

Present: Councillors Councillor Bob Bushell (*in the Chair*), Kathleen Brothwell, Gill Clayton-Hewson, Paul Gowen, Jane Loffhagen, Lucinda Preston, Tony Speakman and Naomi Tweddle

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Sue Burke, Councillor Chris Burke, Councillor Thomas Dyer and Councillor Helena Mair

Also in Attendance: None.

11. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed the following external representatives to the meeting:

- Farhan Ahmed – University of Lincoln

12. Confirmation of Minutes - 1 August 2017

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 1 August 2017 be confirmed.

13. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

14. Terms of Reference

The Chair reminded those present of the terms of reference for Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED that the terms of reference be noted.

15. An Introduction from the Chair

The Chair provided a brief introduction and outlined the proposal for the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee to undertake a review of inclusive growth over the course of four meetings.

The review had a strategic fit with Vision 2020 which contributed towards both the Reduce Inequality priority, and the Economic Growth priority.

16. Introduction to Inclusive Growth - Jay Wilkinson

Jay Wilkinson delivered a presentation on Inclusive Growth and covered the following topics:-

- Inclusive Growth – how it was defined.
- The two sides to Inclusive Growth – Supply and Demand.
- Examples of supply-side policies.
- Examples of demand-side policies.
- Examples of Inclusive sectors according to the JRF study.
- The opportunities in exploring Inclusive Growth.

- The vibrant economy index 2017.
- The key areas for potential exploration.

Members asked the following questions:-

Question

Would the City of Lincoln Council offer jobs to people with career opportunities and not just any job that would be available at that time?

Response

Yes we would and we would look at the impacts that they are having on the authority.

Question

Was the Council looking to promote Inclusive Growth within the city of Lincoln or to wider areas?

Response

The Lincoln Strategy (wider area) would be included however identifying it as Inclusive Growth was difficult as it was such a broad area. It would become more clear after the next three meetings.

Question

What was the definition of 'fair wages'?
Were the figures highlighted in the presentation current?

Response

Fair wages was identifying what worked for the local economy. The figures were current however were subject to change due to inflation. Jay explained that he would do a comparison between Lincoln and other areas during the next stage of the review.

Question

Could the skills that people gain be used in Lincoln so students didn't move elsewhere?

Response

Looking at the skills of residents in the area would be part of the review as well as looking into which areas of the city had the most inequality. Officers hoped that this would be identified as they went along.

Question

Where did the figures come from in regards to GCSE levels? Was it for schools within the boundary only?

Response

It was for Lincoln residents irrespective of what school they attended and whether or not the school was in Lincoln.

17. Intelligence from Key Witnesses

Farhan Ahmed, University of Lincoln delivered a presentation on the academic perspective of Inclusive Growth and covered the following points:-

- Inclusive Growth – how it was defined.

- What should be done to improve Inclusive Growth?
- The positives associated with Inclusive Growth.
- The problems associated with Inclusive Growth.

Members asked the following questions:-

Question

How could companies be more flexible and help women who were at a disadvantage for various reasons train up to a reasonable level?

Response

There was a big issue around women being at a disadvantage when it came to gaining employment, only being offered lower paid jobs. It would need to be looked at in further detail.

Question

If the barriers to Inclusive Growth were going to be investigated, surely somebody would be at a disadvantage i.e. people wouldn't want to pay higher wages or can't afford to?

Response

Certain groups would be targeted so there wouldn't necessarily be a loss. The key was to look at the groups that weren't benefitting currently.

Martin Walmsley, Head of Shared Revenues and Benefits delivered a presentation on the current initiatives of Inclusive Growth and covered the following topics:-

- Reducing inequality.
- Assisting low income households.
- Successes in relation to training and gaining accreditation.
- The Network – it's functions and performance.
- Activities and events helping to provide people with information relating to potential job opportunities.
- How the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy could potentially help Inclusive Growth.

Members asked the following questions:-

Question

Were other authorities getting involved in attracting businesses to their district?

Response

North Kesteven has a similar policy for Discretionary Rate Relief.

Question

Why were the statistics for The Network's social media lower in Quarter 1 2017/18?

Response

Mainly because after having a social media account for so long the amount of new followers reduced and it was quieter over the summer period.

Question

Had young people been involved such as the National Citizen Service?

Response

The Council had worked with EBP (who deliver the NCS scheme) and were looking to re-engage with them as they were a vital partner.

Question

What boundaries were going to be set? What was the criteria?

Response

The project with Lincoln College is not postcode dependant, although the majority of students were in the city boundary, but some did travel from a wider area.

Question

Was age reflected in this? It was harder for people who were older to get jobs, was there anything that could be done for those people?

Response

The College project had helped older people gain employment after being out of work. The Network has also helped older people gain access to the services they need.

18. Member Discussion

Members had nothing further to raise following the presentations.

19. Proposal and Agreement of Scope for Future Meetings

Members and officers agreed to proceed with the following proposals over the course of the next 3 meetings:-

- Inclusive Growth involved balancing the needs of the economy and the needs of the communities, to identify what recommendations could be made to support both the economy and the residents.
- It was explored how inclusive growth was important to economic growth, as it would bring more people into the economy and could help generate innovation and create new business start-ups.
- The topic of inclusive growth was broad, therefore it was important to narrow the debate to specific segments so maximum impact could be achieved. Experience elsewhere had shown women, young people, and vulnerable groups could particularly benefit from inclusive growth initiatives.
- Bradford and Cardiff were identified as areas of the country where inclusive growth initiatives had been trialled. It was agreed to explore these further at the next meetings.
- The extensive work that the City Council was already doing to deliver inclusion was explored. Moving forward this would be kept in mind, whilst other additional areas for activity could be explored. It was discussed that initiatives such as free employability courses could potentially be targeted on the recommendations of Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee. Additionally, there may be scope to make recommendations for any future growth aims.

- It was agreed to have three further meetings on inclusive growth: the next would focus on the labour market; the one after on the economy and business sector; and the final one would explore the key findings and recommendations from the review.