

- Present:** Councillor Calum Watt (*in the Chair*)
- Councillors:** Debbie Armiger, Biff Bean, James Brown, Rachel Storer, Dylan Stothard and Emily Wood
- Also in Attendance:** Lynsey Collinson (DevelopmentPlus), Toby Ealden (Zest Theatre), Emily Holmes (Assistant Director of Strategic Development, City of Lincoln Council), Carlie Jago (DevelopmentPlus), Adam Perkins (Zest Theatre), Victoria Poulson (Democratic Services Officer, City of Lincoln Council) and Simon Walters (Strategic Director of Communities & Environment, City of Lincoln Council)
- Apologies for Absence:** Councillor Chris Burke, Councillor Laura Danese, Councillor Bill Mara and Councillor Aiden Wells

67. Welcome and Apologies

Councillor Calum Watt, Chair of the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee, opened the meeting with a brief round of introductions and offered a warm welcome to external guest speakers.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor(s) Laura Danese, Bill Mara and Aiden Wells.

Councillor(s) Gary Hewson, Hilton Spratt and Clare Smalley were in attendance as substitutes.

68. Confirmation of Minutes - 26 March 2024

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2024 be confirmed and signed by the Chair as an accurate record.

69. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Calum Watt declared a non-pecuniary interest with regard to the agenda item titled 'Sheltering Our Citizens'.

Reason: He was a trustee of the registered Charity, Developmentplus.

70. Sheltering Our Citizens

Councillor Calum Watt, Chair of the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee, introduced the topic of discussion which was Sheltering out Citizens

The Committee received a collaborative presentation from guest speakers, Lynsey Collinson, Chief Executive (DevelopmentPlus) and Caylie Jago, Project Manager (DevelopmentPlus). During consideration of the presentation, the following points were noted:

Lynsey Collinson, Chief Executive (DevelopmentPlus)

Lynsey Collinson commenced the presentation with background information on DevelopmentPlus' history and work focus.

- DevelopmentPlus was a charity based in Lincoln which had operated for 27 years
- Work focussed on mental health and wellbeing through support projects which included one to one support and group support activities
- The charity worked with ex-offenders and rough sleepers and supported individuals where mental health was the biggest obstacle to progression
- The charity wanted to help people to thrive, not survive
- Project Compass, a homeless advocacy project, was launched in March 2019 further to difficulties with the drug, Spice, in 2018.
- Officers from the City of Lincoln Council (CoLC) requested that DevelopmentPlus offered a befriending programme for individuals that used the drug, Spice
- A research project commenced so individual backgrounds could be understood. The project included investigation into the reasons for drug and alcohol use and what services had already been accessed. Information was collated into a homelessness report.
- Two areas of need were identified within the city; a lack of understanding of where support and help was available and the need for a signposting service
- There was a specific cohort of individuals that had fallen through the net. Individuals had been banned from using NOMAD and YMCA due to their behaviour and therefore, there was no service provision available for them
- Project Compass reconnected individuals through an advocacy service which helped them to re access services such as mental and physical health support
- Additionally, the project also helped individuals to connect to different appointments such as probation and Council appointments.

Caylie Jago, Project Manager (DevelopmentPlus)

- In August 2023, DevelopmentPlus moved to different premises after the number of service users had increased
- DevelopmentPlus offered creative services for individuals that were rough sleeping; a person who was out on the streets. This included those in immediate need of food and access to physical and mental health care. The service was open to individuals daily
- An initial assessment was carried out when a homeless person presented themselves
- The charity worked in partnership with other authorities around the city such as the City Centre Policing Team, local Council's and the Rough Sleeper Outreach team
- Developmentplus also offered holistic healthcare for the homeless through the use of an NHS based team which floated support between YMCA, Framework and NOMAD etc
- The charity had worked hard in the last 2-3 years to set up 'Lincolnshire Recovery Partnership' - a drug and alcohol service. Information sharing was a big part of the partnership
- A weekly meeting took place in which every member of the cohort was considered to assess if they had engaged with services and if they had been seen. This formed the basis of a welfare check

- Engagement was a significant barrier to progression for service users. There were high levels of digital poverty, complex addiction issues and physical and mental health needs
- The charity had a broad spectrum of work as individuals presented with multiple complexities, battling the elements daily, with difficulties during winter and with daily rain.

Lynsey Collinson, Chief Executive (DevelopmentPlus)

- DevelopmentPlus was a charity and projects were grant funded
- The charity employed 2 full-time and 4 part-time employees however the project had been continued with only 4 staff members more recently. A minimum of 3 staff members were required in the office to safely run project company. This was to mitigate risk and ensure the operation was ran safely
- At the time of this meeting, there was approximately 50-60 rough sleepers within the city and 4 cohorts of individuals:
 - individuals within the original cohort
 - individuals that had no local connection
 - individuals that had been released from prison under the early release scheme
 - individuals that had become homeless due to the housing issues within the city - temporary housing was not as available as it once was
- The number of rough sleepers and returnees had recently increased:
 - May 2024 – 16 new rough sleepers, 49 returnees
 - June 2024 – 2 new rough sleepers, 40 returnees
 - July 2024 (up to 19/07/2024) – 14 new rough sleepers
- DevelopmentPlus was the only daytime support programme and as such, rough sleepers accessed the charity's services often which was relied upon by a number of services
- The charity recently closed temporarily due to staff burn out; the project was not safe to run
- Difficult decisions had become necessary prior to the reopening. If an individual presented with no local connection, they would be issued a travel warrant to their own home place. If a travel warrant was refused, the individual would not be able to access services and would be left on the street. Similarly, early releases from prison would not be supported by the charity. Instead, individuals would be added to the waiting list for the 'Bridging the Gap' project
- Funding for the charity was commissioned through the Integrated Care Board (ICB) for half the funding and lasted until 2026. Finding a source for continuation funding was difficult and the charity had no access to Government homelessness funds. There were challenges within the third sector with accessing grant funding
- A high number of the people the charity worked with had been deemed too high risk to access provision within the town or individuals that faced other barriers to accommodation
- Immigrants that came to the country to work that had lost their job may not have been in the country long enough for settled status to have been gained. This meant these individuals did not have full access to benefits with pre settled status as well as language barriers.
- It was a requirement that individuals were in receipt of housing benefit to be granted access to NOMAD. A high number of the people that the charity worked with were able to access benefits however for those with pre settled status, it was very difficult

- It was not always comfortable for potential service users to have assessments with people in uniforms/lanyards
- When a person was sent to prison, their GP registration was cleared and when released, it was necessary to re-register which was traumatic for people with complex medical issues
- The charity would not put staff at risk and would close if the demand on services resulted in an unsafe working environment
- DevelopmentPlus believed that every person has the right to access food, medical care and clothing and planned to continue to do that for as long as funding was available
- It was important for partners to work with the charity in an attempt to ensure that services were sustainable in the future.

The Chair offered thanks for the presentations from all guest speakers and welcomed comments and questions from Members of the Committee. As a result of discussions between Members and speakers, the following points were made: -

Question: Was there a stipulation that individuals had to be alcohol/drug free to access services?

Response: No

Question: Were there any success stories?

Response: Success stories were a rarity. A person's homelessness journey was not linear. Services users often did not have the stability to aspire to as they had mostly endured a chaotic life. Services users were often resilient individuals.

Question: What relationship did DevelopmentPlus have with Lincolnshire County Council (LCC)?

Response: The charity was not within the remit of the LCC. It was within the remit of the CoLC.

Question: Was there any cross over with probationary services?

Response: When a Council saw that DevelopmentPlus had offered support to an individual, they didn't appeal to fulfil their statutory obligation. Commissioning conversations had recently commenced with LCC. The charity supported Lincoln resident-based individuals and did not appear to be as recognised as others.

Councillor Calum Watt, Chair of the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee, wished it to be noted that the Committee had been unsuccessful in securing attendance of a representative from LCC further to an invitation sent from the Democratic Services Officer.

Comment: Thanks offered to guest speakers for the informative presentation and the work of the charity.

Question: In this instance, what obligations did LCC have as a County authority?

Response: Discussions referred to District Councils.

Comment: The charity hoped to have more of a working relationship with District Authorities and wanted service users to reengage with Councils. Lincoln was a large rural area, and the charity did not have the resources.

Comment: Anti-Social Behaviour had increased and was a problem. The charity did fantastic work. Individuals needed to engage which appeared to be affected heavily

by mental health. Lincoln had £90 a week housing fund and emergency accommodation was costing the General Fund account large amounts of money.

Question: Funding was short. How was the charity going to keep running if further funding was not secured?

Response: The charity would endeavour to secure funding. From a charity perspective, funds had vastly reduced. It was difficult to secure funding to keep DevelopmentPlus operational, prior to funding for the continuation of projects. The charity had reached out to partners to establish if there was anything that could be done collaboratively.

Question: Where did the other half of funding for DevelopmentPlus come from?

Response: The other half of funding came from grant giving organisations such as Tudor Trust and the Mercers company. The Mercers agreed for the charity to submit another application, but the Tudor Trust had closed whilst they reassessed their priorities. A large amount of the homelessness funding was reserved for nighttime provision.

Question: If the demand on services continued on the current trajectory, how long could services be sustained?

Response: If funding had not secured by March 2025, the charity's employee numbers would be halved. DevelopmentPlus could run reduced services for a couple of days per week.

Comment: The Rough Sleeper team valued the services that DevelopmentPlus offered. Thanks given for the clarity on the costs for Project Compass. There was a challenge for core funding as a charity. The CoLC 5-year budget setting cycle was due to commence as the Council began to consider Vision 2030. The issue fell under the Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing and as such, it could be considered under Vision 2030 to assess if there was any support that could be offered.

Question: DevelopmentPlus dealt with very complex cases. Where would the charity want to place a person with no issues with money?

Response: For some individuals, it was not just a case of giving them a house, sometimes it was a more specific need. Work included an advocacy service for individuals and a continuation of wrap around support. Some service users needed long term mental health support, accommodation that suited their needs and to be checked upon. A number of service users found the administration of running a household too overwhelming. Every case had individual need.

Comment: Lots of organisations had a low threshold for 'high need' and therefore, dispelled individuals. DevelopmentPlus took the time to unearth those complex needs and tried to support them.

The Chair offered his thanks to guest speakers and officers for all the information provided to Committee and for the remarkable work carried out.

RESOLVED that:

1. The Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing be informed of presentations for consideration under Vision 2030.
2. The content of all presentations be noted with thanks.

(Note: Councillor Clare Smalley left proceedings at this stage)

71. Youth Engagement Update

Councillor Calum Watt, Chair of the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee, introduced the item with the purpose of the discussion which was to receive an update on the creation of a cultural consortium following a successful award of funding to the University of Lincoln.

The Committee received a collaborative presentation from guest speakers, Toby Ealden, Artistic Director & CEO (Zest Theatre) and Adam Perkins, Participation Co-Ordinator (Zest Theatre). During consideration of the presentation, the following points were noted:

- Zest Theatre existed to make space for young people and to release the voice of a generation
- Mental health figures in young people had risen and 5 pupils in every classroom had a probable mental health issue
- In 2022, Zest Theatre was commissioned to investigate how culture could create a city of the future for young people
- It was important to recognise the political and social awareness that young people had; they understood why people ended up homeless and experienced a lot of trouble
- McDonalds was a common theme as a space for young people to go that was clean and bright
- The research brief included engagement of 1,094 young people throughout the process which resulted in engagement of 8.7% of Lincoln's population aged 10-19, based on 2018 census data
- The consultation concluded with the creation of six maxims. The themes that arose proceeding to the creation of the Maxims included equality, environment, place, space, relationships, creativity and mental health
- It was agreed that the focus would be on 'Making Space' as that would encapsulate many of the thoughts young people discussed
- Areas around the High Street Heritage Action Zone were explored for use, young people designed it and 'The Zone' was created
- Money had been received from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) and the National Lottery. Funding had also been received from Lincolnshire Co-Op
- 360 hours of The Zone would be delivered and was opened on 17 June 2024
- There had been a week of 'soft launches' the week prior to opening with a big launch planned for 19 August 2024
- 'The Zone' would move to Sincil Bank for two weeks before it moved to Moreland Centre Car Park
- Airclad was the company that created the structure and gifted the two-year lease. Funding received from the National Lottery would be spent on the project
- The Zone featured an artist, a Playstation, water cooler, a table tennis table outside, reading corner, iPad, display boards and music played inside. Beanbags and wooden blocks could be moved around
- The facility was staffed by a dedicated team that were all artists in their own right
- YMCA and Noise Academy had visited 'The Zone'. Gentry Barber Shop had paid for two staff members to give free haircuts. Bubble Tea planned to give away free products. Michael from Stokes Coffee had visited to grind coffee with young people

- The Cornhill Market area was a perfect example of local engagement
- Since 'The Zone' opened on 17 July 2024, there had been 480 visits in total - 53 a day on average
- Funding would continue until March 2026
- 'The Zone' encouraged young people outside of their own communities. Some young people had never visited the Corn Market.

The Chair offered thanks for the presentations from guest speakers and welcomed comments and questions from Members of the Committee. As a result of discussions between Members and speakers, the following points were made: -

Comment: It would be interesting to see if any firms would assist young people to learn skills that had been lacking such as brick laying. Collaborative working with Lincoln College might prove positive.

Response: Conversations regarding the project had taken place with Lindum; some of their leaders were involved in other charitable organisations. Discussions included their events for the future builders and consideration of how the project could fit into that. At present, young people wanted somewhere to chill and relax and that was what was the project offered, led by young people which gave them a space to be creative and artistic. Career paths and aspirations also discussed with young people. The team's main objective was to sign post young people to the best opportunities that they could have. There was a real mix across the team of experienced individuals.

Comment: It was an incredible undertaking to gain the views of 1000 young people. Led by Toby Ealden's vision for the project, Historic England agreed and it was amazing to see what the project had become. The project was a journey that had taken place over two years and the work was phenomenal.

Comment: Thanks given to the City of Lincoln Council for the trust instilled in the project of which had been a big piece of work. Core funding as a National Portfolio Organisation could be applied for until March 2027.

Question: There was no youth provision within St Giles. Could the community centre be used there in the future?

Response: The YMCA had space youth workers that had been used within the project on a Wednesday. Collaboration across originations had made the project possible.

Question: What lessons had been extracting from the project and how could things be done differently? Should youth clubs in our communities be recreated?

Response: Youth clubs used to fall under Lincolnshire County Council. Young people needed those spaces. The project had been able to reimagine what those spaces looked like. Young people just wanted a voice to be heard.

Question: Was there scope that the project to be continued beyond 2027 with the provision that was in place? Could it be evolved from that?

Response: Work would be continued until funding was secured. A clearer idea of public spending would be known after the autumn spending review had been announced. There was funding available from Arts Council but it was a possibility that the funding could be removed. It was too soon to speculate what funding would look like.

Question: Was the artwork created by young people going to be displayed anywhere?

Response: Local spaces would be contact to see if the artwork could be displayed somewhere. The artist involved in the project wanted to create t shirts. The purpose of the space was to relax and to empower young people to take ownership.

Comment: St Giles Parish Church would gratefully receive artwork for the church.

Question: What age group engaged the most?

Response: Engagement varied, but the largest age group was 11-18 years of age. A large amount of engagement was from young people within the first three years of secondary school although it was very varied. Young people attended for free but if they wanted to participate in an activity, a parent/career needed to sign forms.

The Chair offered his thanks to guest speakers and officers for all the information provided to Committee and for the remarkable work carried out.

RESOLVED that:

1. Zest Theatre be invited back to Committee in one year for an update on the progression of the project.
2. The content of all presentations be noted with thanks.

72. Work Programme 2024/25

Consideration was given to the Committee's Work Programme. Further to scoping discussions, the Democratic Services Officer confirmed that the focus of the Committee's upcoming work would include further attendance in relation to Education and the Cost of Living.

It was agreed that a representative from Lincolnshire County Council, the CEO of Bridge Church and a representative of Acts Trust be invited to attend Committee in relation to Education and the Cost of Living. The Democratic Services Officer confirmed that the item would be brought before the Committee in September 2024.

The Chair sought the views of Members with regard to future topics of scrutiny review. Members suggested a continuation of scrutiny work on 'Sheltering our Citizens'. Members suggested a scrutiny review on Homelessness. The Democratic Services Officer confirmed that scoping discussions would take place further to the meeting.

Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 17 September 2024.