

REPORT UNDER RULE 2(VI) OF THE COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

Report by Councillor Rosanne Kirk, Portfolio Holder for Social Inclusion and Community Cohesion

This is my fourth report as portfolio holder. In the following pages I have summarised the progress made across my portfolio over the past year. This work builds on the work we have done over the previous three years since I gained responsibility for this portfolio. I continue to be proud of what has been achieved.

The past year has been an extremely challenging year due to changes and developments both nationally and internationally. The impact of leaving the European Union continues to be unclear for many, especially for those residents who have moved to the city from Eastern Europe. Over the past year there has also been two major terrorist attacks in the UK, which have placed greater pressure on communities. Further afield the ongoing crisis in Syria and the Middle East continues to be of concern.

Local Government savings, driven by austerity ideology have been felt in all departments, and my portfolio is no exception. The challenges ahead will be immense, with fewer resources. This is the reality of the cuts to Local Government, as it affects our communities. The changes to Neighbourhood Working highlight the reality of what is happening in Local Government.

As a result of the above the level of available resource to work on community cohesion projects has also been severely reduced following the Community Cohesion Officer post at the council coming to an end in March 2017. Work on this and other areas of my portfolio has been further impacted as a result of there not being a permanent Assistant Director of Strategic Development in position since August 2016.

Although there have been many challenges during 2017, it is important for me to highlight some of the positives in my portfolio. These include the continuing success of World Hello Day, Lincoln Against Poverty Conference and ongoing work to promote the benefits of paying the Voluntary Living Wage to Lincoln businesses, to name just a few.

The areas covered by my portfolio include neighbourhood working, community cohesion, social inclusion, domestic violence, young people, older people, safeguarding children, vulnerable adults, community centres, asylum seekers and adult learning. I have provided an insight into the work completed over the past twelve months under each of these areas below.

Key Activities

This section of my report goes through the different areas of my portfolio highlighting activities undertaken during the past year.

Neighbourhood Working

It has been a difficult year for Neighbourhood Working due to the ongoing review of the service partly driven by the need to make considerable savings across the council.

In late 2016 we consulted on a proposal to change the way the service operated. Following the first round of consultation it became clear that neighbourhood boards in the areas we were withdrawing the Neighbourhood Working service from, felt they needed support to transition from the current service to the new way of working. In the second round of consultation we therefore proposed a year's worth of support for the boards from the third sector and this was generally received well. The amended proposal was approved by Executive in September 2017.

The revised service is therefore:

- A reduction to one team (from three) focusing intensely in the 'Sincil Bank' area of the city initially.
- Reducing the breadth of issues tackled by Neighbourhood Working to emphasise a focus on lifting people out of poverty through offering them pathways into skills acquisition and ultimately employment.
- A revised team consisting of
 - One Neighbourhood Manager;
 - One Community Connector (new role);
 - One Neighbourhood Working Project Assistant;
- Delivery of a one year package of support through the third sector to ensure sustainable active neighbourhood boards.
- Delivery of a saving of around £177,000 per year.
- A move of the Neighbourhood Working service into the Directorate of Housing and Regeneration to better align with the emerging regeneration area.

This does mean that the service is withdrawing from several areas where we have been working – St Giles, Ermine East, Ermine West, Abbey and Tower, Moorland, Birchwood and Bracebridge and the third sector support will be aimed at supporting these seven boards (as well as the board in the Sincil Bank area) over the next year.

Over the summer we went out to procure a third sector partner and the procurement was based around the following five principles –

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.

I am pleased to inform committee that we have recently appointed a Lincoln based community and voluntary sector consortium to deliver this work. The consortium is led by Urban Challenge and involves –

- Development Plus,
- Abbey Access Training,
- Green Synergy,
- Just Lincolnshire and the
- Pelican Trust.

As a consequence of the review the Neighbourhood Working offices in both Moorland and St Giles have been closed. The Moorland office closed in 2017 and the St Giles office closed on Friday 12th January 2018. Work is underway to relocate the public access computers and public telephone line from St Giles to another accessible location within the area.

The consortium led by Urban Challenge is now working with all of the eight neighbourhood boards that they will be working with over the next year. I wish these boards every success for the future and would like to thank the Neighbourhood Working service for all of the fantastic work that they have delivered across the city.

Community Cohesion

The previous two years have seen significant challenges for community cohesion, both on a national and international level. These challenges have further highlighted the importance of community cohesion, both on a national and local level.

As mentioned above, unfortunately in the past year the council's Community Cohesion Officer post came to an end in March 2017, which has unavoidably impacted on the level of community cohesion activities delivered after this time. Despite this impact on resource, I am pleased with what has been achieved.

The largest community cohesion event in the city continues to be World Hello Day, which takes place on 21st November each year. World Hello Day 2017 was once again promoted as our key community cohesion event with 19 events (with many more organisations involved), linked to the day taking place between 17 and 25 November. These events were hosted by a number of organisations across the city. The council worked closely with these organisations to ensure individual events were a success. Some of the key events this year included:

- Communication Across Culture Conference - University of Lincoln
- Web Walk starting from different areas of the city – Access Lincoln and Lincoln Interfaith Forum
- Big Coffee Morning at Queen's Park Community Hub – Development Plus
- WHD themed work at five primary schools

- Hidden Gems; music, poetry and food – UoL and Lincolnshire Polish Society

Myself and the Mayor attended various events around the city to say hello and find out about the groups taking part.

Despite the reduction in resources, the council's community cohesion work continues to focus on four areas, as well as the ongoing citywide promotion to encourage people to get to know each other. These areas include:

- The mosque and different faiths
- Students and integration in to the community, including international students
- Integrating people from different backgrounds
- Hate crime

I have provided further information below outlining the key activities undertaken over the past year under each area of focus.

The Mosque and Different Faiths

- Work continues to maintain an awareness of the development of the new mosque in the city.
- Over the summer work on the mosque has focused on making the building water tight in advance of the winter months. Focus has now turned to completing the interior work. Opening of the mosque is scheduled for winter 2017, however this is reliant the funding required being available.
- Faith's Festival 2017 took place from 21st April 2017 until 1st May 2017 and was co-ordinated by a small group of representatives from different faith groups. The festival's aim was to raise awareness of and celebrate different faiths and cultures in the city.
- A Peace Walk took place in the city on Monday 31st July. The walk focused on encouraging people of all ages, races, faiths or no faith to spread an important message – That we can all live in harmony, whoever you are and whatever your background or religion. The walk was organised by Lincoln Interfaith Forum and was well attended.

Students and Integration into the Community, Including International Students

- In August 2017 representatives from the council met with the new student leaders for 2017/18. This meeting allowed contacts to be exchanged and good relationships to be formed at an early stage in the academic year. This meeting also provided an opportunity for our Communications Team to offer students studying photography the chance to gain experience in a real work environment. This helped to further develop our relationship with the University of Lincoln.
- City of Lincoln Council has been present at two Fresher's Fayres in the city during Fresher's Week 2017. The first attended was at the

University of Lincoln on 18th September, and the second at Bishop Grosseteste University on 19th September. The attendance at both allowed the City of Lincoln Council to promote our services, together with raise awareness of the importance of students respecting and getting on well with their neighbours. Promotional 'Proud to be Lincoln' and 'Shush' items were handed out at the events to encourage students to make Lincoln a city they are proud to live in.

Integrating People from Different Backgrounds

- The council provided a small amount of funding to enable a summer open air cinema event to take place in the Arboretum on 19th August 2017.
- The council has successfully supported the promotion of four ESOL classes in the city to help improve the English of those residents where English isn't their first language.
- The council has supported meetings to look at setting up a new partnership group for agencies to engage with the supplementary schools. A new panel was launched in spring 2017.

Hate Crime

- A Hate Crime Charter was adopted by the council in December 2016, showing our ongoing commitment towards reducing incidents of hate crime.
- Representatives from the council continue to attend the Safer Communities Lincolnshire Hate Crime Delivery Group.
- As part of our membership to this group, the council actively promoted Hate Crime Awareness Week between 16th and 20th October.
- The council is supporting a countywide hate crime survey, led by Lincolnshire County Council. The survey was rolled out during Hate Crime Awareness Week. The closing date for the survey is 15th December 2017.
- The council is also currently raising awareness of Hate Crime, which is becoming an increasing issue. Information posters and flyers on this type of crime were also distributed during Hate Crime Awareness Week. Raising awareness of this type of crime is being co-ordinated by Safer Communities Lincolnshire.

City Wide, Bringing People Together (Including Media Coverage)

- We have continued to promote community cohesion through the media. Over the past year we have had 53 articles that have featured in print, either online or in the Lincolnshire Echo newspaper. In addition we have also had 8 radio articles and 1 television article.
- We have also had a very positive year on social media, publishing two Facebook live videos, which received a total of 1,054 views.
- In addition to the Facebook live videos we have also posted 31 community cohesion based stories on Facebook.

- We have reached an audience of 13,200 people through posts on Twitter.
- We have issued 2 statements to the media in total, both of which were offers of condolences for terror attacks.
- There have been 15 articles published in Your Lincoln over the past year
- As mentioned above, World Hello Day 2017 on 21st November 2017 was again promoted as the main community cohesion event in the city. This was the fifth year we have celebrated the day.
- For the year 2016/17, I have continue to chair the Community Cohesion Steering Group, which has met on three occasions since my last report. A different partner now hosts each meeting providing an opportunity to showcase how they make a positive contribution to tackling community cohesion.

Looking Ahead

Whilst community cohesion resource has been heavily reduced during the last year, I continue to be pleased with what has been achieved. However, it is important to ensure we continue to focus on integrating our communities across the city. This is particularly important in light of the recent terrorist attacks in the UK. To allow us to do this we will be refreshing the community cohesion strategy during 2018, but in the meantime continue to focus on the four strands as outlined above, and support a range of community cohesion initiatives and events held by our partners within the city.

Social Inclusion

Anti-Poverty Performance Outcomes

The Anti-Poverty Action Plan was launched in 2014/15 and continues to be delivered jointly by officers at the City of Lincoln Council, and by our partners across the city. Over 100 actions have been delivered to date. To ensure agreed actions are delivered on time, I continue to chair the Lincoln Against Poverty Steering Group, which meets bi-annually to discuss current poverty issues and progress towards this plan.

Lincoln Against Poverty Conference 2017

The fourth annual Lincoln Against Poverty event took place in March 2017 at Alive Conferences. The event was attended by over 50 delegates from 28 organisations across the city. The keynote speaker for this year's event was Katharine Knox, Policy and Research Programme Manager for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. The event focused on reviewing the completed anti-poverty actions in 2016/17, and developing actions for the year ahead. To help identify these actions, two workshop sessions were held during the conference. These workshops focused on 'Reducing benefits dependency and reducing benefits for the working age' and 'Older person's poverty'.

Lincoln Money

A new service providing an alternative to high cost loans for people who are unable to access mainstream services, Lincoln Money, was launched at the Lincoln Anti-Poverty Conference 2017. After an encouraging start, unfortunately the operator has currently had to cease the delivery of this service. We are therefore now looking at exploring a number of other services with the Lincolnshire Financial Inclusion Partnership. In the meantime we are continuing to promote the service provided by Lincolnshire Credit Union based here in City Hall.

Lincoln Against Poverty Activity Taking Place in 2016/17

- A campaign to promote Lincolnshire Energy Switch continues to take place to help tackle the issue of fuel poverty in Lincoln. Fourteen external partners and eight internal teams have been encouraged to display posters and issue flyers to their service users to raise awareness of the benefits of registering for the scheme. Registration numbers continue to be high following this promotion with 495 households registering for a personal energy quote in the past year.
- The Lincoln Living Wage Campaign continues to be promoted to Lincoln businesses. The Voluntary Living Wage rate is currently set at £8.45 per hour/£16,258 per year. To date 26 organisations are registered as Living Wage employers in the city. Within these organisations 220 employees have received a pay rise as a direct result of the campaign. The campaign was also successful in encouraging the first key national employer, Barclays, to join the Lincoln Living Wage register in September 2017.
- Following the ending of the Lincolnshire Community Assistance Scheme in November 2016, the council funded a six month pilot project with Voluntary Centre Services to assess and distribute food vouchers. This has now been extended to the end of March 2018 in order to provide time to develop a long term solution.
- We continue to work closely with the foodbanks and have initiated a regular monthly collection of foodbank donations at City Hall. In addition the mayor's charity for 2017/18 is supporting local food banks, which has also helped to raise awareness of the need for donations.
- The council continues to support two partnership steering groups focused on reducing poverty in the city – Lincoln Living Wage Forum & Lincoln Against Poverty Steering Group. These two groups help to steer and manage the Lincoln Against Poverty Strategy and Action Plan.
- Residents seeking bulky waste collection have continued to be signposted to furniture redistribution charities in the city. This not only helps the individual to save money, but also helps to increase the supply of good quality second hand furniture available. Residents disposing of their unwanted furniture through this route also helps to reduce the amount of furniture going to landfill.
- The council continues to ensure good quality flooring is left in council properties. This helps to reduce costs for new tenants and ensures

tenants can quickly move into their new property. Since my last report, flooring has been left in 53 rooms across 22 council properties as a result of this initiative.

- The Lincoln Against Poverty website and Twitter accounts continue to be key resources for raising awareness of support available to residents in the city. To date we have 538 followers to the Lincoln Against Poverty Twitter account, with posts to this page regularly being retweeted further to raise awareness of poverty related support available in the city.
- Although not included in the Anti-Poverty Action Plan, the council continues to support Lincoln as a Fair Trade City. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Cllr Gary Hewson for his hard work in this area.

Adult Learning

Free Health & Wellbeing Adult Learning Courses

A Health & Wellbeing project to provide access to 600 places on college courses continues to be a success. To date 300 people have benefitted from free courses, helping them into employment and training. These people would have otherwise struggled to meet the cost of their course. The course has also supported 70 people into employment so far.

The Network

Launch into events continue to be hosted by The Network. The events provide young residents with information on the different career routes available to them in Lincoln and/or how to get into a career of their choice. Launch into events have focused on the sectors of construction, IT, law, business and health & social care amongst others. In addition, The Network continues to support individuals seeking guidance and support. Since the launch of The Network, 187 individuals have used the services available. Of these 112 (60%) have progressed into employment, education and training.

Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk

Safeguarding at the Council

Safeguarding has been a high profile area of work at a national level for a number of years now. The council continues to give this agenda high priority and our processes and procedures are now well embedded in our everyday work. We have a safeguarding policy which is reviewed annually and we provide training, via the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board, for all of our staff, Elected Members and volunteers. We also ensure that any contractors engaged to work on our behalf are appropriately committed to the agenda.

The Housing Solutions and Support Manager (who is the designated Lead Safeguarding Officer for the authority) continues to be an active member of the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board and also has strong links to the

Adult Board. The council attends the District Safeguarding meeting which is a group of officers from the seven districts who meet regularly to exchange good practice and to ensure a consistency of application across the organisation. The council has an internal working group which consists of key officers from across the work areas, and this group ensures that our statutory duties are met.

We have recently undertaken a Section 11 Audit, which relates to our statutory child safeguarding duties in accordance with the Children Act 1989. The audit consisted of a submission of evidence which demonstrates how we meet specific criteria under 10 distinct areas of work including corporate commitment to safeguarding, strategic planning, contract management, accountability, consultation with children and families, training and development of staff, and proper involvement with safeguarding processes and procedures. The council's submission was moderated in early October and our compliance with all requirements of the Audit was confirmed at that meeting. We are anticipating a similar assessment of compliance in relation to adult safeguarding early in 2018.

Prevent

The council continues to support Prevent, which is a supportive framework to assist people at risk of radicalisation. All council staff have received Prevent training, either face to face or online, and are fully aware of the council's procedures to make referrals for people they are concerned about. To ensure the council remains fully informed on Prevent, a council representative attended a county wide Prevent conference on 1st November 2017, which focused Prevent and Community Collaboration. The council is continuing, as part of a wider partnership across Lincolnshire, to look at new ways to raise the profile of Prevent in the community. The council also continues to report any signs of community tension to the Police. Fortunately this is very rare. Where information is requested by the Police, the council continues to provide this information (under our information sharing arrangements).

Domestic Abuse

The council remains compliant with the domestic abuse charter, and continues to attend the Domestic Abuse Delivery Group and strategic management board. To help increase staff knowledge and awareness of domestic abuse, the PPASB team has linked in with the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC), and is continuing to identify training needs for staff on MARAC engagement and DASH assessments. A quilt which has been produced by women who have been subject to domestic abuse will be displayed in City Hall in on 31 January 2018. This will align with a staff briefing.

Older People

The council continues to work with Age UK Lincoln & Kesteven to deliver a range of actions to support older people as part of the Lincoln Anti-Poverty

Action Plan. One of the actions currently be progressed is to produce a 'Bus pass to your rights' information pack to be issued with bus passes. This pack will include information on a range of local services available to them and how to access these. In addition the council continues to promote the Lincolnshire Energy Switch scheme as mentioned above. To help raise older people's awareness of the scheme, Age UK Lindsey & Kesteven, Lincoln Citizen's Advice, Neighbourhood Working, Housing Estate Officers and the Resident Involvement Team have been encouraged to promote the scheme to their elderly service users.

Community Centres

With the secondment of the Recreation Services Team Leader in February to deal directly with the transport hub, existing leisure and recreation council officers have stepped up and taken on added responsibilities to ensure the continued smooth running of the service. Any challenges faced by the team have been dealt with promptly, with customer satisfaction being at the forefront of any decisions made.

Over the last year, there has been an escalation in the number of key holders that have been trained across the portfolio of community centres. A continuing trend of groups taking ownership is proving to be successful. A recent satisfaction survey was under taken to determine the key-holders views on the process and overall the feedback was highly positive.

Through key holder engagement and assistance the number of groups that still require support has reduced to two. Voluntary support is still being explored with partner organisations with the aim of moving all remaining groups to key-holding.

Talks are on-going with Lincolnshire County Council regarding the use and provision of alternative resources at St. Giles community centre, particularly with regard to the upstairs area. The Executive committee met on the 30th August to discuss the opportunity of the first floor being leased to the Youth service. We continue to support the provision of youth services in the area in a focussed and sustainable model.

Capital works have been completed at the Grandstand weighing rooms which has significantly improved the quality and accessibility of the building for groups. This has seen an increase in the use of this facility. Work is about to begin on the repair and replacement of the terracing steps at the Grandstand site. Again, this will vastly improve the overall appearance of the centre and safeguard a well-known Lincoln landmark for future generations.

Emphasis is currently being given to freshening up the decoration and appearance of the community centres both internally and externally. This is an on-going process which involves replacing windows and cladding at a number of the centres, rooms being re-painted and in some cases re-carpeted.

Young People

Children of Lincoln Project

The City of Lincoln Council, with the support of the Children and Young People Advocate for Lincoln, has been working with the School of Political Sciences at the University of Lincoln and Lincolnshire County Council since May 2016 to launch a child rights initiative for the city of Lincoln. The aspiration of the group is for Lincoln to be recognised by Unicef as a 'Child Friendly City' alongside a number of other cities in the UK. A launch event for the project took place on 4th November 2017 as part of a university led ESRC Festival of Social Science Family Fun Day. The event focused on recognising what young people living in Lincoln need to thrive and succeed, and what obstacles or challenges they face. A range of fun activities for the entire family were available on the day to encourage participation.

Asylum Seekers and Refugees

We have not received any asylum seekers or refugees into the city during the year. The council has been considering the plight of Syrian refugees and an officer group has looked at the Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme with a view to offering accommodation. However, without confirmed support from Lincolnshire County Council in relation to Education and Social Care, we are unable to move forward to pledge an offer of accommodation.

Concluding Comments

Following outlining the key activities above which have taken place under my portfolio remit over the past year, I hope you will agree, despite a severe reduction in resources, we should again be proud of what has been achieved during the last year during a time of change. I would like to thank all of those officers, members, partners and community volunteers alike, who have worked so hard to make Lincoln a better place to call home, and a place we can all be proud of.