

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD WORKING SERVICE

DIRECTORATE: COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT

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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek the views of Policy Scrutiny Committee prior to submission to Executive.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This business case summarises the current strategy, work programme and resulting structure, of the NW service deployed in specific areas across the city and then goes on to present a number of options for taking the service forward. The business case evaluates each of these options and then proposes a preferred option for the future of the service for Members to consider.

- 2.2 There are currently three teams, north, central and south working across a number of defined areas of the city.

Each area has

- 1 x Neighbourhood Manager.
- 1 x Neighbourhood Administrator.
- 1 x Community Caretaker.

Of those 9 posts, currently 6 are occupied by permanently contracted staff. The other three posts are filled by fixed term contracts or are vacant.

- 2.3 Total costs of the Neighbourhood Working service as currently configured are

	Budget 2017/2018	Budget 2018/2019	Budget 2019/2020	Budget 2020/2021	Budget 2021/2022	Total MTFS 2017-22
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Existing Budget	331,710	336,320	341,160	347,690	354,390	1,711,270

2.4 The recommended option arising from the business case is summarised as:

- Reduction to one team focusing intensely in one area of the city only. If the council moves forward with a regeneration scheme in the Sincil area then that will be the targeted area. If not, the scheme will be based in an area of greatest need, but also where the greatest impact can be achieved.
- Deliver a one year package of support through the third sector to ensure sustainable active neighbourhood boards.
- Deliver a saving of £177,000 per year.

3. Background

3.1 The neighbourhood working programme originally started in Moorland a number of years ago and developed into St Giles and Park Ward and following a review in 2012 began expanding in to the other areas listed in Sec 5.1 of the report below.

The programme has histrionically grown organically and followed an approach that is focussed around areas where there is an identified need (based generally on the Indices of Multiple Deprivation) and the primary aim was to help communities improve the quality of life in those areas.

The team are generally not direct service providers but rather facilitators and connectors, working with and through the residents themselves to encourage, support and pressure different statutory and non-statutory agencies, voluntary and community organisations to focus work in these areas to tackle the key issues impacting on the local communities who live there.

3.2 As such the work of the teams covers a whole array of different tasks and outcomes including

- managing community facilities;
- supporting or arranging events, promotions and campaigns;
- writing funding bids;
- identifying needs, gathering data and turning that into intelligence;
- persuading negotiating and supporting organisations to deliver bespoke or focused services in their areas;
- signposting individuals to established support;
- providing a link between residents and the council and other organisations;
- reporting problems to the Council or other agencies on behalf of residents;
- providing a listening ear or a shoulder to cry on;
- providing a framework for residents to come together and empower themselves.

4. Main Body of Report Purpose of the Review

4.1 The neighbourhood working teams have been successful in a variety of ways over the years it has operated in the City and a great deal of very positive work has been delivered in our communities. However given the unprecedented pressures on local government funding it is necessary review the scope, purpose and cost of delivering what is a non-statutory service to ensure it continues to have maximum impact but within a much smaller cost envelope. The scale of savings anticipated at the outset of this review has necessitated a “root and branches” assessment of the service to

comprehensively re design it in terms of scope, reach and focus.

- 4.2 Fundamentally this review is focussed on orientating the service to focus it on the Council's Vision 2020 objectives whilst also delivering a significant saving to the MTFS.
- 4.3 However, there are a number of drivers associated with the review of the Neighbourhood Working Service. These include internal, external, local and national drivers and are summarised below:

i) Refocus of our strategic priorities.

The focus, structure and funding of the council (and indeed nationally) has changed since the Neighbourhood Working team was created some 10 years ago. The Council's strategic Vision2020 document launched in January 2017 has the following priorities –

- Let's drive economic growth;
- Let's reduce inequality;
- Let's deliver quality housing;
- Let's enhance our remarkable place.

It is essential that we ensure that all the services we deliver focus on delivering against these objectives.

While the NW team work across all of those priorities, evidence and a strong leadership steer make it clear that neighbourhood working resource needs to be realigned to deliver work on supporting the economic regeneration of the areas we work in – building employment opportunities and supporting our residents to upskill or prepare for work. This is seen as a major factor in lifting people out of poverty.

ii) A changing service delivery landscape.

The environment that neighbourhood working teams are delivering in is a changing one. One of the impacts of cuts to local government budgets and public spending is a shift in the ways that services are delivered by a whole range of other agencies. This has in some cases seen a complete withdrawal of services by delivery agencies (such as the withdrawal of Healthy Lifestyles funding by the County Council) and in other cases a move away from targeted services to more universal services, less tailored to particular local communities. This inevitably makes it more difficult for the neighbourhood working teams to engage and encourage organisations to tailor their services to the needs of our communities.

In addition the voluntary and community sector are changing the way they deliver services. They too are affected by cuts in public spending but are also more flexible in their ability to deliver, to change and refocus and to identify needs and seek opportunities and funding to meet those needs. The voluntary and community sector in Lincoln is thriving and is delivering a great deal of work across the city.

iii) Our financial position.

Since 2010 the Council, alongside the majority of other local authorities, has experienced unprecedented financial challenges in various forms; central

government funding reductions, all time low returns on investments and a national economic downturn affecting jobs, housing and business growth, which has in turn created pressure on the generation of local income streams together with a rising demand for council services from customers who rely on the safety net provided by local government.

The financial outlook for the Council continues to be extremely challenging. The central government's November 2015 Spending Review and subsequent Local Government Finance Settlement confirmed that funding cuts to local government would continue until 2019/20 and on scale far greater than any other Government department.

The distribution of funding cuts across local government has not been uniform with some types of authorities being significantly more affected, with this Council being one of those suffering a greater proportionate loss. The Council's grant from central government is set to dramatically reduce from £2.585m in 2015/16 to £22,354 in 2019/20, a drop of 99%.

The Council continues to face a difficult financial path to navigate in the forthcoming years in order to deliver a sustainable financial position and will need to deliver further savings of £0.7m to achieve its current target, by 2018/19.

It is therefore essential that we review and consider what we deliver and how we deliver our services across the board. Part of this is an acceptance that the City Council must do fewer things well.

To contribute to this a savings target of £177,000 per year has been set against the neighbourhood working review.

iv) Best use of available resources

Even without the pressure to deliver savings it is important to ensure that we continue to deliver the best service possible within available resources. The potential scope of the existing work of the neighbourhood working teams covering as they do the many needs, priorities and desires of our residents and liaising with the agencies, organisations and council teams that work in across all eight areas is massive and to try and deliver is in hindsight setting the service up to fail.

One of the criticisms (if it can be called that) is that the neighbourhood working team do try to deliver on a vast range of, priorities. This inevitably leads to concerns that the service 'spreading itself far too thinly'. It is appropriate to ask if it is better to focus on a smaller number of areas, or focus more specifically on two or three themes or both.

A smaller area of focus both thematically and geographically should allow the council to deliver more impact and have a greater level of influence on the outcomes sought. The service must also align with our Vision 2020 priorities which will give Neighbourhood working and all the supporting Council teams an even greater focus.

v) The Emergence of Sincil Bank regeneration scheme.

The Council is currently exploring opportunities for a Park Ward regeneration scheme and to that end has commissioned a 'place shaping' strategy. This has been completed and is being developed further with partners and evidence and options for moving forward with the 'revitalisation' of the Sincil Bank area over the next few years is continuing.

Following the council's adoption of this as a key strategic project it will be essential to ensure sufficient resources are allocated to ensure its successful delivery. As part of that it will be vital to consider how neighbourhood working fits in to this project both as a concept in delivering better communities but also in terms of how the Neighbourhood Working team resources are best used to contribute to the aims of the scheme.

vi) Staffing levels

There have recently been several changes to the staffing in the neighbourhood working team with several staff moving on to other positions elsewhere. As with any staff vacancy it is essential to consider what the purpose of the post is and whether the current format is still the right one before recruiting.

The current situation is that 3 of the 9 posts are either filled on a temporary basis or are vacant. Whilst it is accepted some of these posts have been held vacant pending this review, the level of vacant posts provides that catalyst to consider a more fundamental review of the number and type of roles within the team and their purpose.

vii) Collaboration with other City of Lincoln Council teams.

Much work has taken place in recent years across the council in delivering against priorities that the neighbourhood working team also deliver on. For example in 2014 the City of Lincoln Council produced its Community Cohesion strategy and its first Anti-poverty Strategy. Thus the role of other teams within the Council has also changed over the last few years to deliver these priorities.

While there is still much to do, the focus and purpose of the Council, of other teams and the Neighbourhood Working team are more aligned than ever before and the Vision 2020 will see similar priorities further embedded.

Equally there is potential overlap, duplication and possibly conflicting priorities across some teams such as community cohesion, Public Protection and ASB, poverty and community services.

It is therefore more essential than ever to ensure that we do not duplicate work across the council and that teams working in our communities are working together towards the same outputs cohesively. This review provides an opportunity to consider and resolve some of those issues.

viii) Increasing the resilience and independence of Neighbourhood boards and our communities.

Two of the three outcomes of our Neighbourhood Working Strategy (discussed in more detail below) are:

- Strengthening accountability to local people,

- Providing community leadership at neighbourhood level

The neighbourhood working teams have delivered a great deal of very positive work in our communities and have been successful in delivering Neighbourhood Boards in all eight communities they work in. All of these boards have a mix of representatives from the community, statutory and third sector organisations and the council and are chaired by either residents or in some cases by the NW manager for the area. This has undoubtedly strengthened accountability to local people and has encouraged community leadership.

However one of the fundamental principles of neighbourhood working is that it is not intended to stay in an area indefinitely - it is intended to build the capacity of the community to help itself, to engage with partners on behalf of the community, to build community and social capital in an area and then to move on. Equally the service should not be designed to support boards indefinitely, rather the neighbourhood working team should ensure that the boards become self-managing, independent of the council and resilient.

While it is difficult to do, it is essential that we evaluate the programme against the following questions:

- how long does NW stay in an area for?
- how much resource does the council continue to commit?
- What outcomes are NW delivering?
- Has NW delivered all it can?
- Are there some areas in more need than others and hence benefit from those resources more?
- when is the right time to move NW on?

5. Current Team Structure and Location

- 5.1 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 (based at St Giles Matter Building, Swift Gardens)

- St Giles
- Ermine East
- Ermine West

(Some occasional work has been undertaken on Glebe Park)

Central Team (based at Belmont Street Office)

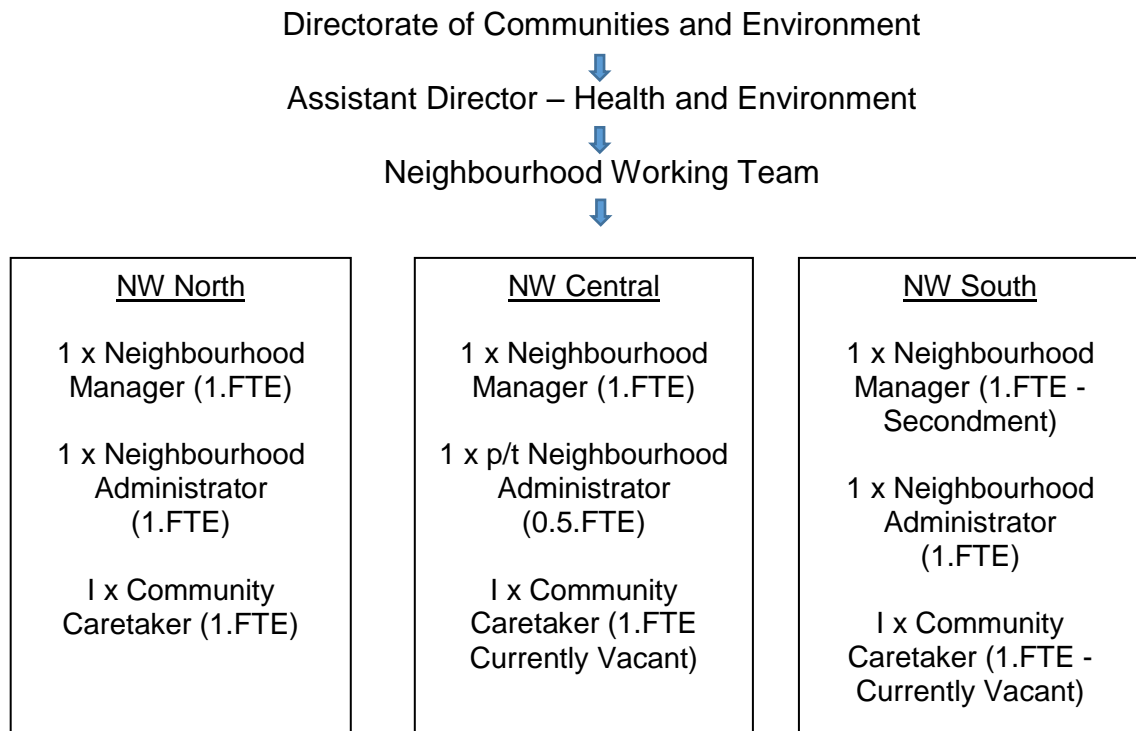
- Abbey and Tower
- Park ward including Sincil Bank and Bracebridge.

(Some work has been undertaken in Carholme however the majority of our presence in that area is from the Policy team from a Community Cohesion perspective)

South team (based at Moorland Community Centre)

- Moorland
- Birchwood

5.2 Team Structure



(Current staffing levels in brackets)

Each of the three Neighbourhood teams have the same structure:

- 1 x Neighbourhood Manager.
- 1 x Neighbourhood Administrator.
- 1 x Community Caretaker.

Given the different needs of each community, the different agencies that work in the communities and the strengths and personalities of individuals working and living in each community, how the team works in each area is slightly different but a brief overview of the core purpose of each role is covered in S5.3

5.3 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 with that community. 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.

Neighbourhood Administrator

The Neighbourhood Administrator is responsible for keeping the neighbourhood informed and up to date with what services are available. This includes setting up

neighbourhood meetings and taking minutes, preparing posters for events, compile local newsletters and keeping social media up to date.

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. As this role has developed the community caretakers have often been involved in small projects such as 'In bloom' or facilitating community events.

The current structure and budget allows that one of the three neighbourhood managers takes the role of programme lead at a more senior grade managing the overall direction of the service and providing line management to the other two Neighbourhood Managers. This programme lead role is not currently filled following the departure of the previous post holder. Each of the NW managers currently refers directly to the Assistant Director.

As can be seen from the diagram above, of those 9 posts, 3 are either vacant or filled on a temporary basis.

5.4 The Neighbourhood Working Strategy

The Neighbourhood Working team have a strategy that sets a framework for their work "City of Lincoln Council Neighbourhood Working Strategy – 2013-2018". The full strategy is included at appendix 1

The strategy states that the purpose of the service is:

'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'

The strategy 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, and driven by the neighbourhood teams. In summary this model is:

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

5.5 Core Objectives for the Neighbourhood Teams

The teams currently have several wide ranging core objectives which are:-

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

How are we doing? Of the 8 neighbourhood working areas all have boards and 5 have Neighbourhood plans. The significant issue is are these boards sustainable or resilient if neighbourhood working resource is reduced or withdrawn from a particular board or area? (as per the overarching principle of neighbourhood working of not staying in an area indefinitely) It seems that we have a mix of those that are and those that are less so, which needs to be reflected in the final recommendations for the future delivery of NW.

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.

How are we doing? All 8 neighbourhood working areas have Neighbourhood boards, although the participation by sufficient residents to give a truly representative cross section of the community is problematic in some areas.

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.

How are we doing? Some good success in this area but this is always ongoing work and as discussed above the refocusing or withdrawal of services at the neighbourhood level by partner agencies makes it increasingly difficult for NW to influence. Additionally, it is a large resource demand on agencies and organisations if a focussed approach across all eight neighbourhood working areas is pursued.

Whilst objective 3 above drives the Neighbourhood programme in each area to meet identified need with partners, the NM's in each area 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.

How are we doing? More could be done by refocusing priorities and resources of the neighbourhood working teams to specifically focus on this aspect as the key priority.

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.

How are we doing? Some great work has been delivered against this objective particularly where the Council's Community Services team are not able to influence or do not have a duty (e.g. the 'In Bloom' competitions). However there is overlap and sometimes raised expectations and contradiction in what statutory services can deliver against the expectation of communities. The interaction between neighbourhood working teams and those services needs reviewing and clarity of role achieved.

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.

How are we doing? A great deal of work has been done by all agencies in this area. Dealing with hate crime is now an embedded principle of the Council's ASB and Public Protection team and there is a corporate focus on some thematic elements of community cohesion.

6. Initial Proposal and Consultation

6.1 Building on the drivers for change articulated in S4.3 above, the review was specifically designed to tackle the following deliberative questions:

- A large amount of time is spent delivering administrative work supporting the boards – how does the council support and encourage other members of the boards to contribute to or take over this role? The current model is unsustainable financially.
- How does the council support and encourage the voluntary, community and resident sector to take over some or all of the elements of neighbourhood working to ensure it is fully part of community life and therefore sustainable? This is a fundamental objective of N.W.
- The documented neighbourhood working model is very top down in terms of process (strategy, boards, data, plans, monitoring) – this can often put off residents who want to engage in specific projects or less formally rather than sit on a board and monitor plans. It may also disengage VCS organisations for similar reasons.
- The resources the council is able to deploy are too thinly spread to take significant impact on deprivation in all eight areas of the city – is it appropriate to withdraw from certain areas and refocus and use these resources over a smaller geographic area for maximum impact? This will encourage investment from partners in support for targeted area/s. Could these areas move over time?

- Is it time to withdraw from certain areas in any event and let other groups or organisations take the lead in their communities (e.g. Birchwood Big Local) and allow a different model or type of community working and development to permeate through our communities?
- Other groups such as those in the VCS are often able to bid for grants to a much wider number and type of funding streams not open to the City Council.
- Other teams within the council now overlap significantly with neighbourhood working such as community cohesion, poverty, cleansing and housing officers. While roles and responsibilities are reasonably well documented, occasionally there is duplication with two or more officers attending meetings, or tension emerging between neighbourhood working and service delivery teams who see the duplication or worse, feel neighbourhood working is increasing demands on already stretched service resources. Is there another way of working to avoid this duplication?
- How does the Council focus in and resource additional community work on any regeneration project in Park Ward, a recognised priority intervention area currently for the authority? In order to ensure the greatest success of any such regeneration project it must focus on supporting individuals and communities.
- The Community Caretaker role has been successful in identifying issues, but not without the tension highlighted above. It was never intended to be a long term model and was set up to both report issues on behalf of residents who often wouldn't report directly to the council and to monitor and report on the council's performance in dealing with these issues and to provide an integrated interface between neighbourhood working and those council services dealing with those issues. This interface has never really happened with the two teams remaining separate. Effectively this adds a layer of bureaucracy and resource which the council can no longer afford. Additionally more tools (e.g. on line/using smartphones) are available to both the public and staff to report such problems, so is the current model still valid?
- Members, Management and community boards have in various ways expressed a desire to be more output focussed and this might be delivered by enabling the Community Caretaker and neighbourhood working administrator to be more project focussed and enabled to deliver rather than monitor and refer. This has been a particular topic for Performance Scrutiny Committee at the annual scrutiny of the Portfolio Holder for Community Cohesion and Social Inclusion. This committee are keen to see real impact over time on the indices of multiple deprivation. Could a different model have such an impact?

6.2 In summary the initial options considered, within the context of the cost envelope available in the Medium Term Financial Strategy were:

- Reduce the number of areas NW operates in
- Reduce the structure of the team
- Refocus the remaining staff on fewer objectives
- Withdraw entire service

- 6.3 Consideration of the developed option is considered in section E of Appendix 2 - Outline Proposal for review of the Neighbourhood Working Service but in summary the pros and cons of each of the top line options above are –

Reduce the number of areas NW operates in

Pros: Delivers savings, allows remaining resource to focus on areas of greatest need. Clear focus and role of team, more concentrated delivery

Cons: Withdrawal from areas that may still require support of some form.

Reduce the structure of the team

Pros: Delivers savings, reprioritise team roles and outputs, more focused delivery and outputs.

Cons: Reduced resource to deliver in communities that may need support in some way, reduced ability to engage with agencies.

Refocus the remaining staff on fewer objectives

Pros: Reprioritise against Vision 2020 priorities, more focused delivery and outputs. Clearly defined role of remaining team.

Cons: May not meet the aspirations of the community or agencies whose objectives are different.

Withdraw entire service

Pros: Greatest level of saving.

Cons: No direct support or resource in any area from a neighbourhood working perspective.

An initial proposal was developed in order to deliver against the drivers raised in the purpose of the review. This proposal was extensively consulted on across partners and neighbourhood boards from 22 December 2016 to 23 January 2017.

- 6.4 The proposed option was actually a hybrid of above options:

- Reduction to one team focusing intensely in one area of the city only, the regeneration of the Sincil Bank area.
- Reducing the breadth of issues tackled by NW to emphasise a focus on lifting people out of poverty through offering them pathways into skills acquisition and ultimately employment.
- A small redesign of the team to include:
 - One Neighbourhood Manager;
 - Deletion of the Community Caretaker role and replaced with the creation of a Community Connector role;
 - Small redesign of the Neighbourhood Administrator role to become Community Support Assistant role;
 - A permanent apprentice role in neighbourhood working.
- A potential move of the NW service into the Directorate of Housing and Regeneration to better align with the emerging regeneration area.

- 6.5 The redesigned team would continue to deliver neighbourhood working and

community development but would move away from the current model of directly supporting the local resident board. Whilst the NW team will be present at the Board, the Board itself will benefit from the same capacity building as the other boards (see below) to enable it to become self-sufficient in the same way other areas will be. This will enable the team to refocus on delivering the council's Vision2020 objective of physical and economic regeneration in an area and hence be focused on helping people into decent, fairly paid employment.

- 6.6 The full proposal document that was sent out for consultation is included at appendix 2. This includes a detailed analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed option and proposed mitigation.
- 6.7 A 2 page summary of the proposal was also included in the consultation which is attached at appendix 3.
- 6.8 Consultation was undertaken with the following -
 - (1) Ward councillors;
 - (2) Residents;
 - (3) Neighbourhood boards;
 - (4) agencies working in our communities;
 - (5) those who share premises with us;
 - (6) Internal COLC teams;
 - (7) community and voluntary sector groups;
 - (8) the public.

A full list of the consultees is included at appendix 4.

- 6.9 The consultation included a questionnaire for respondents to fill in although many respondents replied in a general written format.

7. Results of the First Consultation

- 7.1 In total 26 written responses and 26 consultation questionnaires were received to this consultation. The responses were generally against the proposal to withdraw neighbourhood working from areas of the city.

Generally speaking respondents chose to respond in one way, either in writing or by means of a questionnaire although some respondents used both methods. Some respondents made more than one response for example where they made follow up comments following a group meeting or after asking a question – these have generally been grouped together in a single response.

- 7.2 Several respondents asked clarifying questions. Where these didn't involve a specific view on the proposal they have not been included
- 7.3 Replies came from several different sources – neighbourhood boards, Police, resident board members, residents, NW staff, councillors and other council teams.
- 7.4 A 37 signature petition was also received regarding keeping the St Giles Matters Building open.
- 7.5 The consultation questionnaires are included at appendix 5. The written consultation

responses are included at appendix 6.

7.6 The written consultation responses have had the name and details of the person replying to the consultation removed. However due to the content of the response it is possible in some cases to identify the group or organisation where the response has come from.

7.7 The responses were wide ranging but in summary included –

- General opposition to withdrawing the NW service from areas and the implications that has for those areas. This covers a wide variety of reasons from potential for estates to decline, concern about lack of support for areas in need.
- Impact of losing 'local offices' which are staffed predominately by NW staff. This impacts both as an access point for local services and the closure of 'yet another' public building within local estates ;
- Speed of withdrawal, giving areas little time to adjust;
- Withdrawal of administrative type support for local neighbourhood boards and the potential collapse of the neighbourhood boards if left unsupported.
- Reduced level of engagement moving forward between communities and the services the city council provide.
- Several respondents agreed that if there were a reduced resource it should focus on one area of the city in particular although many did not think the case had been made for focusing in Park ward but instead felt that another area was more or at least equally deserving (generally this was the area on behalf of which the respondent was replying).

7.8 Many respondents were against the proposals in so far that they didn't want to see neighbourhood working withdrawn from their area and either proposed having the NW team remain in their area alone or retain the current format and resources of the NW service.

Given the scale of the saving that needs to be delivered it is not possible to consider an option which is essentially to maintain NW in all of the areas it currently works in.

Other alternatives proposed in the responses included to have a reduced NW capability working across a similar number of areas as they currently do. However, this option does not address several of the issues that were drivers for the review such as the teams are already spread too thinly.

7.9 In the absence of any feasible alternative emerging that addresses the drivers for the review, and in particular or the scale of financial savings required, the preferred option for NW remained the most likely option to progress further. It was clear from the consultation it is no longer possible to deliver NW across the range of geographical areas that we currently do in the format we currently do and still make a financial saving of the scale required.

7.10 Several comments were made around the fact that the voluntary and community

sector could possibly contribute more to supporting the boards or local community. Some comments were made that perhaps Ward Councillors could take more of a community leadership role on the boards or provide more of a link back to the Council – hence provide that conduit For the flow of information between the council and Neighbourhood Boards.

- 7.11 Comments were made regarding the importance of the Community Caretaker role but these seemed to be about tasks outside of the actual current job description which would appear to support the proposal that this role is fundamentally reviewed.
- 7.12 A number of comments were received that suggested that without the support of the NW teams, the Neighbourhood Boards would cease to operate. Given that strengthening local community leadership is an important part of the NW Strategy it was felt important to reflect on these comments and seek to provide a mechanism that would support the boards becoming more sustainable without having to provide that support directly by a NW team.

8. Amendments to the Business Case following the First Consultation

- 8.1 In order to mitigate some of the issues identified in the first phase of public consultation, to ensure a smoother transition and encourage greater sustainability of the boards the business case was amended to include:

- A longer transition period supported by a clear plan ,
- additional support for neighbourhood boards in the first year following the above changes
- small ongoing financial support to each board to cover some operating costs
- and mitigation measures for the closure initially of one local office (St Giles Matters).

8.2 Support for the Neighbourhood Boards

In order to meet some of the issues raised in the consultation exercise and deliver resilient neighbourhood boards that are capable of moving community aspirations forward and holding the council and other agencies to account, that the business case has been altered to include additional support . This support would be focussed on:

- 1) Improving the governance and administrative resilience of the boards;
- 2) Upskilling of the community representatives on the boards;
- 3) Attracting and developing volunteers within the area to support the work of the local Board;
- 4) Providing each Board with the ability and confidence to help them identify the needs and desires of the local communities;
- 5) Identifying long term funding opportunities for each Board.

It is proposed that this support is delivered for a period of one year to allow sufficient time for the support to the boards to be effective.

- 8.3 There are a number of options for delivering this additional support. These could

include:

- dedicated COLC staff and support,
- procure third sector support either from one or many organisations or
- provide cash support to the neighbourhood boards to buy in support as they see appropriate.

8.4 There are several reasons why it would be favourable to procure the third sector to deliver this work for a year –

- Encouraging the third sector and boards to work together in a more structured way should develop links that may have a longer term mutual benefit (for example the boards may bid for grants funds for a specific purpose that might be delivered by the third sector organisations.
- Mobilising staff internally to deliver this support would inevitably lead to delays in delivery of the overall service review implementation phase. Conversely, appointing the third sector allows the reformatted NW team to immediately focus on their revised core area and function.
- There are several third sector organisations that specialise in delivering work in one or many of those objectives and arguably are better placed to offer such support.
- Spreading work across more than one third sector organisation encourages resilience.
- Direct procurement by the City Council provides better oversight (compared with the boards buying in support directly themselves) and should provide better economies of scale.
- Risks of successful delivery sit with the third sector organisations, although the refocussed Neighbourhood team will direct the contract to ensure the third sector delivers to specified outcomes.

8.5 It is therefore proposed that the amended business case will include provision for the council to procure and manage the third sector to deliver a package of support to meet the five objectives above, working with each Board to tailor the package of support to them.

8.6 The Five objectives in more detail:

1) Improve the governance and administrative resilience of the boards;

The legal governance arrangements vary across the boards with generally loose terms of reference only. This stream of work will improve this situation and develop a clear vision, appropriate governance arrangements and define roles and responsibilities of those on the boards.

Ultimately it should allow the boards to sufficiently improve their governance to be able to bid for external funding directly and have their own bank account. Additionally this stream will support the boards in preparing administratively for being self –

sufficient including things such as developing standard agendas and minutes, report templates, arranging and booking meeting space etc. including timings of meetings (e.g. would evening meetings engage more people?).

This work stream will consider whether there are opportunities to bring together different community groups in an area that share the role of representing the views of residents and a desire to change and improve the neighbourhood. A small input of work here may improve the sustainability of these groups.

2) Upskilling of the community representatives on the boards ;

This stream would develop the skills of existing board members and perhaps other key community members to build confidence and resilience in delivering the plans of the local community in particular specific board roles such as Chair, secretariat, treasurer, but also skills around building confidence in engaging, negotiating or challenging agencies in delivering against the need of their local community.

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

This would obviously look at identifying opportunities to engage new volunteers or community advocates in the local community. This may not be directly on the boards if there are other ways to develop volunteers in a specific area but should be with a view that over time some of those will also want to contribute to the local board.

4) Providing each board with the ability and confidence to help them identify the needs 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. These generally have been developed by the neighbourhood teams with the boards. This outcome moving forward is not intended to be a large piece of work but rather a workshop style event to identify 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 or aspirations for the local area or community. Delivery of that plan should be the substantive purpose of each board.

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. The neighbourhood grant funding budget (from the City Council) is allocated by each board but is entirely financially managed by the neighbourhood teams.

A variety of third sector organisations attract funding to deliver work in our communities but this is attracted by the third sector organisation to meet priorities they have identified rather than directly through the board. For example from 2012-2017 to date the National Lottery alone has awarded over £3million in to the Lincoln city area.

This stream of work would be a light touch helping neighbourhood boards understand what funding streams exist.

8.7 In order to respond to some of the other consultation issues it is also proposed that additional support will include -

- £1000 a year each for the 8 boards by way of a direct grant to support the workings of the board (postage, printing, room hire etc.)
- Attendance at the board as required by key staff from the City Council – consultation indicated these would include ASB, Community Services, Tenancy management at a senior level.
- Support by way of sourcing alternative accommodation for other groups currently using our local neighbourhood offices (this relates primarily at this stage to the St Giles matters building which is the only one scheduled for immediate closure and the services relocated in a slimmed down form to the community centre almost next door)..

This will be managed by the new Neighbourhood Team and the cost will be accommodated within their revised (increased) working budget.

8.8 An amended proposal was therefore developed considering and including the issues above and this was then consulted upon.

9. Summary of the Revised Proposal

9.1 The revised proposal -

- ❖ reduce the number of neighbourhood teams from three to one
- ❖ focus intensively in a single area where the potential to have maximum impact exists which has been identified as Sincil Bank
- ❖ refocus the remaining team to be project focused including a review of the roles and responsibilities of the team.
- ❖ **buy in support from the third sector to deliver support to all the neighbourhood boards and areas for a period of one year** utilising the skills and expertise that they have across the city.
- ❖ **Support (financial and non-financial) on an ongoing basis for neighbourhood boards;**
 - £1000 a year each for the 8 boards through a direct grant to support the workings of the board (postage, printing, room hire etc.)
 - Attendance at the board as required by key staff at a sufficiently senior level from the City Council – consultation indicated these would include ASB, Community Services, and Tenancy management. It is envisaged ward councillors will play a key role as the main conduit between the board and council and hence field/refer issues back and forward. This will prevent those same senior officers being called to all eight boards on each cycle which itself is equally unsustainable.

- **Support by way of alternative accommodation for other groups currently using our local neighbourhood offices at St Giles and Moorland -**
 - a structured transition process for the closure of St Giles Matters and the transfer of some functions to the community centre and
 - supporting groups using Moorland Community Centre to a key holding system so they can continue to use the same building.
 - In relation to Belmont Street Office, the NW team will move out and relocate to Sincil Bank. However, an offer has been made to the police to stay in the building rent free. If this proves acceptable then a third sector organisation will be sought to co-locate. Should neither of these options provide sustainable then the future of the building will need to be reviewed at that point.

10. The Second round of Consultation

- 10.1 A copy of the document that went out for the second round of consultation is attached at appendix 7. Following feedback from the first consultation this consultation document was much more concise and asked for written feedback only. Consultation was undertaken for 4 weeks from 20 March 2017 to 18 April 2017.

This round of consultation was again undertaken with those previously listed in appendix 4.

- 10.2 Consultation was also widened to include posters advertising the consultation in the three NW offices and St Giles, Bud Robinson and Sudbrooke Drive Community Centres and a presentation at a meeting of Lincoln Tenants Panel. This was done to raise awareness of the consultation with the public in those areas. There was also some media coverage of the second round of consultation. The consultation was also sent out to the Lincoln CVS mailing list that covers Lincoln and West Lindsey.
- 10.3 Consideration was given to whether there were any other steps that could be taken to enhance the second consultation. It was felt that from an equality impact perspective the groups that might be more impacted from the revised proposal, most notably the withdrawal of NW from some areas, were: –
- Older people (based on the fact that some of the services that NW working support are either focused on or more likely to be accessed by older people);
 - Those from ethnic minorities (based on the fact that particularly in the central area (Abbey and Park)) the NW team have many contacts and interactions with groups representing ethnic minorities.

The second consultation therefore also included a direct approach and offer to meet with:

- Age UK Lincoln and Kesteven.
- Ethnic Minority and Traveller Engagement Team (EMTET) with a request to forward on to the Supplementary Schools in Lincoln.
- Lincoln Polish Society.
- Lincoln Islamic Association.

As a result a meeting was held with Age UK's chief executive to discuss the proposal

in more detail and also with Lincolnshire West CCG who confirmed that they would share the consultation with GP practices and patient groups in Lincoln City area.

It should be noted that the consultations showed that the race characteristic was not in fact adversely impacted.

No other groups responded to the direct approach.

11. Results of the Second Consultation

- 11.1 24 written responses were received from the second round of consultation. The results of the consultation are attached at appendix 8. In addition the consultation was discussed at the neighbourhood boards.
- 11.2 The written consultation responses have had the name and details of the person replying to the consultation removed. However due to the content of the response it is possible in some cases to identify the group or organisation where the response has come from.
- 11.3 As with the first consultation the responses came from a wide variety of respondents – Police, Community groups, neighbourhood boards, NW staff and internal teams.
- 11.4 The issues that were raised in the second round were a little more focused with many expressing both an appreciation that comments from the first consultation had been listened too and generally positive about the proposal to procure the third sector to deliver support in some way although most with some concern or provisos. Some respondents were still wholly against the amended proposal. This reflects the variety of the views held by different boards and how they visualised the future beyond the review. Some appear keen to take the opportunity to have the support for an additional year and use that time to build the board whilst other boards were more pessimistic and at present cannot see a positive future. This might change, if the review recommendations are progressed and support provided, of that view might persist which will affect the viability of such boards post support.
- 11.5 In summary, the responses can be considered to fit in to the following themes –
 - i) Broadly or wholly unsupportive of the overall proposal. A small number of responses were still either wholly or broadly in opposition to the proposal and mentioned issues such as –
 - There are areas of deprivation that still need support.
 - The one year support was not comparable with removing the NW team
 - Supporting the boards is only one element of the NW service and that whatever support is given to the boards there will still be a gap in service provision.
 - St Giles would go back to being a 'no-go area' as it used to be.
 - Sincil Bank not felt by some respondents to be the area most in need.
 - That boards will fold once the support is withdrawn after one year. One year of support is still too short.
 - Volunteer resilience is not sufficient when compared with paid NW staff supporting the boards.

- ii) Broadly supportive of the offer of third sector support saying that it will provide opportunities. Many respondents qualified their comments saying:
 - they felt that it was important that it was not a one size fits all approach,
 - that the resource must be tailored to the particular board.
 - it would be more useful to have a set number of hours of support to draw upon rather than a time limit of one year.
 - Suspect that 1 year of support still might not be long enough to become self-sufficient.
 - That volunteer resilience isn't sufficient on some boards or in some areas to maximise the benefits or provide sustainability (due to age/ability/poor supply).
 - That some boards would develop at different speeds when supported leading to stronger boards and less developed boards.
- iii) There will be a reduction or gap in provision when the service is reconfigured. Comments included:
 - a. the ability to signpost to other services (e.g. the food banks)
 - b. for those that will find it difficult to travel in to City Hall to access services face to face.
 - c. A couple of respondents suggested moving other staff from City Hall to the offices to be able to keep them open.
 - d. A suggestion that the proceeds from the sale of Belmont Street should be used to fund the NW service or similar in Abbey.
 - e. A statement that the Belmont Office was funded by EU grant funding for neighbourhood renewal in Abbey and therefore the office belongs to that community.
- iv) Supportive of attendance at the neighbourhood boards by key staff at a sufficiently senior level from the City Council. Respondents expressed a variety of views around this issue –
 - a. attendance was essential in moving the boards forward but that there also had to be 'buy-in' rather than just attendance.
 - b. commitment from senior staff at the council was not there at the moment and didn't feel anything would change without a significant cultural change.
 - c. More than one respondent felt that there was still an element missing which is the oversight sitting above the boards that would be lost if the wider NW programme was removed and that there should be a tier above the boards involving senior City Council officers. '...what is the link between the boards and city council 'decision makers'?'
 - d. What is the role of councillors? Should they have more of a role in being the link between boards and the Council?
 - e. More than one internal respondent raised concerns about the ability to commit resources to attend and service the various boards across the city (Additionally there are other community boards or forums that expect support other than the ones directly affected by this proposal). One officer felt that this was a significant time commitment that would either require additional staff to deliver or a reduction in work streams

in the area to free up resource.

- v) Other comments included:
 - a. Where will the Police move to (a reference to the neighbourhood offices closing)?
 - b. Given the loss of the Community cohesion post (not part of the NW team, but was a post located elsewhere in the authority) can boards be tasked with having more of a responsibility to deal with community cohesion?
 - c. Boards should not have to pay for space after a year is up.

11.6 Consideration of the issues raised in the second round of consultation.

- 1) It is acknowledged that there will be an impact for all areas where the neighbourhood working is being changed. It is also acknowledged that in each of those areas there is generally a case to be made regarding the need for some form of support. Given the scale of the savings required to be delivered and therefore the reduction in the neighbourhood working resources available it is inevitable that there will be an impact as the service is pulled away from areas that have benefitted from the service historically. It is anticipated that the provision of support for up to a year from the third sector will help support those areas and develop a long term resilience and capability without the need for ongoing direct support from a NW team.

There is the potential that boards do not become self-sufficient after a year but it is the responsibility of all parties involved to work together to the best of their abilities to try and deliver this objective.

- 2) Given the broadly positive consultation feedback, it is proposed that the use of the third sector to deliver a package of support for up to a year is included in the final proposal with the following amendments –
 - Representatives of the boards will be asked to assist with the preparation of the specification and the scoring of the tenders (this is already being progressed but no contract will be entered into until a decision of Executive is reached. It simply allows rapid early progressed if the recommendation of this report is taken forward);
 - that the specification is designed to ensure that the resource delivered is flexible and can be tailored in some way to deliver to the needs of the particular board rather than be a one size fits all.

Other comments were noted but in order to retain focus and management of the programme it is felt that a limit of one year is necessary.

It is acknowledged that some boards will develop at different speeds but that situation already exists depending on the strengths and weaknesses of board members. It is more important to focus the work on moving the boards forward and delivering sustainability rather than them all reaching a fixed standard.

It is also acknowledged that some boards, if not all at some point, will have an issue with the resilience of the volunteers that sit on or support the boards or other community work. That is the reason that objective 2 and 3 of the support

for the boards is around volunteer support and development -

- (2) Upskilling of the community representatives on the boards;
- (3) Attracting and developing volunteers within the area to support the work of the local board;

It is important to note that the contract with the VCS will have clearly defined outcome measures related to contract performance to ensure payments are linked to delivery of those outcomes.

- 3) It is important to remember that NW is not a universal service across the city, and indeed a number of communities do not currently have this. However, it is accepted that there is likely to be a reduction in the service provided across some communities from any closure of NW offices. The review has reflected on this and the unique way in which each office operates ranging from a simple “drop into the office” arrangement at Moorland Community Centre up to a fully accessible local neighbourhood facility at St Giles. Belmont Street office is a hybrid of the two. It is important that the Council’s Customer Excellence Strategy is considered alongside this element and the desire to drive channel shift and move to self-service and more efficient means of customer service although acknowledging that that won’t be suitable for everyone and all transactions.

A further factor to consider is that In order to deliver the necessary savings it is not feasible to staff these centres with permanent staff, be it NW staff or other staff re- sited at those locations. This is contrary to the channel shift programme and the affordability of such an approach within the context of reduced government funding.

The outcome therefore of the second round of consultation is to treat each office in a different way –reflective of the available facilities in the local area. Thus:

St Giles Matters – would close and returned to the Housing Revenue Account. A decision on its long term future use will then be subject to a separate report later when all options have been fully considered.

Moorland Community Centre – the NW element of the centre would close but overall the community centre would continue as a community centre and hence accessible to a wide range of groups and individuals for use as such.

Belmont Street – the aspiration is to keep this as an operational building. The NW team will move out of the building and relocate to the Sincil Bank area as part of this review. However, the building will be offered to the police rent free. Work will also progress to try to identify a third sector organisation to relocate to the office and provide some form of public access – but this will have to be at no cost to the council to hit income targets. If this is not achievable then the future of the office will need to be re-assessed at that time.

Work is underway to ensure that all groups using any of the three neighbourhood offices have accommodation moving forward. The list of affected groups and proposed mitigation is attached at appendix 9.

- 4) All external respondents who expressed a view felt that the support and buy in for the neighbourhood boards from sufficiently senior staff at the council was essential, although some challenged whether that commitment had ever been there. However comments were raised by internal staff about how that would be resourced. Given that the majority of demand will fall on the same teams as the same issues generally recur (litter, dog fouling, fly-tipping, ASB) then there would be potentially a significant resource pressure on a small number of teams and those service managers or assistant directors.

It is therefore essential to find a model that ensures that the boards that we withdraw from feel that they have access to sufficiently senior staff or decision makers to either influence service delivery or at least feel that the views of the boards (in so far that they represent their communities) are being considered in drawing up service plans, contracts or partnerships.

In any event the relationship between boards and the council will have to change. For example we must encourage residents and boards to follow normal channels to report specific issues initially and then focus Board time on recurring issues or issues more strategic in nature.

Given concerns raised in the second round of consultation about the resources required to support the boards it will be important to ensure that senior officers are available to attend boards and discuss issues with the boards but this must be carefully managed. This could be on a specific frequency (say quarterly or annually rather than an assumption that it can be every meeting) and rotated around different service areas or by invitation up to a maximum number.

It is clear from some consultation that it is felt that there should be a local community leadership role from councillors and this will be explored further as part of the third sector delivery work. Councillors should be included in the element of support and training for board representatives.

5) Other issues –

- Where will the Police move to?

It is proposed that the Police will continue to operate from Belmont Street Offices until any long term decision is made about the future of the building. Officers have also offered that they could move in to City Hall in with the soon to be co-located ASB and Police office as an alternative if necessary to keep them close to the Monks Road area.

A decision has already been made by Lincolnshire Police that the Police based at the St Giles Office will be co-located with the Fire and Rescue service at their Lincoln north station on Nettleham Road. This decision was made separately to the Neighbourhood Working Review.

- Given the loss of the Community cohesion post can boards be tasked with having more of a responsibility to deal with community cohesion?

This needs sensitive consideration. Given the work that needs to be achieved in any partnership between the third sector and the boards and the likely perception (and therefore resistance) that this is more work for

the boards to undertake due to council cuts, it is proposed that this point is not a pre-requisite of any third sector contract. However the boards will be free to consider community cohesion when they are developing their plans whatever the future model of neighbourhood working.

- Boards should not have to pay for space after a year is up. It is proposed to clarify that all the existing neighbourhood boards will be supported by the provision of free space in our community centres indefinitely.

12. Final Proposal - A Summary

12.1 Considering the drivers for the review and the many consultation comments across two rounds of consultation the following proposal is made for the neighbourhood working service:-

- ❖ reduce the number of neighbourhood teams from 3 to 1 and so withdraw the NW teams from 7 of the 8 areas we currently work in (for clarity these are Abbey (including Tower), Birchwood, Bracebridge, Ermine east, Ermine West, Moorland, St Giles,
- ❖ focus intensively in a single area, which is likely to be the Sincil area as part of the Sincil Bank Revitalisation project. In future the NW team will move every few years to a new area – dictated by the extent of achievement in the present area and the needs of other areas in the city
- ❖ refocus the remaining team to be project focused including a review of the roles and responsibilities of the team. This will include:-
 - Deleting the Community Caretaker post and create a new post called Community Connector (or similar).
 - The job descriptions and person specifications of the remaining Neighbourhood Manager and Neighbourhood Administrator posts will have a light touch review and it is proposed to rename the Neighbourhood Administrator as Neighbourhood Working Project Assistant.
- ❖ Procure the third sector to deliver support to the neighbourhood boards for a period of one year aimed at delivering resilient neighbourhood boards that represent the community and are 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. That work will be based around the following 5 key objectives:-
 - 1) Improving the governance and administrative resilience of the boards;
 - 2) Upskilling of the community representatives on the boards;
 - 3) Attracting and developing volunteers within the area to support the work of the local board;
 - 4) Providing each board with the ability and confidence to help them identify

the needs and desires of the local communities;

5) Identifying long term funding opportunities for each board.

The final specification of the contract and the appointment of the winning organisation(s) have been progressed with engagement with the neighbourhood boards. It is proposed that the maximum amount available for any third sector contract will be £40,000 based on £5,000 per area. This will be met from within the NW supplies and services budget.

This work will be monitored by the remaining Neighbourhood Manager, an Assistant Director and Strategic Director.

- ❖ Provide support (financial and non-financial) on an ongoing basis for neighbourhood boards;
 - £1000 a year each for the 8 boards by way of a direct grant to support the workings of the board (postage, printing, room hire etc). This 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, an agreed neighbourhood plan (between the board and the community), demonstration of moving forward with business etc.
 - Attendance at the board by representatives of the city council (officer or member) at a level of seniority and of a frequency to suitably engage with those boards (while acknowledging that there are limited officer resources).
- Support by way of alternative accommodation for other groups currently using our local neighbourhood offices at St Giles and Moorland (where they cannot be accommodated in the community centre model)-
 - a structured transition process for the closure of St Giles Matters and
 - supporting groups using Moorland Community Centre to a key holding system.

The following matrix will be used:

Building	Category	Proposal
St Giles Matters	The group would NOT normally be expected to pay a room hire charge under our community centres charging policy (e.g. benefits advice team)	Move to the St Giles Community centre and provide free space on a key holding basis
St Giles Matters	The group would normally be expected to pay a room hire charge under our community centres charging policy	Move to the St Giles Community centre and provide free space for one year on a key holding basis, thereafter provide space at the appropriate rate.
St Giles Matters	If insufficient space is available to migrate all groups to the community centre then we will work with groups to identify other	

	options preferably free of charge using other community venues in the area.	
Moorland CC	The group would NOT normally be expected to pay a room hire charge under our community centres charging policy (e.g. benefits advice team)	Move to key holding model at the Community centre and provide free space.
Moorland CC	The group would normally be expected to pay a room hire charge under our community centres charging policy.	Move to key holding model at the Community centre and provide free space for one year thereafter provide space at the appropriate rate.

Existing neighbourhood boards will be provided with free space for up to 6 meetings per year at the City Council's community centres.

- ❖ The remaining neighbourhood working team will transfer into the Directorate of Housing and Regeneration once the phase out work is complete.

13 Financial Savings and Budgets Associated with the Final Proposal

13.1 Savings associated with the proposed option:

	Revised Budget 2017/18	Revised Budget 2018/19	Revised Budget 2019/20	Revised Budget 2020/21	Revised Budget 2021/22	Total MTFS 2017-22
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Existing Budget	331,710	336,320	341,160	347,690	354,390	1,711,270
General Fund	212,230	216,840	221,680	228,210	234,910	1,113,870
Housing Revenue Account	119,480	119,480	119,480	119,480	119,480	597,400

Anticipated Salary Savings	(87,380)	(177,740)	(180,880)	(184,920)	(189,130)	(820,050)
Proposed Revised Budget	244,330	158,580	160,280	162,770	165,260	891,220
Salaries Element of revised budget	135,030	92,640	94,000	96,100	98,280	516,050
Residual grants, supplies & premises budget	65,620	65,940	66,280	66,670	66,980	331,490
General Fund	189,330	131,080	133,362	136,636	139,934	730,342
Housing Revenue Account	55,000	27,500	27,500	27,500	27,500	165,000

Savings General Fund	(22,900)	(85,760)	(88,318)	(91,574)	(94,976)	(383,528)
Savings Housing Revenue Account	(64,480)	(91,980)	(91,980)	(91,980)	(91,980)	(432,400)

Updated figures now assume that the service will cease after 6 months of 01 April 2017/18, whereas previous costs assumed redundancies by 01 July 2017. These costs assume the service continues in its current guise for roughly 6 months in 2017/18.

Although the 2017/18 TOFS savings can no longer be met as previously agreed, there will be an opportunity to meet the TOFS savings target in year via current vacancy savings of the service.

Should any revised job description exceed the predicted grade in job evaluation then this will be taken from the bottom line ensuring that the savings target is met.

13.2 Operating budget

As can be seen from the final line of the table above it is proposed that there will be a c£66,000 per annum operational budget for the remaining neighbourhood working team under this proposal. An element of this will be absorbed by the proposed £1,000 a year grant to the 8 neighbourhood boards, and the usual supplies and services budgets and mileage, telephone and I.T. costs. However this does leave an operating budget that is more generous than it currently is. This will allow the flexibility of the service to utilise that funding to deliver community and engagement events, provide seed, grant or match funding for small community projects and to deliver projects that will engage the community, contribute to the revitalisation project and deliver Vision2020 priorities.

14. Staffing Issues

14.1 Under the final proposal it is proposed to delete 7 posts

- 2 x Neighbourhood Manager posts (including the programme lead);
- 3 x Community Caretaker posts;
- 2 x Neighbourhood administrator;

and create one new post –

- 1 x Community Connector post to replace the Community Caretaker role.

This would leave a remaining team of

- 1 x Neighbourhood Manager
- 1 x Community Connector
- 1 x Neighbourhood Working Project Assistant respectively.

14.2 The Council's Management of Change Policy has been applied and Consultation has taken place with staff and unions on the proposed amendments to the service. Further details on the staffing implications are attached in the Part B report.

15. Significant Timeline Milestones

15.1

13 June 2017	CMT
23 June 2017	Agree specification with neighbourhood board panel

27 June 2017	SRG
11 July 2017	Staff consultation recommences regarding job descriptions
20 July 2017	Finalise specification for support package from the third sector
25 July 2017	Revised job descriptions etc to JE panel
26 July 2017	Prepare final budget/based on job grades
8 August 2017	JCC considers full business case
10 August 2017	Labour Group
15 August 2017	Specification goes live for procurement
22 August 2017	Policy Scrutiny Committee considers final business case
30 August 2017	Executive considers final business case
Early September 2017	Internal recruitment to posts
Early September 2017	Finalise staffing position/management of change
	Implementation phase/ withdrawal from St Giles Office commences.
w/c 18 September 2017	Receive and evaluate third sector tenders
25 September 2017	Appoint successful bidder for third sector support
16 October 2017	Third sector support package starts (proposed)

16. Strategic Impacts

16.1 Let's drive economic growth

As discussed above a refocused team will have a specific emphasis on supporting the economic regeneration of the areas we work in – building employment opportunities and supporting our residents to upskill or prepare for work. This is seen as a major factor in lifting people out of poverty.

16.2 Let's reduce inequality

Working with partners and residents to reduce inequality and poverty will remain a key principle of a revised neighbourhood working team.

16.3 Let's deliver quality housing

While delivering in the Sincil Bank area the Neighbourhood Working team will work with the council's Rogue Landlord Team (Sincil Bank being one of the primary areas of investigation) to ensure a joined up approach and support for tenants of rented properties.

16.4 Let's enhance our remarkable place

Should the revitalisation project go ahead in the Sincil Bank area the team will be playing a significant role in the delivery of a multi-agency project, a notable part of which will be based around enhancing the natural and built environment in the area.

17 Organisational Priorities

17.1 Finance (including whole life costs where applicable)

See section 11

17.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

It is proposed to procure the third sector to deliver the work described in the final option. This will be by way of a Request for Quotation – Goods & Services using the council's standard documentation. The specification went live for procurement on 15th August and will be awarded from 25th September 2017 (subject Executive approval of the business case). The contract will be for a period of one year.

17.3 Land, property and accommodation

Property implications are discussed in more detail above (section 11.6) but in summary –

- Closure of St Giles Matters Building and return to the Housing Revenue Account pending a decision on its future use. This will see the loss of £7,500 rental income from NW to the HRA.
- Closure of the NW office at Moorland Community Centre with the whole site reverting to the general key holding model as with other community centres.
- The closure of Belmont Street Office to the public with the intention that it could be used by a third sector organisation as their base.

17.4 Human Resources

Staffing issues are discussed in section 14 above and in a separate part B report.

17.5 Equality, Diversity & Human Rights (including the outcome of the EA attached, if required).

A full equality impact assessment is included at appendix 12.

17.6 Significant Community Impact

The proposal is likely to have a significant community impact based on –

- A negative impact due to the withdrawal of the current service from 7 or the areas it currently operates in.
- A positive impact due to the focusing of resources in one specific area.

18. Risk Implications

18.1 (i) Options Explored

A number of alternative options have been explored as part of the overall development of the final proposal and are discussed throughout the report.

18.2 (ii) Key risks associated with the preferred approach

There are a number of risks associated with the preferred option

18.3 The sustainability of the neighbourhood boards. There is a risk that some of the neighbourhood boards that we propose to withdraw support from may fold. It will be essential to ensure that any third sector support is delivered in a way that engages with and properly supports the sustainability of the boards. Monitoring measures will be put in to place as described above (which include Assistant Director and Director oversight). This will be reported in to members at 6 and 9 months into contract.

- 18.4 Impact on deprived communities we withdraw from. In addition to supporting the local boards the NW service delivers a range of work with agencies and the community that may no longer be delivered. It is hoped that empowering the boards will mean the agencies are still engaged with and deliver directly in those communities.
- 18.5 Negative publicity from the proposed option. The Communications team have been involved throughout the development of the proposed option. It will be necessary to ensure their continued support throughout the implementation phase.
- 18.6 Negative impact on partnership working. There is a risk that other partners and agencies will consider that we are not an organisation that wants to work in partnership to deliver outcomes in our communities. The Vision2020 strategy, the Housing Strategy and the Sincil Bank Revitalisation programme are clear evidence of our desire and ability to work in partnership.
- 18.7 Withdrawal from NW offices. It will be necessary to support groups affected by the closure of the neighbourhood working offices and that have to relocate. There is also likely to be short term concern from those residents that have been able to access council services through the NW offices (most notably St Giles) that will no longer be able to. A key part of the withdrawal work will be to highlight alternative means of access to services.
- 18.8 Unfocused NW service delivery in remaining area. In order to maximise the service delivery and outputs of the proposed remaining team it will be necessary to have clear service priorities. These have not been delivered as part of this review but rather than will be delivered either as part of the Sincil Bank Revitalisation project or taking in to account the needs of the community and developing a work programme if delivering in a different area.
- 18.9 Capacity. As well as delivering the core work in Sincil Bank the remaining NW team will have to evaluate the requests for the £1000 grant and in all likelihood deal with queries from the unsupported boards as they arise.

19. Recommendations

- 19.1 The Committee are asked to consider the report and provide any comments prior to submission to Executive with a recommendation to approve and implement the final business case.

Is this a key decision? Yes

Do the exempt information categories apply? No

Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply? No

How many appendices does the report contain? Twelve

Appendix 1 – Neighbourhood Working Strategy 2013-2018
Appendix 2 - Outline Proposal for review of the

Neighbourhood Working Service
Appendix 3 – Proposed Option – summary for consultation
Appendix 4 - Consultation list for Neighbourhood Working
Appendix 5 – Consultation questionnaire response to first
round of consultation
Appendix 6 -Written responses to first round of
consultation
Appendix 7 – Second consultation proposal
Appendix 8 - Written responses to second round of
consultation
Appendix 9 – Groups affected by NW office closures
Appendix 10 – Revised Job Descriptions
Appendix 11 – In Section B
Appendix 12 – Equality Impact assessment

List of Background Papers:

None

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