

- Present:** Councillor Jane Loffhagen (*in the Chair*)
- Councillors:** Bill Bilton, Matthew Fido, Gary Hewson, Helena Mair, Bill Mara, Clare Smalley and Calum Watt
- Substitute Member(s):** Councillor Rosanne Kirk
- Also in Attendance:** Ben Lilley - Lincolnshire County Council, Children's Services, Andrew Garbutt - Lincolnshire County Council, Lincolnshire Youth Council and Dr Sue Bond-Taylor – University of Lincoln
- Apologies for Absence:** Councillor Naomi Tweddle, Councillor Adrianna McNulty, Councillor Pat Vaughan and David Sampher – Lincolnshire County Council, Children's Services

1. **Confirmation of Minutes - 7 December 2021**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2021 be confirmed and signed by the Chair as an accurate record.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were received.

3. **Giving Young People A Voice On How They Engage With The City of Lincoln Council**

Councillor Jane Loffhagen, Chair of the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee, opened the meeting and provided the Committee with a brief introduction to guest speakers and the topic of discussion which was giving young people a voice on how they engage with the City of Lincoln Council.

(a) **Lincolnshire Youth Council - Andrew Garbutt, Participation (Quality and Standards)**

The Committee received a presentation from Andrew Garbutt (Quality and Standards, Lincolnshire Youth Council) and Ben Lilley (Practice Supervisor, Children's Services, Lincolnshire County Council). During consideration of the presentation, the following points were noted: -

- The Lincolnshire Youth Council was established in 2005 and was made up of young people aged thirteen to eighteen, meeting every six weeks.
- They shared ideas and opinions with Councillors and managers at Lincolnshire County Council and its partners and followed the form of what the young people wanted to work on
- The meetings were activity based and consideration was given to what young people would want to do when meetings were arranged. These included bowling and the Kinema in the Woods.
- Previous challenges have included the recruitment of young people for the Youth Council and maintaining their involvement and interest. Historically, young people wanted to know that their views went on to mean something.

- Currently, numbers were low and acknowledgement was given to a change in a young person's circumstances e.g leaving school/college to go to University.
- Challenges had previously arisen when trying to engage the idea with schools. Consideration was given to the impact of Covid-19 and that schools may be recovering from the effects of this
- There had been UK Youth Parliament involvement previously, but this became quite expensive and resulted in involvement with this ending
- Further work included the Children's Services Stakeholder Engagement Group which coordinated feedback from service users and went into an annual audit report
- Future opportunities considered have included development of a participation, citizenship, and democracy projects within schools. In addition, further development of the Lincolnshire Youth Council to engage tier 2 authorities, partner organisations and the voluntary sector

**(b) Lincolnshire County Council, Education Department / Youth Engagement - Ben Lilley, Practice Supervisor (Children's Services)**

Andrew Garbutt concluded his presentation on the Lincolnshire Youth Council and Ben Lilley addressed the Committee on the Participation Groups of the Lincolnshire County Council. During his presentation, the following points were made:

- Participation meant ensuring that children, young people and families were not only given opportunities to be involved in the decision-making process, but also acting on them as part of development and improvement
- The work of the Lincolnshire County Council followed the Lundy Model, created by Laura Lundy in 2007 and consisted of four concepts; space, voice, audience and influence.
- Voices 4 Change (V4C) was a participation group for children in care, specifically those in residential care homes, foster care and those who had been adopted. This group covered each locality, Lincoln, North & South Kesteven, Boston & South Holland and East Lindsay.
- V4C was created for young people in care to provide feedback to Lincolnshire County Council about their services and was an activity-based group with discussions, held in various locations friendly to those participating e.g. Youth Centres, Soft play areas, Ten Pin Bowling Alleys.
- Although some groups had been lost due to Covid-19, these groups were starting again next week and plans involved Councillors, corporate parenting and senior officers meeting with the young people face to face to come up with a plan moving forward.
- This group in particular was instrumental in updating the language used in policies and procedures. Previous work included consideration of the term 'Looked After Children' which when shortened, wasn't liked as the term 'LAC'. V4C gave their views on the abbreviation and following consideration, it was changed to 'Children in Care'.
- Lincolnshire Young Voices was a pan-disability participation group created to research and act on issues faced by young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities up to the age of twenty-five.
- The group met regularly and carried out work on accessibility and transport issues including a number of visits to heritage sites where they conducted an accessibility health-check which would be shared with venues in an overall report on accessibility. This work was part of a service development plan.
- Lincolnshire Young Voice, had ongoing development of a training programme called 'How To Avoid Putting Your Foot In It' within which young people

shared experiences on communicating with children and young people with SEND

- The group met regularly, every six weeks and was established in 2017 with Lincolnshire being one of the only counties that had a specific participation group for young people with disabilities.
- Young Inspectors was the third participation group within the County Council with a programme to inspect children's services including interviewing other young people about how they felt about services e.g. quality of supervision social workers received.
- The participation group was involved in recruitment and sat on the employment panel to participate in the selection process.
- Young Inspectors also included participation in mystery shopping, observations, questionnaires and focus groups

The Chair gave thanks for such an informative and inspiring presentation and reiterated the importance of the participation groups in giving young people a voice.

**(c) The University Of Lincoln - Dr. Sue Bond-Taylor, Senior Lecturer and Programme Leader in Criminology**

Dr Sue Bond-Taylor, Senior Lecturer in Criminology at the University of Lincoln addressed the committee and expressed an interest in youth justice and the exploration of issues that affected them within the community. During her presentation, the following points were made:

- Consideration was given to the global Unicef initiative, Child Friendly Cities which in summary, was a city or community where the voices, needs, priorities and rights of children are an integral part of public policies, programmes and decisions
- The responsibility for the formation of a child friendly city primarily fell on the Government but also fell on stakeholders including civil society organizations, the private sector, academia and the media as well as children themselves
- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, as ratified in December 1991 gave comprehensive coverage of every aspect of young people's lives
- The UN Convention was based on provision, protection and participation
- The Unicef approach to a child friendly city was a rigid one which comprised of nine building blocks, set as the gold standard
- In a city friendly city, inclusion and participation were fundamental in providing an integrated response to the invisible demands of children
- Issues surrounding the level of complexity were considered in that children did not often present with a singular issue. Often, it was several connected issues
- The highest rung of Roger Hart's Ladder of participation was where young people are initiating projects themselves and avoided tokenistic participation
- Inspiration for a child friendly city came from Leeds and although they hadn't adopted the Unicef route, they began with participation work with children which led to twelve wishes that formed the basis of their child friendly city model including play, travel, transport, and venues
- A child friendly city strategy for Lincoln, extended to the county of Lincolnshire was launched in 2017 at ESRC Festival of Social Science event
- Work within wider districts presented difficulties in facilitation of the concept including issues surrounding local authority staff restructuring, resources, economic implication, and the impact of austerity
- The main aim of the University of Lincoln Child Friendly Research Network was to build an interdisciplinary research base which supported the rights of children both in the City and the County

- A systems thinking approach recognized the need for multiple stakeholders to work together, since stakeholders in different parts of the system hold different parts of the solution
- University Industry Research Strategy set out the process of co-creation which included discover, define, develop and deliver
- In summary, the University of Lincoln Child Friendly Research Network aimed to tackle the invisible problems that affected young people and promote children's rights as granted through international legal obligation

As a result of discussion between members, officers and guest speakers, the following points were made: -

- Consideration was given to child friendly spaces when planning applications were granted such as the Western Growth Corridor approval and how we could integrate children into the process
- It was noted that there was emphasis on children involvement in the Vision 2025 presentation, but it would need to be implemented in a way that worked
- Recognition was given to daily services such as planning, licensing, and collection of rubbish and that all these areas affected children
- It would be beneficial if Lincolnshire County Council and City of Lincoln Council could work collaboratively on the initiative
- Previous discussions and works were delayed due to the Coronavirus pandemic and the emergence of Omicron. However, the Portfolio Holder for Housing was in dialogue about young people's voices and the importance of that
- It was noted that Leeds was a unitary authority however in Lincoln we had a two-tier authority, with Children's Services delivered at County level. Other services that affected children such as parks and play spaces were delivered by District Councils. The complications that this could cause when trying to initiate a child friendly city concept were highlighted
- The importance of work continuing after dialogue took place was recognised and the need for work to be initiated and lead by an agency that could affect change
- It was agreed that a child friendly city was a great aspiration for any city to have as everyone wanted the best for children as they were the future
- Consideration was given to the possibility of dialogue with Leeds, to form something achievable from the start and build upon that however concerns were raised about the academic year and school engagement with Data protection issues being raised historically
- There was a desire to create a space to share materials with potential access to external partners. An affiliated group – Lincolnshire Learning Lab launched at the University in the School of Education made attempts at building relationships
- School engagement was important, and it was essential to establish resistance to engagement and the reasons for that as the initiative gave young people a voice
- Emphasis was placed on the importance of in person meetings. It was understood that Covid-19 impacted the ability to meet in person however inspirational presentations were best heard in person
- Young people made up 34% of the population and this made their voices an important part of the decision-making process
- It was important to consider a diverse demographic of children and young people including refugees, those from the traveller community, those with disabilities and those that faced stigmas

- Leaders in the community had a responsibility to source ideas and for them to be made possible
- City of Lincoln as the pilot could work collaboratively with other districts councils. It did not need to be an isolated approach
- Concerns were raised regarding costings but if resource would be used to benefit young people, it could be possible
- Previous concerns were raised regarding the ability of young people accessing the Citizens Panel with data protection issues as a main concern
- It was noted that there were ways to collect data in an anonymous way and in accordance with data protection rules. Further information could be found in the 'Let's Talk' system that the Council procured
- Due to the size of Lincoln, it could be difficult for people to engage in issues affecting other areas that they did not inhabit
- Comparisons were drawn in relation to the Police and Crime Commissioner works to develop a Youth Commission. Over a two year period, there had been a team of ambassadors made up of young people who carried out peer research and gathered peer views regarding crime and justice issues, mental health and exploitation. It would be useful to see how this work went

The Chair gave thanks for such an inspiring presentation and for all the work carried out by the University. In addition, she expressed confirmation that the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee made recommendations and therefore work would be ongoing.

#### **4. Work Programme 2022**

Consideration was given to the Committee's work programme. The Democratic Services and Elections Manager advised that Sukhy Johal from the University of Lincoln and Toby Ealden from Zest Theatre were listed for attendance to the next meeting to provide the Committee with an update on the creation of a cultural consortium.

The Chair advised that the Committee were interested in the Youth Commission and suggested opening communications with Dr Sue Bond-Taylor to establish a contact best placed to attend the meeting of the Committee in March.

Discussion took place regarding a collaborative working approach with Lincolnshire County Council owing to their hub of information and that this was ongoing work in progress.