

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

Report to Council by Councillor Calum Watt, Chair of the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee 2022-23

**Introduction**

I commenced the role of Chair of the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee in June 2022, taking over the role from former Councillor, Jane Loffhagen. I would like to thank former Councillor Loffhagen for her time as Chair of the Committee.

The current elected members of the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee are:

- Councillor Calum Watt (Chair)
- Councillor Joshua Wells (Vice-Chair)
- Councillor Debbie Armiger
- Councillor Chris Burke
- Councillor Liz Bushell
- Councillor Matthew Fido
- Councillor Hilton Spratt
- Councillor Rachel Storer
- Councillor Dylan Stothard
- Councillor Aiden Wells
- Councillor Emily Wood

Democratic Services Officer: Victoria Poulson

In addition to the Council's Executive and its senior and front-line Officers, external contributors included:

- Aaron Joyce, Chair - Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA)
- Charlotte Brooks, Director for Local Change - Local Motion
- Chief Superintendent Jon McAdam, Area Commander - West Area Local Policing
- Fiona Bone, Suicide Prevention and Self-Injury Reduction Lead - Lincolnshire Partnership Foundation Trust (LPFT)
- Kerry Stocks, Operations Manager – Shine Lincolnshire
- Lucy Gavens, Consultant in Public Health - Lincolnshire County Council
- Marianne Langley - Keep the Tap Running
- Rachel Wright, CEO – Shine Lincolnshire
- Sarah Connery, CEO - Lincolnshire Partnership Foundation Trust (LPFT)
- Steve Renshaw, Secretary - Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA)
- Sukhy Johal MBE, Director of the Centre for Culture and Creativity - University of Lincoln
- Toby Ealden, Artistic Director and CEO - Zest Theatre

The Committee recorded its thanks to all its contributors and Council staff who stayed for long and sometimes late meetings during the year, and whose contributions were so helpful and enlightening.

The Committee's recommendations concerned a variety of topics such as development and empowerment of young people, the Cultural Consortium - a significant number of events had been held over the last six to eight months to drive culture within the City, the Cost-of-Living Crisis and Cost of Living Support including the Community Grocery, the Warm Spaces initiative and the Household Support Fund 2023/24.

The Committee scrutinised Community Policing and noted the progress that had been made within two years in respect of suicide prevention in Lincoln.

Discussions also took place around poverty and the need for a collaborative and holistic approach to this issue and a Member briefing would be arranged on Assets of Community Value.

Within this report, I have outlined the key activity undertaken by the Committee over the past year. I would like to thank each member of the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee, Council Officers and external contributors for their ongoing support towards effective scrutiny over the last year.

### **Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee Agenda Items from the Past 12 Months**

During the past year, the Committee has met on six occasions, as planned to discuss a range of topics. Detailed minutes of these meetings are available to Members and to the public should they wish for more information. Meetings were held on:

- 28 June 2022
- 6 September 2022
- 11 October 2022
- 6 December 2022
- 24 January 2023
- 8 March 2023

Below includes the agenda items discussed at each meeting.

#### Tuesday 28 June 2022 Agenda Items

1. Cultural Consortium Update
2. Work Programme 2022/23

#### Tuesday 6 September 2022 Agenda Items

1. Poverty Trust Commission
2. Cost of Living Crisis
3. Work Programme 2022/23

### Tuesday 11 October 2022 Agenda Items

1. Community Policing in Lincoln
2. Work Programme 2022/23

### Tuesday 6 December 2022 Agenda Items

1. Suicide Rates in the City of Lincoln
2. Work Programme 2022/23

### Tuesday 24 January 2023 Agenda Items

1. Suicide Rates in the City of Lincoln
2. Cost of Living Crisis Update
3. Work Programme 2023

### Wednesday 8 March 2023 Agenda Items

1. Assets of Community Value
2. Work Programme 2023

### **Cultural Consortium Update**

The Committee received presentations and/or undertook face to face discussions with the following individuals:

- Simon Walters, Director for Communities and Environment – City of Lincoln Council
- Sukhy Johal MBE, Director of the Centre for Culture and Creativity - University of Lincoln
- Toby Ealden, Artistic Director and CEO - Zest Theatre, accompanied by Lachlan Madin, a young person involved throughout the consultation process

It was confirmed that the Cultural Consortium was a joint commission between the University of Lincoln and the City of Lincoln Council and funded by Arts Council England. The desire was to become nationally renowned for cultural offers to enable a bid for City of Culture in 2029.

Zest Theatre were commissioned to implement expanded practise and facilitate the consultation for the benefit of young people in Lincoln. Zest Theatre interviewed, employed and trained seven youth facilitators, aged 16-20 to co-facilitate workshops and all were paid above the National Living Wage. 1,094 young people were engaged throughout the process which resulted in engagement of 8.7% of Lincoln's population aged 10-19, based on 2018 census data.

There was a strong desire for equality and equity across the city and this underpinned the Maxims derived from the qualitative data. The key themes that

arose proceeding to the creation of the Maxims included: equality, environment, place, space, relationships, creativity and mental health.

For Lincoln's Cultural Compact to make a meaningful impact on young people, it needed to adopt a co-creation process; actively listen, acknowledge what was heard, empathise, and then respond by releasing young people's creativity through co-creation.

## **Recommendations**

It was confirmed that consideration had been given to engagement with other sectors such as the third sector, private sector the Police and the National Health Service (NHS). Engagement with other sectors would take place further to working projects in progress to demonstrate lateral thinking and the power of a collective and collaborative approach with all organisations within the city.

With regard given to St Benedict's Square, an area frequented by young people, the City Council needed to codesign with young people to create a dual-purpose space that would align with Vision 2025.

The creation of festivals and events in neighbouring areas for individuals that did not come into the City could be assisted with funds from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). A bid had been submitted to the UKSPF for £2.9m over three years and the decision on the bid would be made by the Governance Board, not just City of Lincoln Council, but wider partners.

An element of £130K capital was for the creation of outdoor safe space and a further £130K for two years to create family events, artistic installations within the city centre and outreach work in areas that did not get the exposure culturally.

## **Poverty Truth Commission**

The Committee received presentations and/or undertook face to face discussions with the following individuals:

- Charlotte Brooks, Director for Local Change - Local Motion

The Committee were advised that LocalMotion was founded on building a social, economic, and environmental justice movement of six communities across the UK; created by six established funders in the UK who shared a desire to find new and better ways to tackle the common social, economic and environmental issues communities faced.

The six places were Lincoln, Enfield, Torbay, Middlesbrough, Oldham and Carmarthen. Lincoln was selected to benefit from additional funding from LocalMotion until November 2023.

The Committee were advised that after investigating what was happening from the perspective of individuals and organisations over the eleven wards within Lincoln,

three common themes occurred: community prosperity, aspiration, and sustainability.

Launched in September 2022, Poverty Truth Lincoln sought to identify approximately fifteen community commissioners to take part in the overall commission. In addition, the cohort of collaborative working would include fifteen civic/business commissioners.

The ten-year LocalMotion programme was in the exploration stage, phase 2. This phase was less 'outcome focused' and more person centred. The ambition was to have tested a number of projects by June/July 2023 and to secure future funding up to 2030/31.

The Commission was resourced until August 2024 with an 8-year collaboration action plan to be co-designed by the commissioners. There would be an annual impact report and analysis post 2024 and the 2025-30 strategy plan, by Lincoln, for Lincoln, would ensure delivery of ideas.

## **Recommendations**

It was acknowledged that the scheme addressed absolute and relative poverty. Within the eleven wards of Lincoln, there are approximately 17,000 people Just About Managing (JAM'S). If the cost of living continued to rise, it was suspected that over the duration of the next six months, this figure could significantly increase.

The panic and pressures of poverty could not be understood unless experienced and the exit routes from poverty could not be executed in isolation – a collaborative and holistic approach was essential.

There was a positive working relationship with Poverty Truth Network and the term 'Poverty Truth' was chosen to represent the reality of the crisis faced. Rather than be spoken about, people needed to be involved.

There appeared to be a bias towards those in financial hardship by way of significantly higher interest rates for borrowing money and a resolve to the bias was needed.

National organisations or institutions that had an interest in supporting people but could not formally commit officers to the process, would continue to engage and offer expertise through a 'friends of the commission' network.

There would be a review of the core group every six months and it was noted that the regular commitment for the group of 30 commissioners would not begin until January 2023 when regular meetings would begin with capped numbers to ensure sensitivity of subject content.

The Chief Executive's remit would be to appoint representation from the Council and would be guided by the Chair and relevant Portfolio Holder.

## Cost of Living Crisis

The Committee received presentations and/or undertook face to face discussions with the following individuals:

- Martin Walmsley, Head of Shared Revenue and Benefits – City of Lincoln Council
- Kate Bell, Climate Change Manager – City of Lincoln Council
- Sara Boothright, Food Health and Safety Manager – City of Lincoln Council

The Committee was advised that the information provided during the presentation was correct and accurate at the time of the meeting.

As community lead, we had worked in partnership with a number of organisations in the delivery of national and local schemes. This included the private and voluntary sector, communications and the Portfolio Holder for reducing inequality.

19% of residents were 'just about managing' and classified as fuel poor. The Council Tax Energy rebate scheme of £150 had been a difficult scheme to deliver.

A presentation on the Disabled Facilities Grant informed members that Lincoln received £750,000 per year for the scheme however previously, it was very restrictive.

In 2018, the Regulatory Reform Order provided a more flexible approach to how we improved home facilities within the city. The applicant would need to demonstrate a physical health-related issue through the discretionary route. However, the new approach also considered chronic mental health issues.

The City of Lincoln Council Private Housing Health Assistance Policy Grants included the Safe, Warm & Well and Gas Central Heating schemes worth up to £10,000 subject to eligibility criteria being met. Funding of £200,000 had been ring fenced to target and encourage more people to come forward for help.

For residents who privately rented their home, it was confirmed that under the Housing Act, we had powers to enforce landlords to make changes to substandard accommodation. Funding of £72,000 had been secured to facilitate education of local landlords where their properties had an energy performance certificate (EPC) of below E to ensure that work was carried out to make homes more efficient.

There had been a collaborative approach with West Lindsey and North Kesteven District Councils on the Home Energy Upgrade Scheme. The Home Energy Upgrade Scheme detailed a range of fully funded energy efficiency home improvement to eligible homeowners with an annual income below £30,000. The scheme was available to properties with an EPC rating of D, E, F or G.

It was highlighted that many companies offered support to low-income households such as Anglian Water who promoted specialist tariffs.

Ex Chancellor, Rishi Sunak announced a Household Support Fund from October 2022 – March 2023 and work was to be undertaken to devise a scheme to implement and operate a third rounding of financial assistance.

Officers explained the availability of help with food to residents and this included Trussell Trust Food Bank, Community Larder and Community Grocery which would help people to make affordable purchases in shops.

The Local Government Association website had a cost-of-living hub to share best practice to help Council's support residents with the rising cost of living.

Frontline staff would soon receive training on illegal money lending and 'loan sharks' and this was due to take place in the first week in October 2022.

### **Recommendations**

There had been considerable exposure on the support available at present via Look North recently and the idea was to keep the leaflet live and updated as information changed.

There were initial plans for communications to be distributed and those plans would be developed in the months ahead.

Consideration was given to intervention for the prevention of loan sharks.

There was the Rogue Landlord Register as another means of deterrent for deteriorated accommodation and non-compliance. It was confirmed that the Council had a dedicated officer to consider cases whereby landlords failed to comply with legislation consistently, a legacy from rogue landlord works in 2016.

Consideration was given to the regular press release of cost-of-living support to ensure that information was received by residents that may be suffering from digital poverty. Officers confirmed that Lincoln featured on BBC News on Tuesday 6 September 2022 and discussion would be held with the Communications team.

Members suggested the consideration of a free telephone number to access support available. It was confirmed that costs would be assessed and explored as a possibility and suggested through Executive.

The Corporate Management Team were aware of potential increase of demand on services and consideration would be given to resource utilisation for priority services.

### **Further Update**

Martin Walmsley and Kate Bell attended a later meeting to provide the Committee with an update on the Cost-of-Living Crisis which confirmed that there had been a promotion of regional and national guidance.

The recent focus had been on help with food and collaborative work had taken place with Community Grocery through Towns Fund monies.

Work was ongoing with Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) for free school meals and the Household Support Fund had seen significant funding through Lincoln County Council from central Government. The demand resulted in the funds in December 2022 only lasting two days.

We were currently in the process of sending £250 through the Post Office to recipients of Housing Benefit that did not benefit from the National Cost of Living Payment scheme. The cost-of-living support offered to businesses included a 75% reduction for 2023/24 – up from 50% in 2022/23.

### **Recommendations**

Warm Spaces fell under the remit of Paul Carrick, Neighbourhood Manager Central and marketing was very important to ensure the stigma of Warm Spaces was removed.

Digital inclusion was important and during implementation of the Council Tax Support scheme, 11% of individuals contacted did not have access to the internet or were unable to complete the relevant forms. The leaflet would be reviewed regularly to ensure it contained the most up to date information.

Work within the Corporate Management Team (CMT) was ongoing to signpost contingency plans and a high priority within workloads. Further information could be provided to the Committee when more information was available.

### **Community Policing in Lincoln**

The Committee received a presentation from the following individual:

- Chief Superintendent Jon McAdam, Area Commander - West Area Local Policing

It was confirmed that Lincolnshire Police were in the process of a significant recruitment programme, the largest since approximately 2000. Through the Uplift Programme, there would be an additional 146 officers for Lincolnshire.

It was outlined that each recruitment intake had doubled to thirty officers and there had been an introduction of a mid-year intake in an attempt to future proof policing with 1086 officers increasing to 1186 in the first instance.

It was further highlighted that interviews had been underway for future police officers to be included in January's cohort in 2023. In addition, there were a number of Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's) in training.

## **Recommendations**

Violence towards woman and girls was a key priority within the partnership and went beyond a single agency response. The Police tracked Street Safe Data weekly to enable a response to individuals that felt isolated.

Work with men and boys included the Mini Police Scheme, educational programmes, and personal development within schools to educate, prevent and support.

The relocation to South Park of the Neighbourhood Policing Team for morning briefings was a result of a review into how the city was being policed to ensure that resource profile could respond in a robust manner.

The commitment from the police to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour was ongoing.

Challenge remained with resource availability. Joint working relationships with the fire service, ambulance, council, LPFT and health services were robust and effective. There was a strong commitment to policing in Lincolnshire and work to continue with the Council.

## **Suicide Rates in the City of Lincoln**

The Committee received presentations and/or undertook face to face discussions with the following individuals:

- Fiona Bone, Suicide Prevention and Self-Injury Reduction Lead - Lincolnshire Partnership Foundation Trust (LPFT)
- Sarah Connery, CEO - Lincolnshire Partnership Foundation Trust (LPFT)
- Lucy Gavens, Consultant in Public Health - Lincolnshire County Council

It was confirmed that 1 in 3 deaths, as a result of suicide were individuals that had never had contact with mental health services.

As a district, the City of Lincoln had the highest suicide rate across the country of 21.3 per 100,000 population.

Suicide prevention work and an understanding of suicide locally derived from annual releases from the Office for National Statistics, Real Time Surveillance from Lincolnshire Police and Coroner Data.

Local intelligence provided information on suspected 'clusters' and additional support would be placed within communities where suspected suicide clusters had been identified.

'Reaching Out and Saving Lives' (2020-2023) was developed and delivered by the multiagency steering group who lead suicide prevention activity in Lincolnshire.

Suicide prevention within Lincolnshire included work in the following areas:

- Core Offer
- High Risk Groups
- Children & Young People
- Knowledge and Intelligence
- Awareness raising and training

There was now an Urgent Assessment centre within Lincoln County Hospital to support residents and access to 'Zero Suicide Alliance Training' was free and was a twenty-minute suicide prevention training course available to all individuals.

## **Recommendations**

There was a mental health helpline available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, accessible using a freephone telephone number. Recognition was given to individuals that would prefer to access support through a text messaging service and in that instance, the text messaging service SHOUT could be accessed for nonverbal forms of communications. There was also an Urgent Assessment Centre within Lincoln County Hospital. This could be accessed without going through A&E whereby it could be busy and overwhelming. Work on urgent 24/7 solutions was ongoing.

Work was ongoing by the University of Lincoln for development of an app called 'Ripple'. The app would be installed on all university computers and if an individual inputted an 'unsafe' word into a search engine, signposted help would be displayed, giving information on local chatlines such as SHOUT.

There were services specifically for the use of children and young people. There was a gap in funding between services required and demand on those services. As we emerged from Covid-19, the demand on supply increased significantly, especially support required for eating disorders. Additional resource had been ringfenced for children and young people.

Based at Lincoln City Football Club (LCFC) grounds, peer to peer support was offered to men through 'Andy's Man Club'. This was a peer to peer support group, some of which were previous service users that tried to help and support other men. Collaborative work with third party stakeholders was important and signposting where help was available was essential.

It was important to recognise the significant impact that social media has on children and young people's mental health which includes the encouragement of self-harm. Work to identify clusters would remain ongoing and this included non-geographical clusters. Work with Lincoln College had taken place to establish commonalities.

Ongoing signposting was essential and would continue with social media awareness, mental health support and teams based within schools and specific podcasts on safe social media with a consistent approach to prevention. Future

ideas for prevention work, subject to recruitment, included a specialist councillor in every GP Surgery, as part of community transformation.

### **Further Meeting**

A further meeting was held to continue the work on suicide rates in the City of Lincoln. The Committee received presentations and/or undertook face to face discussions with the following individuals:

- Rachel Wright, CEO – Shine Lincolnshire
- Kerry Stocks, Operations Manager – Shine Lincolnshire

It was confirmed that Shine Lincolnshire was established in 2011 through funding from the Managed Care Network, Mental Health Promotion Fund via Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (LPFT)

As a support network, Shine ensured information was shared through community mapping and not siloed. Shine worked to ensure community support services for individuals with mental health illnesses were available locally and worked collaboratively with partner agencies.

The 360° support offered by the charity included:

- Assistance with interpretation of the tender and requirements
- Support with Application
- Host Employment, if required
- Implementation Support
- Training and Development

Shine worked with Lincolnshire County Council, LPFT and Integrated Care Board (ICB) to support mental health investment programmes through a Grant Administration.

In January 2023, Shine announced a new Mental Health and Wellbeing Community Investment Fund which would be divided between a large Sustainability Fund and a smaller Innovation Fund on a 70/30% basis.

### **Recommendations**

Shine had not submitted a project bid under the UKSPF award for Lincoln however Members agreed that it would be beneficial for Shine to be made known to Kate Ellis, Major Development Director, and Francesca Bell, former Assistant Director of Growth and Development.

All staff at Shine had gambling training via GamCare to support relevant organisations.

There had been engagement with both the University of Lincoln and Bishop Grosseteste University to consider encouragement of work placements and

business models. Engagement work included Lincolnshire Voluntary Engagement Team (LVET) and Age UK.

Shine received funding from LCC for Grants Administration work. Shine were contracted by LPFT for the Peer Support Work. Revenue was also raised from training sales as well as business donations.

The partnership with LPFT originated further to the consideration of what peer support would look like. Collective and collaborative work was at the centre of everything Shine did and would remain ongoing.

### **Assets of Community Value**

The Committee received presentations and/or undertook face to face discussions with the following individuals:

- Aaron Joyce, Chair - Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA)
- Marianne Langley - Keep the Tap Running

It was confirmed that Under the Localism Act 2011 (Part 5 Chapter 3) & detailed in Assets of Community Value Regulations 2012, nominated groups were given the right to bid for a listed property if entered onto the property sale market. However, there was no obligation to sell, cooperate or accept a community offer.

There was a large disparity between commercial and residential property, magnified by Lincoln's large student population and the Assets of Community Value (ACV) regime was the only method for communities to demonstrate the value of an asset.

Nomination for an ACV came from suitable nominating bodies such as Parish Councils or groups with a community (geographical/shared interest) connection. The process typically took up to eight weeks to approve or reject a nomination and if approved, the nominated property would be added to the list of assets for five years or unless sold. The owner retained the right to appeal.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was the dominant legislation and Section 8 made provision relevant to ACV. The NPPF made clear provision for the inclusion of public houses.

Lincoln's current pub protection policy fell within LP15 of the Local Plan which laid out three conditions that determined whether the loss of a community facility might be permitted.

Planning Committee considered applications carefully and if appropriate, would query officers. The addition of a planning policy document would grant officers and Member of the Committee additional powers.

It was important to note that ACV's did not cover public houses exclusively but protected a number of community assets that would otherwise be lost if planning policies did not provide adequate protection.

## **Recommendations**

It was noted that Parish Councils could nominate their own public houses however in Lincoln, there was a noticeable lack of focus as the role was not present. A supplementary planning document would support properties in jeopardy.

It was resolved that the Committee make a recommendation to the Executive for the creation of a policy document on Assets of Community Value and an individual be nominated, knowledgeable on the policy document contents, to act as a contact for information and clarification when needed.

**Councillor Calum Watt**

**Chair of the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee 2022-23**