

Position Statement – December 2019

Whilst the Reducing Inequalities Vision Group work to deliver a range of projects to reduce inequality across the city, this priority is much more than delivering projects. The day-to-day work of all members of staff at the council has an enormous impact on our residents, either directly or indirectly. An overview of this work is provided below.

Corporately

- Providing a website to support, promote and signpost residents to partners that help us tackle poverty
- Working regularly with partners to drive forward existing and new initiatives to reduce inequality. This includes hosting the:
 - Annual Lincoln Growth Conference
 - Lincoln Tenants Panel
 - Lincoln Against Poverty Steering Group
 - Lincoln Social Responsibility Forum
- Delivering an Equality Action Plan to ensure our services are accessible to everyone

Customer Services

- Providing benefits advice and FCA regulated money advice
- Holding weekly advice sessions in our most deprived communities, including Sincil Bank, Birchwood, St Giles and Moorland
- Providing foodbank vouchers to enable our customers to access emergency food parcels
- Offering free use of 20 public access PCs to our customers to enable them to search for jobs, advice etc
- Managing the Public Services Hub at City Hall. Alongside the council the Hub includes DWP Job Centre and Medical Examination Centre, Voluntary Centre Services, The Network and Lincolnshire Credit Union

Revenues and Benefits

- Providing housing benefit and council tax support
- Work closely with tenancy services to help tenants manage their rent arrears and avoid falling into difficulty
- Arrange for managed payments in cases where tenants are struggling to manage their rent payments
- Providing support to Universal Credit customers
- Welfare Team – supporting DWP customers with personal budgeting support
- Work closely with partners including DWP and Lincolnshire Credit Union to ensure reactive and agile service across the public sector hub
- Providing Discretionary Housing Payments and Exceptional Hardship Payments to give people extra help with rent or council tax in special circumstances
- Ensuring fair debt collection

- Responding to welfare reform

Housing

- Leading multi-agency support to prevent homelessness by offering advice and support to enable residents to stay in their homes
- Provide housing solutions for those sleeping on the streets, tailoring solutions based on the needs of the individual through a dedicated Rough Sleeper Project Team
- Retaining good quality flooring in council houses to reduce costs to new tenants
- Signposting new tenants to our own advice services along with other support agencies
- Providing Lincare remote monitoring to support vulnerable or disabled people living at home

Human Resources and Work Based Learning

- Signposting staff in our Health and Wellbeing booklet to debt advice, housing advice and mental health advice,
- Delivering an apprenticeship scheme to build the skills and experience of our residents whilst assisting them into work
- Paying our own staff the real Living Wage set annually by the Living Wage Foundation
- Monitoring and reporting on recruitment and success rates by protected characteristics – presented annually to the Equality and Diversity Group
- Promoting a range of staff benefits to help reduce living costs

Community Services

- Offering a free bulky waste collection service for residents with a disability, eligible for a state pension or pension credits, or in receipt of a means tested benefit
- Providing assisted waste collection to residents who do not have an able-bodied person living with them

Planning

- Providing sustainable communities where people can thrive and access services

Recreational Services

- Offer a range of events and activities at no cost to residents in Lincoln's award-winning parks and open spaces
- Providing access to market stalls that offer a variety of affordable produce

Leisure

- Ensuring access to Yarborough and Birchwood leisure centres in an affordable and accessible way

Communications

- Promoting a range of advice and support services through our advertising channels including social media, Your Lincoln magazine, Home! Magazine and the bus station advertising screens
- Developed a robust advertising policy preventing payday lenders from advertising on council assets

IT

- Blocking access to payday loan websites on council computers, including the free public access computers

Corporate Policy

- Promoting Lincoln Community Lottery as a tool to raise additional funding for local good causes (over £42k raised in year one)
- Producing the Lincoln City Profile, which can be used externally for fund raising bids as well as internally
- Actively promoting the benefits of Fairtrade to Lincoln's residents
- Promoting the NHS blood and organ donation campaigns
- Supporting the delivery of the Lincoln Anti-Poverty Action Plan
- Supporting the externally led Community Cohesion Steering Group