

SUBJECT: REDUCING INEQUALITY PROGRESS REPORT

DIRECTORATE: CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TOWN CLERK

REPORT AUTHOR: ANGELA ANDREWS

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide Performance Scrutiny Committee with an update on progress towards the Reducing Inequality strategic priority contained in Vision 2020.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 On an annual basis each vision group provides a progress report to Performance Scrutiny Committee. This report provides an update on the progress of the group in delivering the strategic priority Reducing Inequality and its aspirations. The report should be read alongside Cllr Rosanne Kirk's annual Portfolio Holder report, also being presented to Performance Scrutiny Committee on 9th January 2020.

3. Background

- 3.1 Vision 2020 was published in January 2017, and contains four strategic priorities (Reduce Inequality; Economic Growth; Quality Housing; and Remarkable Place), along with an important strand of work focusing on High Performing Services.
- 3.2 As part of the arrangements for managing and monitoring progress of Vision 2020, the council established four Vision Groups along with a High Performing Services Board, each with a Corporate Management Team lead. Each Vision Group reports annually to Performance Scrutiny Committee on progress.
- 3.3 The Reducing Inequality Vision Group is leading on delivering the following council aspirations under this priority:
- Let's help people succeed
 - Let's provide help to the most vulnerable in our City
 - Let's help people feel safe and welcome in their communities
 - Let's empower people
 - Let's ensure the best quality of life for people living in Lincoln
- 3.4 This report is being submitted alongside the annual report written by Cllr Rosanne Kirk, Portfolio Holder for Reducing Inequality, providing Performance Scrutiny Committee with the opportunity to undertake an in-depth review of the Reducing Inequality strategic priority and portfolio. To help avoid duplication, key performance indicators have been included in Cllr Kirk's report instead of this report.

4. Position Statement (Appendix A)

- 4.1 A Position Statement is attached to this report as Appendix A. It captures the 'day

to day' work by the council that is integral to delivering this strategic priority. This was captured to ensure we understand the resource committed across the council, and to recognise how all staff have a role in delivering this priority under Vision 2020.

5. Project Monitoring Table (Appendix B)

5.1 The Project Monitoring Table provides an overview of the current and live projects for this strategic priority. This table is attached to this report as Appendix B.

5.2 There are 18 projects currently being monitored in the work programme for Reducing Inequality. A summary of the position of these projects is included below. This is split by completed projects, projects flagged as green (meeting their milestones), and projects flagged as amber (monitored closely as a result of being impacted by a number of external factors). There are currently no projects flagged as red (not meeting their milestones).

5.3 Completed projects – The following two projects have been completed during the past year in the current Reducing Inequality work programme;

- Promote access to a range of financial products – Working with the Financial Inclusion Partnership, the council has explored and identified a range of financial agencies/products available to residents in the city, with a particular focus on providing support to our most financially disadvantaged residents. Information on these agencies and products has been shared to residents via a wide range of routes, including via the Lincoln Against Poverty website, Your Lincoln resident magazine and via the council's website and social media channels.
- Friends Against Scams – This aim of this initiative run by National Trading Standards is to protect and prevent people from becoming victims of scams by empowering people to take a stand against scams. The council has successfully gained accreditation as a Friends Against Scams organisation and has appointed SCAMchampions who are on hand to provide staff and our customers with advice on how to spot and avoids scams. Our SCAMchampions have received training on the laws surrounding scams and where to access further support and guidance should a member of staff or resident fall victim of a scam.

5.4 Projects flagged as green – There are currently 12 projects flagged as green in the current Reducing Inequalities work programme. Those where notable progress has been made during the past year toward Reducing Inequality are provided below:

- Reduce incidences of suicide – Following the successful delivery of SafeTALK and ASIST training to all frontline staff in 2018, the council has continued to provide suicide prevention training to frontline staff in 2019, with an additional six SafeTALK sessions being held for 92 members of staff. The training teaches participants to recognise when someone may have thoughts of suicide, and work with them to create a plan that will support their immediate safety. A rolling programme of training will continue to be delivered moving forwards.
- Promotion of bulk energy switching to lower energy bills for residents – The council has continued to actively promote the Lincolnshire Energy Switch initiative to local residents. Three tranches take place each year, with the

switching process between suppliers being fully undertaken at no cost to residents. Up to May 2019 iChoosr, who administer the scheme on behalf of all Lincolnshire authorities, confirmed that City of Lincoln residents had saved over £54,000 to date through this initiative.

- Encourage businesses to embrace corporate social responsibility – Following the successful launch of the Lincoln Social Responsibility Charter in October 2018, the council has been working to encourage local businesses to embrace corporate social responsibility. To date, 63 local businesses have gained recognition as socially responsible employers. The charter gives recognition to an organisation for the wide range of socially responsible activities they undertake to support their employees and the local community. These activities are above and beyond what the businesses are statutorily required to deliver. Alongside the charter, the council has also continued to promote the benefits of paying the real Living Wage to local businesses.
- Sincil Bank Revitalisation Programme – A new community hub was opened to residents in the Sincil Bank area of the city in December 2018. The hub has provided a venue for three members of staff in Sincil Bank to provide a range of support and advice to local residents. Since the opening of the hub approximately 1,600 residents have visited the hub seeking advice and guidance. Surgeries delivered at the hub have so far included Welfare Advice, homelessness advice from P3, and a Bulgarian Community Group. Alongside the community hub, in the past year additional national funding has been awarded to support the delivery of a range of projects to improve the Sincil Bank area and further support local residents over the current and coming years.
- Promotion of Pension Credit – The council has actively promoted Pension Credit to local residents via a range of routes, including via the council's website and via our Your Lincoln resident magazine. Direct contact has also been made with individuals who have been identified as meeting the criteria for Pension Credit. Promotion is planned to continue through to March 2020.
- Severe Disability Premium – Since July 2019 the council has also actively communicated with residents who may be entitled to the Severe Disability Premium, or a related allowance, benefit or payment. As at the end of November 2019, 14 customers' incomes have so far increased as a result of this exercise, equating to a total of £45,358.

5.5 There are four projects flagged as Amber. None of the project outcomes are delayed, but have instead been flagged as Amber to ensure they are monitored closely by the Reduce Inequality Vision Group as a result of a number of external factors. A summary of these actions is provided below. Further detail on these actions is provided in Appendix B.

- Maximise any opportunities for income generation as part of the National Apprenticeship Employer Levy – The WBL team has recently secured a sub contract which will enable the team to work with and deliver apprenticeships to SME's. This will see this project move to a 'Green' status in the new year.
- Work with training providers, businesses and partners to increase opportunities for local people to access training and employment (college courses) - The highly successful four-year project working with Lincoln College has ended. Unfortunately, a new project based on similar principles of assisting those on low incomes has not yet commenced, due to new

sources of funding not yet been successfully bid for despite a significant amount of work going into this. Further exploration of other potential funding streams is taking place.

- Providing a central hub of support for young people through The Network - The Network continues to support NEETs with a range of issues, particularly around careers advice. The Network is working on plans to be sustainable moving forward, with their current largest source of funding due to end 31st March 2021.
- Maintaining support for people moving to Universal Credit - The impacts of Universal Credit (UC) are still creating demands for support to help people claim, with other related support such as digital inclusion and budgeting assistance. The UC support function within our Council's Benefits Team is presently in place to the end of 2019/20, with work on further improving processes and providing holistic support continuing to progress. Working alongside Citizens Advice's 'Help to Claim' regime is also continuing to help support residents.

6. Performance Indicators

A set of performance indicators have been developed for the Reducing Inequality strategic priority. These measures have been included within Cllr Rosanne Kirk's Portfolio Holder report to this committee.

7. Strategic Priorities

7.1 Let's reduce inequality

This report captures the progress of the Reducing Inequality Vision Group, whose remit is to ensure the delivery of this strategic priority.

8. Organisational Impacts

8.1 Finance (including whole life costs where applicable)

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

8.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

8.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

There are no E&D implications arising from this report.

9. Risk Implications

- 9.1 Options Explored – Not applicable.
Key risks associated with the preferred approach – Not applicable.

10. Recommendation

- 10.1 To consider the progress of the Vision Group and this strategic priority.

Is this a key decision? No

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? Two

List of Background Papers: None

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