits in a new Board covering this area and the Sincil Bank regeneration area, not least of which is the efficiency of running a board covering both of these areas.

Additionally, as Sincil Bank does not have a local office, the existing Belmont Office could service both areas. Although it is not centred near Sincil Bank this would be a low cost option and the distance is not necessarily a disadvantage.

There could also be considerable advantages from a joint approach to the needs of these two areas such as Policing, ASB, Health and Employment.

It is evident that Abbey ward residents have a considerable sense of belonging and an appreciation of the benefits of Neighbourhood Working. To retain part of Abbey would actually produce a considerable feel-good factor which would benefit Sincil Bank.

The way in which the review of Neighbourhood Working and the subsequent “consultation” have, we believe, severely

damaged the credibility of the City Council. Future efforts must be directed to mitigating this view and MRNI is keen to help.

Thanks for your email. The only thing that I'd like to add is in relation to the whole thing of making room for the Neighbourhood Board. The way it came across was that after a year, the board would have to start paying to use the community centre. It's my understanding that the council started the group and should probably pay for, or make room for, the group to run. If I'm honest, I haven't been for a while because I've been really busy, but when I have been it has been 'outsider' heavy. There doesn't seem to be much buy-in from the residents when I'm there, and the guys that are working on the estate are often too busy to turn up too. I'm not sure you'll have many, or any, 'insiders' after your team has left, and Sylvia has retired in July. How things work on other estate, I have no idea though.

I hope this helps.

Also, I'm aware that the council is keen to keep ownership of Moorland Community Centre, and so my offer to buy it might not go down well. I would also be up for leasing the centre on a peppercorn rent, which would save your budget on staff, cleaning, and business rates. As we are a church we wouldn't have to change the use of the building to have it registered as a place of worship so that we can save money all round, and make improvements to the building and what is offered there for the community.

We're also very keen to have an office on the estate, so if there's no chance of us buying the building, or leasing it, we would also be interested in renting some office space there if the price is right. We might be able to match what the Neighbourhood Team is currently paying for their office.

Thanks again for consulting us, and I hope you have a blessed week.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment further on the proposed changes to the way that Neighbourhood Working will be supported in future by the City Council. The Parish of St Giles recognises the severe financial constraints which the City Council is facing as a result of the ongoing austerity measures, and whilst we can only echo the sadness of our community at the loss of these important services, we would like to express appreciation for the way that the Council has listened to the concerns raised and is trying to help the community through this transition period. Our comments on the revised proposals are split into two sections: firstly relating to the new proposals and how they will apply to St Giles in particular, secondly relating to future Neighbourhood Working as a whole.

The objectives from the perspective of the community in St Giles:

1) Improve the governance and administrative resilience of the boards

*This stream of work will improve the governance arrangements of the boards and will develop a clear vision, framework and define roles and responsibilities of those on the boards. Boards will then have the tools to bid for external funding directly and have their own bank account. Additionally this stream will support the boards in developing standard agendas and minutes, report templates, arranging and booking meeting spaces and other administrative tasks.*

As the Board moves to a devolved role, only minimally supported by the City Council, it will be important that its governance arrangements reflect that of an independently constituted group. It is likely therefore that the Board governance will need a complete overhaul, rather than improvement. Similarly, working in a completely different funding arena, where partnerships with the private and third sectors are likely to take precedence over the link with the City Council, it will be necessary for any support offered to be able to completely review the Neighbourhood Plan, its aims and objectives, its methodology and its targets. It will therefore be important that the third sector agency chosen has proven experience of working with community groups who have started from a very low base, as this will be a complete re-write, rather than a refresh, of the Board and its role in its community.

2) Upskilling of the community representatives on the boards;

*This stream would provide training to develop the skills of existing board members and other key community members to build confidence and resilience in delivering the plans of the local community.*

It will be necessary that this work reflects the existing skills and skills gaps on our particular Board, rather than applying a 'one-size fits all' training programme which all Neighbourhood Board members across the different areas of the City will be expected to attend. The skills audit and response should also be placed in the context of what needs to be delivered locally – again this will vary from area to area.

3) Attracting and developing volunteers within the area to support the work of the local board

*This would look at identifying opportunities to engage new volunteers or community*

*advocates on the board and in the local community.*

Volunteering is an area where St. Giles suffers, with a number of our community groups struggling to attract volunteers. However it is suspected that there is huge untapped potential within the Parish, and so for St Giles this would be a priority area of work. We would like to see a full and detailed volunteer recruitment and engagement programme, as well as training for volunteers in volunteer co-ordination and management.

4) Providing each board with the ability and confidence to help them identify the needs and desires of the local communities

*Most areas have, or are working on, a neighbourhood plan which is based around the needs or aspirations of the local community. This outcome is around refreshing the top three or four priorities of each area based on existing plans and evidence to make sure that they are owned by and representative of local boards. This will therefore help each neighbourhood board to have a clear set of priorities and aspirations for the local area or community.*

This work tallies closely with that under heading 1). As noted there, it is unlikely to consist of a 'refresh'. The Board is being moved from a City Council directed, managed and administered programme, into a new era of being independent, reliant on other support and funding sources, and completely self-governing. The plan for St Giles will need to be comprehensively rewritten, as much of the current work is directly related to the input of the City Council's paid staff, none of whom will be available to the Board in future. We believe the current neighbourhood plan has a three-year term which concludes in 2018 highlighting the need for a new, not refreshed plan for the future.

5) Identifying long term funding opportunities.

*There is significant amounts of funding available to community groups to deliver community projects and aspirations. Currently the boards are not set up to bid for or manage any such funds. This outcome is aimed at helping boards understand what funds are available and how to bid for them.*

There are a number of agencies in the third sector which can offer support for bids for funding, and it would perhaps be more appropriate to ensure that Boards are aware of funding streams, and the available support to access them, rather than trying to upskill Board members to make bids. Successful bid making is an art, dependent upon a comprehensive understanding of the strategic priorities of the funding organisation, and is most successful when carried out by specialists. This could be an area where Boards could choose to spend part of their annual funding to buy in help as required.

Support (financial and non-financial) on an ongoing basis for neighbourhood boards;

*£1000 a year each for the 7 boards we are proposing to withdraw from by way of a direct grant. This would be spent and allocated by the board for the purpose of delivering their functions (postage, printing, room hire etc).*

- It would be granted directly to the board annually at the start of the financial year subject to a light touch annual review by the City Council and fulfilment of basic criteria. These are yet to be determined but might include minimum number of meetings each year, minimum attendance, demonstration of moving forward with business etc.*
- Attendance at the board as required by key staff at a sufficiently senior level from the City Council. It is not expected that the boards will be attended by a single representative of the council on an ongoing basis as has been the case with the neighbourhood manager. The boards should though expect the attendance of sufficiently senior staff from key areas to enable a dialogue about issues affecting their areas or to help develop their plans.*

The criteria for ongoing funding support from the City Council seem appropriate, but should not in any way impinge upon or restrict the Board's ability to set its own work programme, targets, and measures of success, as the funding is not awarded to support the delivery of such outcomes, rather as core funding to support the ongoing existence of the Board.

Attendance by key staff at a sufficiently senior level from the City Council is absolutely paramount if the Board is to fulfil its role as offering a focus for community engagement around issues which lie within the City Council's remit. It is an area where, particularly in St Giles, the Board has struggled in recent years, and it will seriously weaken the Board's ability to function as a voice for the community if it is not adequately addressed within the new arrangements.

#### Neighbourhood working in the City as a whole:

Withdrawal of neighbourhood working across the bulk of the City:

This appears to represent a significant shift in the City Council's approach to resident involvement from one which is global to one which is project based. Whilst this is understandable given the non-statutory nature of these functions and in the light of the financial constraints, local government and the communities it serves do not operate well in the absence of robust and comprehensive avenues for community involvement in not just the political process, but the physical outplaying of that process within the community.

In order to safeguard the networking that has been built up by the Neighbourhood Working teams, the City Council should consider as part of its overall commission a review of how the teams that will continue to work in the community – the housing Resident Involvement teams, the ASB teams, the arts/culture/leisure teams – will be more responsive and proactive to maintain the network of community liaison, and how Boards will continue to be a part of that ongoing dialogue between service commissioning, delivery and review.

There should also be a clear vision for what happens long-term with neighbourhood working in its geographically limited and project focussed format, and what place communities will have in deciding where the priority for future investment in this service should lie. The rationale for involvement beginning in the Sincil Bank area has not been made clear; its duration is not clear either; nor the change in remit which presumably accompanies the shift from a 'residential and community' focus to that of 'regeneration'.

Proposal for third sector support:

It is our view in light of the comments above that the third sector support, whilst it may be commissioned as a single unit, should be specified and work programmes agreed at individual Board level. The detailed commissioning of the services should be agreed at locality level. It will be essential that the agency chosen is one that has a good 'fit' with those it will be working with – i.e. the Board members, and therefore individual Boards should have the opportunity to choose those with whom they will be working. Boards therefore need to be deeply involved in the commissioning process from start to finish. The City Council would have a role in overseeing performance of the contract, but the views of the individual Boards will again be critical to establishing the extent to which the contract has indeed achieved its objectives and targets.

The proposal should be set in terms of a number of hours of support, rather than a calendar year or limited duration: different Boards will have different levels of need for support in each of the areas identified above. A Board which felt competent to review its own core governance and structures should not be expected to have to 'lose' that element of the time of support. Similarly, a Board should be able to commission in depth support for an area it perceived as weak – e.g. volunteering engagement, which might not occur until after some time had passed and the Board had settled into its new identity and way of working. A calendar timeline would therefore restrict this kind of flexibility.

We have now had a chance to review the revised proposals for the Neighbourhood Working Service and we have also circulated these widely to the voluntary and community sector in Lincoln via our bulletin and website. Paul Carrick also gave a presentation at our Volunteer Co-ordinators' Forum on 11 April 2017.



The revised proposals demonstrate that the Council has listened to the feedback received so far and we were grateful for the meeting on 27 February, following our comments about the initial consultation. This helped us to clarify the areas we had concerns about and to expand on these, which we hope also helped in terms of planning.

Whilst we welcome the new document and the extra detail with regards to the future shape of neighbourhood services, some concerns still remain, namely:

- The withdrawal of high profile services from 7 neighbourhoods (including some of those in wards which are amongst the highest nationally in terms of multiple deprivation) continues to be a concern. Also the perception for local residents that only the Sincil Bank area has value in terms of Council support and long term strategic planning.
- The long term sustainability of the Neighbourhood Boards after the initial one year's input and support from voluntary sector agencies, in terms of strong local leadership and resilience.
- A concern about what happens to a neighbourhood if the existing Neighbourhood Board decides not to engage with these new proposals. This could potentially put the whole neighbourhood and its residents at an immediate disadvantage.
- Parity of access to services and engagement with the Council across the city – this could be very strong in some areas, where the Neighbourhood Boards are robust, but the likelihood is that it could become weaker in less cohesive areas where residents struggle to come together as a strong, united Board.
- The loss of a valuable community asset in the St Giles Matters building.

We hope that these on-going concerns will be addressed by the review and we remain open to continued dialogue going forwards.

Although I didn't comment on the first round of proposals, looking at the review it would make sense to offer the support and reduce the level of that rather than withdraw entirely. Moorland is a deprived community which needs supporting to make Lincoln a better place.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the revised proposals on the Neighbourhood Working Service. My comments are as follows:

1. Whilst I welcome the fact that you propose to buy in support from the third sector to deliver support to the neighbourhood boards and areas for a period of a year, I am still concerned as to whether individuals or groups within an area will have the capacity and skills, and will be prepared to come forward and take on the ongoing roles necessary to enable the neighbourhood boards to continue to function and move community aspirations forward. Most voluntary organisations struggle to have sufficient resource for all the roles within their own organisation, and local organisations with paid employees face the same cash restraints and pressures that are currently being faced by Lincoln City Council. I wonder what discussions have been or will be held with neighbourhood boards and the associated organisations to test the engagement and therefore the sustainability of this model.
2. The proposals for the Moorland Community Centre means that the Centre will continue to be available for use by agencies i.e. the benefits advice team, on a key holding model. I assume this may mean that the agencies will need to provide a 2 staff presence or deal with the issues associated with lone working. Has the implications of this for agencies and hence the viability of them being able to continue to use the facilities been considered?
3. From the perspective of my own organisation, The Lincoln Foodbank distribution centre at Moorland Park Methodist Church, I am concerned that the 'closure' of the Moorland Community Centre except when it is in use by an existing group or agency will impact on the signposting of residents to organisations able to offer support at times when they are facing difficulties or a crisis in their lives. As I explained in my response to the initial consultation, in 2015 Lincoln Foodbank set up a number of additional foodbank distribution centres close to areas of high deprivation, namely Moorland, Birchwood, and Park/Sincil bank to enable easy access for people without transport who therefore would have difficulty travelling distances to collect food parcels. Likewise being unable to obtain food vouchers locally could result in people not knowing that they are eligible to receive a food voucher; not knowing where to go to obtain a voucher; or being unable to travel to get a voucher and so in any of these scenarios the result is they go without food. The Moorland Neighbourhood Team being located within the Moorland Estate has been easily accessible to signpost residents to organisations that can provide support and assistance and also issue Foodbank vouchers. Where residents are not currently supported by an agency this is an essential service to be available locally.

I am sending you this email about the closure of St Giles Matters, I hope you realise closing the office will mean trouble on the

estate. Taking this away from the people on the estate there will be nowhere for them to go, plus the elderly and the disabled they rely on St Giles Matters. Closing will also mean taking the Police off the estate whilst there has been Police presence the estate has been trouble free. Maybe you could think again about closing St Giles matters, I know you are doing this to save money, what is going to happen to the staff I went in there to sit and have a natter with the staff when they were not too busy. It's a sad world when people have to leave a place they enjoy working in and getting out and about chatting to tenants and other people they encounter. As soon as the office is closed and the Police are gone there will be trouble from all walks of life, the trouble makers will have a field day causing trouble for everybody. It would be a good idea if you could see your way to keeping the office open, and maybe stop any trouble that will occur. I have lived happily on this estate knowing there is a police presence on hand, I am also one of the disabled that used the office I for one will miss chatting to the staff having a laugh with them. It will not be the same up here when this happens. Please change your minds about closing St Giles Matters.

#### Response to Neighbourhood Working Consultation

Thank you for providing the NW Consultation document. I have one further comment to make regarding your revised plans about City of Lincoln Council staff :

Successful engagement by City of Lincoln Council staff with third sector organisations and local community groups will be vital under the proposed new structure for working with local communities in Lincoln.

This may be entirely new or at least a new emphasis on the working practices of many City Council staff, particularly those who do not specifically engage with communities themselves. They may have relied on the Neighbourhood Working teams to do this work until now or not been aware/involved at all.

Third sector organisations have many skills and experience, local or nationwide, that should be recognised by City Council staff. A culture of giving people (with and without experience) a chance & supporting them to put ideas into practice will also be required to get things done.

It is important City of Lincoln Council ensure staff are aware of their potential role, feel confident, have the required knowledge and skills (including up to date awareness of community working practices) and have a 'can do' attitude.

Therefore City Council employees are likely to require some form of on-going training and support from senior managers.

Kind regards

Following the second consultation document I only have a couple of comments:-

- Based on comments made at this week's Abbey Board Meeting there is still great concern over the future of Belmont Street. Residents feel incredibly disgruntled that any proceeds from the sale of this building would be put into Sincil Bank, particularly as it was regeneration money for Abbey that paid for the building in the first instance. Perhaps it could be considered utilising the funds from the sale of Belmont Street to continue work in Abbey too, I do feel the needs of

Abbey Ward are as important if not greater.

- Although the contents of the second consultation are much more favourable to Neighbourhood Boards across the City I feel you may have lost support for this option as many are still feeling incredibly dejected from the first consultation. Had this proposal gone out first you may well have had a much more favourable response. I tried to get the Abbey Board to see the positives of this proposal and I hope they will see that there are some positive benefits of having the Voluntary Sector Support them but it was difficult to get them past the negatives.
- Although I appreciate you only have funds to support one year's worth of sustainable work I suspect many of the boards are going to need longer, this was definitely the feeling I got from Abbey Board.
- Board Members were not entirely convinced Council Representatives would continue to attend (from specific departments) as they have felt let down in the past with this promise, a re-assurance on this aspect would be essential.
- Development plus is committed to supporting this proposal and will help in any way it can to support the future of Neighbourhood Boards, as an attendee of the Abbey Board for nearly 7 years I would personally be devastated to see it fold.

Firstly, thank you for responding to the initial consultation with this updated proposal.

We fully appreciate the necessity for these changes and we are particularly pleased that:

- Local boards will be supported to continue
- Key staff at a sufficiently senior level from the City Council will attend board meetings

Ongoing funding of £1000 per year to support direct costs of running board meetings is good and demonstrates a long term commitment.

Using third sector organisations to help with the transition period is similarly a good idea. I would raise only one concern with this; there is the potential for different boards to develop at different paces and to different levels of skill, expertise and knowledge. Whilst localising the development of these boards is generally a positive there should be some safeguards to ensure some boards do not become under-developed in comparison to others. Support from the Council and Third Sector organisations during this one-year period should as much as possible be uniform across all neighbourhoods.

Regarding point 4: *'Providing each board with the ability and confidence to help them identify the needs and desires of the local communities.'* This is an area where Acts Trust may be able to provide a service. We are trained to deliver a course specifically for local community groups which guides them through the process of how to identify the needs of the local community and how to develop action plans. Based on the revised proposals we would be interested in exploring how we could support in this way. Regarding external funding, will boards be encouraged to set up as independent CICs or something similar? Will there be support with helping boards to become constituted?

I agree that it is good to make it possible for boards to be able to bid for external funding. I would be nervous about any third

sector or other organisation offering do this on behalf of a board (such as an 'umbrella' organisation). That would potentially remove the independence of the board and open up possible conflict of priorities.

I would also be concerned that, unlike the current model where resources and opportunities are fairly spread across neighbourhoods, you could have a scenario where the most skilled boards are able to attract funding for their areas better than others would for theirs. (Competition for same pots of funding between boards?) Some lesser skilled boards could miss out and therefore neighbourhoods suffer by comparison.

Alternatively could there be one CIC for the City (all areas) with a representative of each neighbourhood board and representative from CLC as a trustee? This could encourage collaborative work and joint (higher) funding bids? Maintains city wide approach whilst maintaining localised agendas?

Thank you for consulting Birchwood Big Local on the proposed changes to the Council's Neighbourhood Working Service. Once again I am responding on behalf of our Partnership Board.

Whilst the limited additional support arrangements are welcome, as far as they go, they focus almost entirely on the Neighbourhood Boards. These are, of course, quite separate from Birchwood Big Local, although there is a small overlap in membership. The only comment we have on the new proposals is that we trust that the same commitment that senior City Council officers will attend meetings when invited will apply equally to our Partnership Board, as indeed it has in the past. The new proposals do not alter the fundamental scale of the massive budget cuts still proposed. We therefore wish to re-iterate all our previous comments. As previously expressed, Birchwood Big Local have neither the capacity nor the remit to take on all the roles currently carried out by Birchwood Neighbourhood Board or the Neighbourhood Working Service. It is important to re-iterate that we cannot cover gaps created by budget cuts. We can only fund the specific priorities and projects in our Birchwood Big Local Plan, approved by Local Trust nationally, which will be reviewed and updated through the same process.

Although the Council are addressing some concerns in relation to withdrawing the Neighbourhood Boards, the greater impact will be felt from withdrawal of the support and advice that the Neighbourhood Team provide for the wider community in areas such as Birchwood. Their contribution to improving Birchwood and supporting projects being developed and delivered by Birchwood Big Local and other groups is invaluable and will leave a big gap in communities.

To conclude on a positive note, we would like to thank you for the strong support from you personally and your officers in developing our proposals for Jasmin Green and Melbourne Community Park. We trust that this will continue undiminished should the revised proposals for Neighbourhood Working be implemented.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond.

I responded to the original proposal, on 20<sup>th</sup> January. In relation to the revised proposal, my comments are:

- I welcome the proposal for third-sector support for the neighbourhoods boards and areas NW support is proposed to be

withdrawn from – although it will be vital to define the exact support & outcome requirements within the procurement exercise and to ensure an ‘exit strategy’ for the successful provider is clearly set out to ensure a smooth transition at the end of 1-year support;

- The £1,000 p.a. for each of the 7 boards is a positive step;
- Now that the Community Cohesion Officer post is confirmed as ending after 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017, it is important that it is recognised that the level of community cohesion operational activity will be significantly reduced – however with the proposals in place in terms of 1-year third sector support perhaps this could help to formulate alternative ways of picking up some of this work?

I hope my response is self-explanatory, but please let me know if you would like me to clarify further any of the points.