

REPORT UNDER RULE 2(vi) OF THE COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES**REPORT BY COUNCILLOR LUCINDA PRESTON, PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR REDUCING INEQUALITY**

1	Introduction
1.1	<p>Our work to combat the challenges residents and businesses face, especially with regards to cost of living, continues. The many teams who have contributed to this report, have played a vital role in alleviating these pressures, even with the increased influx of customers this past year.</p> <p>This portfolio encompasses a wide range of services that are integral to our provision of support, within our communities. The dedication and work of these teams has allowed us to make a major impact in the last 12 months. I would like to thank all those involved for the level of professionalism and care shown by both staff and members, to those who need it most. These are challenging times but with their help, we have, and will continue, to alleviate the pressures faced by those in need and enable them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>I would also like to thank the Council's partners, especially within the third sector, who play a fundamental role in ensuring our residents receive the support they require. This partner support has been provided at a time when they are facing many challenges themselves as a result of the current economic climate.</p> <p>In the following pages of my report I have provided an update on each of the service areas, which fall under the responsibility of my portfolio. These updates focus on the period following the previous report to committee (July 2024 to June 2025).</p> <p>Where available, performance information has been included within the service area updates. Appendix B also includes the latest performance measure outturns and supporting service area commentary for those strategic performance measures under my portfolio.</p> <p>I am new to the role of Portfolio Holder for Reducing Inequality and would like to recognise the outstanding contribution of my predecessor Councillor Sue Burke to this role. Sue is remembered for her commitment to equality and fairness as well as her boundless compassion and passion for this portfolio. We miss her very much.</p>
2	Welfare and Benefits Advice
2.1	<p>The Council's Shared Service for Revenues and Benefits brings together benefit payments and the collection of the revenue due to both Councils under one team, working under the LiNK label. As part of collecting monies owed and awarding benefits, it is essential that the team are confident that any debt is collected fairly and that individuals are claiming everything that they are entitled to in terms of discounts, grants and benefits. As an extension to this, they also offer a professional money advice</p>

	service, giving residents with problems debt support in tackling and resolving their situation.
2.2	<p>The Welfare Team is a semi-independent arm of LiNK, working across both Lincoln and North Kesteven, providing advice and assistance in claiming benefits. Their focus is on helping residents to navigate the complex rules and entitlement conditions, of the full range of welfare benefits. Additionally, the team provides advice and assistance on pensions, grants, charitable payments and tax credits. They report through the Customer Service Team to ensure that their focus is entirely on the individual and to ensure impartiality of advice.</p> <p>The debt casework undertaken by the team is managed within the regulations set out by the Financial Conduct Authority. The Council is a member of the Community Money Advice organisation who provide training for the debt advisers and who monitor quality by undertaking regular visits, file reviews and an annual report. These reports have been positive throughout, and the team are highly rated for their professionalism, independence and the quality of the advice and support that they give. The last file audit awarded a 100% rating and applauded the quality of record-keeping, adherence to FCA regulations and outcome achieved. Some of the policies and procedures that have been developed by the team have been shared across the organisation as best practice.</p>
2.3	In the last financial year, looking at Lincoln residents only, the team advised 5,616 individual customers and helped them to secure £33,744 of additional weekly benefit payments. In most cases these payments continue to be paid throughout the year and assuming that these all continue in payment, the annual income of the people helped has increased by £1,754,700. Additionally, since many benefits are backdated on award, there were lump sum payments totalling £335,895. In total, the team have brought in an excess of £2 million of extra money into the pockets of Lincoln residents and the Lincoln economy.
3	Welfare Reform, Universal Credit and Cost of Living Support
3.1	The Cost of Living Support Team continues to provide vital support to residents of Lincoln. The Cost of Living Co-ordinator role, originally funded for 1-year through strategic plan monies, has been extended by a further 18 months, recognising the capacity needed in this key area of work. The team continues to receive extremely high levels of demand from residents struggling with cost of living pressures, requiring both emergency support as well as longer-term and preventative assistance.
3.2	<p><u>Household Support Fund</u></p> <p>The Household Support Fund (HSF) is now in its' seventh wave ('HSF7'), which runs for this financial year 2025/26. HSF is a Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) funded scheme, aiming to provide emergency support around food, fuel and other wider related essentials, with HSF7 having a focus on preventative support too. The scheme is being delivered working closely with Lincolnshire County Council and other district Councils.</p> <p>HSF wave 6 ('HSF6') ran from 1st October 2024 to 31st March 2025, with the following support being provided both directly through our Cost of Living Support Team as well as through a range of fantastic partner organisations throughout the city:</p>

Household Composition	Households with a Disabled Person	Households with Children	Households with a Pensioner	Other	
Number of Households Helped	1,123	1,498	247	1,121	
Amount of Award	£80,467	£143,520	£30,249	£73,083	Total Paid £327,319

For 2025/26, £0.5m is available for City of Lincoln Council to deliver HSF7 – the team is geared up to ensure an efficient system is in place to support residents, but also a system that focuses on longer-term preventative support – for example, diversion of foodbank usage to accessing Lincoln Community Grocery (and the associated wraparound personal support provided there). HSF7 has recently ‘gone live’ (in terms of both direct delivery by the Council and also through a range of trusted partner organisations), - demands on this fund have already been high.

The 2025 Spending Review set out to reform crisis support. This year it has allocated £842 million per year to reform crisis support. This includes the first ever multi-year settlement to transform the Household Support Fund into a new Crisis and Resilience Fund incorporating Discretionary Housing Payments and funding councils like City of Lincoln Council to support some of the poorest households in order to alleviate child hunger outside of term time. This longer-term funding commitment will enable the Council to provide further preventative support to communities as well as to assist people facing an immediate financial crisis. At the time of writing, we are awaiting further details, however as a Council are committed to trying to influence the shape of this fund moving forward.

3.3

Universal Credit

The ongoing managed migration of Universal Credit (UC) continues to result in significant demands on officers within our Revenues and Benefits service. The current focus by DWP is moving over customers claiming Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), where they are in scope to claim UC. Many ESA customers are vulnerable and are likely to need support from our team, as well as through working with other partners such as DWP and Citizens Advice.

4

Housing Benefit / Council Tax Support

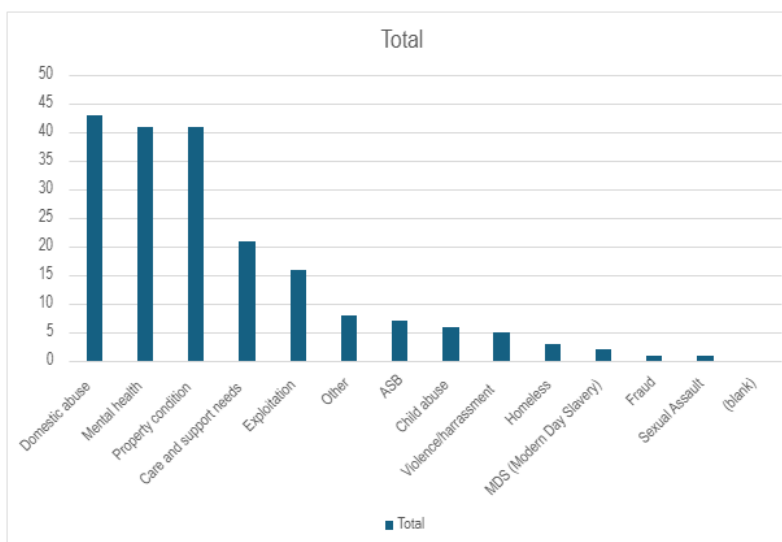
4.1

The Council’s Benefits Team continues to administer a significant number of Housing Benefit (just under 3,000) and Council Tax Support (just under 8,000) claims. Although the Housing Benefit claim caseload has reduced due to migration of certain cases to Universal Credit, demands on the team remain high with associated UC-related documents, as well as the volume of cost of living support and Discretionary Housing Payments applications.

4.2	<p>Despite the challenges, pressures and demands on the Benefits Team, New Claims and Changes of Circumstance for Housing Benefit continue to be processed promptly, with positive average processing times being achieved.</p> <p>In 2024/25, New Claims were processed within an average of 13.20 days and Changes of Circumstance in 3.72 days. These rates of performance compare favourably ahead of national average processing times, with the latest available national figures (in respect of quarter 3 2024/25) being New Claims average 20 days and Changes of Circumstance average 7 days.</p>																														
4.3	<p>The Council's Benefits Team also process Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) applications. These payments assist customers requiring additional help with housing costs, usually on a short-term basis. Payments are limited to a fund provided by central government each year, any payments above this figure are a direct cost to the Council.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th><th>City of Lincoln Council central government DHP grant</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>2025/26</td><td>£132,330</td></tr> <tr><td>2024/25</td><td>£132,330</td></tr> <tr><td>2023/24</td><td>£132,330</td></tr> <tr><td>2022/23</td><td>£132,330</td></tr> <tr><td>2021/22</td><td>£186,707</td></tr> <tr><td>2020/21</td><td>£250,113</td></tr> <tr><td>2019/20</td><td>£178,674</td></tr> <tr><td>2018/19</td><td>£208,624</td></tr> <tr><td>2017/18</td><td>£242,505</td></tr> <tr><td>2016/17</td><td>£173,675</td></tr> <tr><td>2015/16</td><td>£139,678</td></tr> <tr><td>2014/15</td><td>£194,308</td></tr> <tr><td>2013/14</td><td>£199,741</td></tr> <tr><td>2012/13</td><td>£98,865</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>As highlighted earlier in this report, the new Crisis and Resilience Fund will incorporate Discretionary Housing Payments.</p>		City of Lincoln Council central government DHP grant	2025/26	£132,330	2024/25	£132,330	2023/24	£132,330	2022/23	£132,330	2021/22	£186,707	2020/21	£250,113	2019/20	£178,674	2018/19	£208,624	2017/18	£242,505	2016/17	£173,675	2015/16	£139,678	2014/15	£194,308	2013/14	£199,741	2012/13	£98,865
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4.4	<p>Despite rising rents in the city as well as Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates (used to assess Housing Benefit and Universal Credit housing costs entitlement) not reflective of rental rates in the city, funding has decreased in recent years and been frozen since 2022/23, meaning officers regularly need to review guidance regarding making awards.</p>																														
4.5	<p>£125,186 of the 2024/25 government grant for DHP was spent (95%). There was a slight underspend in 2024/25 partly due to a more 'cautious' approach being taken in this financial year with it being the first year Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Personal Independence Payment (PIP) incomes were not disregarded for DHP assessment to allow for more DHP being allocated to private sector cases with a 'cap' in place. This 'cap' is being raised in 2025/26, so it is not envisaged there will be a DHP underspend this current financial year.</p>																														
5	Lincoln Anti-Poverty Strategy																														
5.1	<p>Officers continue to refresh the Council's Anti-Poverty Strategy, working collaboratively with a range of key partners in the city, the approach being led under the name 'Lincoln</p>																														

	<p>Against Poverty’. The development of this strategy is being supported through the work of the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee. A range of data collection exercises have taken place as well as a truly positive and inspiring assembly event held in January 2025 at the Engine Shed (Lincoln Against Poverty - sharing, collaborating and celebrating event). The data collected and assessment of current, emerging and future needs is currently being collated, and the intention is that a refreshed strategy will be presented to Executive and Council in November 2025.</p>
6	Discretionary Rate Relief Policy
6.1	<p>The Council’s Business Rates Growth Policy, approved by Executive in July 2018, provides a time-limited rate relief discount to new and extended business premises within the city, in the interest of building the Business Rates base, supporting economic growth and job creation. Eligibility for this scheme is dependent on the extent of the business premises creation or extension, location and the impact of the new business or expansion plans on the local economy. The impact of Covid-19 meant applications under this policy reduced, and applications/spend at reduced levels has continued. In 2024/25, a total of £35k was awarded under this policy.</p> <p>An internal ‘panel’ meets quarterly (or more regularly if needed) to consider businesses that have applied for this relief, or to try and target businesses who may benefit from this relief (i.e. if we have intelligence that a business is considering moving into Lincoln or expanding – could we look to offer some Growth Relief from their business rates for up to 3 years?).</p>
7	Financial Inclusion
7.1	<p>Financial inclusion continues to be a key objective and factor in many areas of our Revenues and Benefit shared service’s work. The Lincolnshire Financial Inclusion Partnership (LFIP) is currently chaired by the Assistant Director of Shared Revenues and Benefits for North Kesteven District Council and City of Lincoln Council, - which brings together organisations and partners to promote and raise the profile of financial inclusion across the county.</p>
7.2	<p>In 2024/25 LFIP led a successful countywide Pension Credit take-up promotion campaign, as well as running a very well attended (over 130 people from a wide range of organisations) conference in February 2025 focusing on several key areas of financial inclusion related matters.</p>
7.3	<p>Three key areas of high-profile engagement by LFIP in 2025/26, are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate communications as and when proposed/confirmed further welfare reforms are introduced (e.g. those relating to PIP), but for the meantime with a ‘<i>don’t worry, get in touch</i>’ message/approach. • Co-ordination of ‘Talk Money Week’ activities in Lincolnshire during November 2025: Talk Money Week Money and Pensions Service ; <p>A conference to be held in February 2026 (date and venue TBC), to follow on from the highly successful conferences held in Boston (2023), Grantham (2024) and Skegness (2025).</p>

7.4	<p>In terms of the well-documented ongoing national cost of living pressures, both partner Councils continue to review and update web pages dedicated to initiatives to try and assist residents with cost of living support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cost of Living Support – City of Lincoln Council• Cost of Living Support North Kesteven District Council (n-kesteven.gov.uk) <p>Also, LFIP has developed a whole range of cost of living support web pages and information through a dedicated area of the Connect to Support Lincolnshire website: Money Talk Lincs Lincolnshire .</p>																								
7.5	<p>In 2024/25, a proportion of UK Shared Prosperity Funding was allocated to help deliver cost of living initiatives. Projects delivered included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lincoln Community Grocery vouchers for new tenants of City of Lincoln Council or placed in accommodation by the local authority, expanded to YMCA Lincolnshire• Emergency fuel vouchers• Funding accommodation improvement at a homelessness charity• Research work into cost of living support requirements for those whose first language is not English• Grants for community venues• School uniforms provision• Tools library																								
8	Safeguarding																								
8.1	<p>Progress continues to be made to embed safeguarding across the Council. The number of internal referrals from officers has increased which reflects staff training, although it is anticipated that the statistics are also indicative in an upward trend linked to increasing levels of vulnerability and complexity among some adults in the city.</p> <table><tr><th>Safeguarding referrals (adults)</th><th>2020/2 1</th><th>2021/2 2</th><th>2022/2 3</th><th>2023/2 4</th><th>2024/2 5</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>93</td><td>69</td><td>154</td><td>240</td><td>390</td></tr></table> <table><tr><th>Safeguarding referrals (children and young people)</th><th>2020/2 1</th><th>2021/2 2</th><th>2022/2 3</th><th>2023/2 4</th><th>2024/2 5</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>10</td><td>4</td><td>27</td><td>46</td><td>44</td></tr></table> <p>The below graph outlines the main categories of concern for internal safeguarding referrals.</p>	Safeguarding referrals (adults)	2020/2 1	2021/2 2	2022/2 3	2023/2 4	2024/2 5		93	69	154	240	390	Safeguarding referrals (children and young people)	2020/2 1	2021/2 2	2022/2 3	2023/2 4	2024/2 5		10	4	27	46	44
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Whilst the main categories detailed are self-explanatory; property condition includes differing levels of severity, i.e. hoarding, those properties that are “Filthy and Verminous” (Public Health Act 1936) as well as properties with significant repairs issues.

8.2

Mental health encompasses those with significant illness to those that are requesting crisis support from employees.

“Other” is mixture of suspicious/concerning behaviour that cannot be categorised by the above options.

The Council receives a significant number of safeguarding reports that relate to or include concerns for mental health and wellbeing. To increase awareness of the support available and the pathways to access this, the Safeguarding Lead organised a briefing with the S.75 Team and Talking Therapies who are part of Lincolnshire County Council and Lincolnshire Partnership Foundation Trust. This was well attended by services across the Council including, HR, Communications, Housing Tenancy, Private Sector Housing and Customer Services.

Lincoln is represented weekly at Level 2 MACE (Multi Agency Child Exploitation) due to the number of children/young people linked to exploitation in the city. 108 cases were heard at Level 2 MACE in 2024/25; it should be noted that this number comprises victims, persons of concern and locations, and includes repeat cases. The vast amount of exploitation is linked to ‘county lines’. Lincoln has by far the highest number of cases heard at Level 2 MACE compared to neighbouring Lincolnshire authorities, it has the highest attendance rate in the County for Level 2 MACE multi-agency meetings which demonstrates the Council’s ongoing commitment to supporting vulnerable young people.

Lincoln has a higher level of suspected child exploitation activity in the city compared to neighbouring areas and specific training for key frontline officers has been undertaken on how to complete an ‘Op. Insignia’ referral form using the necessary tools and general overview of Child Exploitation.

The Council’s Vulnerable Adults Panel (VAP) has been running for almost a year now. The purpose of VAP is to provide a multi-agency environment for case discussions to support adults with more complex needs, who are not, for various reasons, currently able to access single agency support. Following a successful pilot, VAP is now accepting referrals city-wide from partner agencies such as Police, Probation and Neighbourhood Team.

During 2024/25 there has been a substantial number of Lincoln-based domestic abuse cases heard at the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). All cases heard at MARAC involve domestic abuse where there is deemed to be at high risk of death or serious injury to the victim. The breakdown highlights the increase in numbers of Lincoln cases being heard at the forum. The full year breakdown of MARAC cases is provided in 'figure 6':

	Total	Of which are tenants	Of which are homeless applicants
01/01/2024	26	10	Monitoring commenced in Jan 2025
01/02/2024	28	9	
01/03/2024	24	14	
01/04/2024	20	10	
01/05/2024	22	5	
01/06/2024	19	11	
01/07/2024	26	9	
01/08/2024	19	10	
01/09/2024	20	7	
01/10/2024	20	10	
01/11/2024	20	8	
01/12/2024	20	8	
TOTAL	283	111	
01/01/2025	33	15	7
01/02/2025	23	8	4
01/03/2025	23	4	2
01/04/2025	31	13	5

9 Skills and Training

9.1 Officers continue to engage with a range of skills and employment related organisations (for example, DWP, Lincoln College) seeking joined up opportunities. The Assistant Director of Shared Revenues and Benefits sits on The Network ([The Network – Careers advice, guidance and support for 16-24 year olds in Lincoln](#)) Management Board, providing a link into ways in which the Council may be able to support their vital work.

10 Housing Strategy

10.1 We have also been doing some work from a strategic perspective of trying to deliver a variety of housing options within the city that will help people have varying levels of support according to their needs.

11 Asylum Seekers and Refugees

11.1 We have welcomed families from Syria and Afghanistan into the city in the past, due to our involvement with the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Home Office are looking to

	accommodate asylum seekers and families from Afghanistan within the City. However, due to the lack of suitable and affordable accommodation we are still waiting for our first arrivals. The Council are working closely with the Strategic Migration Partnership and our partner Councils in the East Midlands area, to facilitate this and share our experiences.
11.2	Additionally, the city has a number of Ukrainian Refugees living independently and with host families. The Council has worked closely with Lincolnshire County Council and other local districts to undertake property and safeguarding checks to ensure they are living in safe and suitable accommodation.
12	Neighbourhood Working
12.1	<p><u>Sincil Bank Revitalisation Programme</u></p> <p>The previous report work has continued on the key projects agreed, as part of the Sincil Bank Revitalisation Programme. The objective continues to be on long term sustainable place making and community building.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Team continued to have slightly reduced capacity this year, due to the Neighbourhood Manager being seconded for two days each week. This secondment is to support the Communities and Place element of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) programme. The Project Assistant has also been partly seconded to deliver the Community Grants programme. Despite this reduced capacity, the team has continued to progress initiatives in Sincil Bank, working with partners to deliver a range of key improvements to the area as well as residents' access to services.</p>
12.2	<p><u>Highways Infrastructure</u></p> <p>Funded by the Towns Fund, Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) has received £3.1m to make changes to the highway's infrastructure in the area.</p> <p>Lincolnshire County Council is leading on the improvements to Sincil Bank and the City of Lincoln Council is leading on the improvements to four key gateways into the area.</p> <p>The Highways element was complete during April 2025, aside from the installation of a number of planters. This work is likely to be completed by the end of June.</p> <p>Following a consultation event in November 2023, the gateways that have been prioritised are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Portland Street / High Street · Portland Street / Canwick Road · Sincil Bank / LNER Stadium · Sincil Bank / Tentercroft Street <p>Work is yet to start on the Gateways: it is anticipated that this should commence later in the summer.</p>
12.3	<p><u>Hermit Street</u></p> <p>The Hermit Street element of the revitalisation programme, has seen the creation of eleven new family homes in the Sincil Bank area. The new homes have been built to</p>

	<p>high environmental standards and include modern infrastructure such as new drainage, lighting, and utilities. The project has also generated significant social value, including community engagement and educational opportunities. For example, 100% of the supply chain spend was with micro, small, and medium businesses, role play equipment was donated to a local nursery for their outdoor area, pupils from two local schools were supported with transport to the construction week at Lincolnshire Showground and a wooden plaque was designed by a local social enterprise for the community garden on the corner of Hermit Street and Portland Street.</p> <p>The former garage site on Hermit Mews has been transformed, with the existing garage block and garages adjacent to the flats demolished. All new homes were handed over to tenants in October 2024.</p>
12.4	<p><u>Cleaner Safer Streets</u></p> <p>The team continue to support initiatives to reduce incidents of fly tipping in the Sincil Bank area.</p> <p>A Week of Action took place between the 15th and 19th July. During this week of action, Lincolnshire Police's Eddie Van (Engagement, Digital Delivery, Information and Events) was located outside Wyvern House over three days. The van displayed key information on how to report fly tipping, how to get rid of unwanted waste, bin collection and what goes in black, brown, and green wheelie bins. Also included were key messages on keeping Sincil Bank a cleaner, greener, and safer place to live. A documentary was produced by the University of Lincoln film and media students, working with Sincil Bank Rivercare and the Litter Pick Group. This documentary highlights the work conducted regularly by volunteers in the area.</p> <p>The Mini Police also conducted two street audits making notes of any fly tipping, graffiti, and side waste. These issues were then reported to the relevant service areas to resolve.</p> <p>Over the week of action, an officer from the Public Protection and Anti-Social Behaviour Team conducted inspections. The area's CCTV assisted the Council to take enforcement action in two fly tipping cases. Four fixed penalty notices and six community protection warnings were also issued during the course of the week, with the Neighbourhood Team knocking on 143 doors in the area and speaking to 51 households about fly tipping. A full report outlining the impact of the week is available and will be used to inform a further week of action in 2025.</p> <p>Alongside this engagement activity, the team have funded an additional CCTV camera on the corner of Hermit Street as well as the installation of planters by Green Synergy, on a corner that was previously one of the most prolific fly tipping hot spots in the area. Since installation in December, there have been no reports of any fly tipping.</p>
12.5	<p><u>Other key updates linked to the Sincil Bank Revitalisation Programme</u></p> <p>Alongside these physical interventions, the Neighbourhood Team has continued to work hard to engage with the community and build trusted relationships.</p> <p>An update on some of the engagement activity continuing in the area is provided below.</p>
12.6	<p><u>Sincil Bank Community Hub</u></p>

	<p>The Sincil Bank Community Hub, which is located on Portland Street, has continued to build relationships with residents and is established as a well-known location for people to seek advice. While the visits covered a wide range of issues, common themes include visiting for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · General information and advice · Meet with other residents / organisations · Report fly tipping / litter · Apply for resident parking permits. <p>Alongside members of the team, Citizens Advice and LEAN offer outreach services. Both of these are well attended by members of the community.</p>
12.7	<p><u>Lincoln Embracing All Nations (LEAN)</u></p> <p>To help ensure support is available for our culturally diverse communities, the Neighbourhood Team has been instrumental in creating an organisation called Lincoln Embracing All Nations (LEAN).</p> <p>LEAN has received external funding and appointed members of staff to advance the organisation and assist the various groups that support our communities in the city.</p> <p>LEAN has also continued to support groups to host events, a recent example being a popular International Women's Group.</p> <p>Additionally, work has continued towards the longer-term aspiration of LEAN, which is to have a city-wide location that will act as a focal point for our diverse communities. The Neighbourhood Team are working with LEAN to create a base at St Peter at Gowts Church Hall.</p>
12.8	<p>The Neighbourhood Team has supported three main events in the area over the past twelve months.</p> <p>The team has supported Lincoln City Foundation to organise the second Community World Cup. This took place on the 17th May and built on a previous event that was held last May. This was another successful event bringing together the City's diverse community, with an estimation of over 600 people attending on the day. I visited this inspiring event: it was wonderful to see such a spirit of fun, competitiveness and community.</p> <p>The team worked with Lincolnshire Police to hold a Community Forum in October. This gave residents the opportunity to meet their local Policing Team and discuss any issues of concern.</p> <p>The team also supported a local community group known as Maze Matters to host "Sincil Bank by the Sea" in July. This is the fourth time that this event has happened, making it a regular highlight in the neighbourhood.</p>
12.9	<p><u>Neighbourhood Working Evaluation</u></p> <p>Rose Regeneration has been commissioned to measure the impact of the interventions in Sincil Bank, provide advice on the legacy of the work in the area, advise on the phased move from the area and document any lessons learnt that could inform the next phase of Neighbourhood Working.</p>

	<p>This report is now complete, and the findings were reported to the Council's Executive on the 3 June. The report includes the findings of surveys conducted with groups / organisations who have received funding from the team. 80% of respondents rated the support provided to individual residents as being very strong or strong, and 77% rated the impact on building the capacity of local residents to run activities and events as being very strong or strong. Below is an example of feedback received:</p> <p><i>"There has been a definite change in perception about the Portland Street area and that things can be achieved here."</i></p> <p>These findings are included in Appendix C to this report.</p>
12.10	<p>Rose Regeneration have also conducted more in depth interviews with projects that the team have supported. Below are two examples of notable quotes from these interviews:</p> <p><i>"LEAN wouldn't have happened without the Neighbourhood Working Team – they get it, they see the need and they invest in looking at good practice outside of Lincoln and how to make it happen in Sincil Bank... they play the long game."</i></p> <p><i>"Residents are willing to help with maintenance and ongoing works and that community ownership will bring sustainability."</i></p>
12.11	<p>The report also highlights the work that the team has carried out in connecting with external organisations and bringing together organisations in ways that have harnessed resources and investment, for the local area that would not have happened without this intervention.</p> <p>As part of this evaluation, Rose Regeneration has looked at capturing the less tangible outcomes delivered through the work in the area. The analysis shows for every £1.00 invested in Neighbourhood Working, £3.20 of social value has been generated.</p> <p>Social Return on Investment (SROI) is a way of developing a value for the less tangible outcomes delivered through Neighbourhood Working. The evaluation has looked at how the Community Hub and Programme have led to new ways of working with residents, local groups and partners; increased access to services; and improved the cleanliness and appearance of streets and green spaces.</p> <p>Mapped against the Sustainable Development Goals, the pilot is making a significant contribution around 'Sustainable Communities and Cities'. A Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) analysis was undertaken to assess the value-for-money being delivered. The analysis reveals that Neighbourhood Working has a BCR of £2.48/£1. The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government appraisal guide (2023) ranks BCR; with anything above 2 as offering 'high' value for money. More information about the SROI and BCR analyses can be found in Appendix C.</p> <p>The report to Executive has also used this information to make recommendations on the future direction of the Neighbourhood Team.</p>

13	Public Protection and Anti-Social Behaviour
13.1	<p><u>Public Protection and Anti-Social Behaviour (PPASB Team)</u></p> <p>The Public Protection and Anti-Social Team (PPASB Team) operates to protect individuals, the community, and the amenity of the city. The team operates over a broad range of areas, with the core services providing a combination of both proactive and reactive activities.</p> <p>The areas covered by the service include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-social behaviour (ASB) • Youth ASB • Accumulation of waste • Animal welfare • Fly-tipping investigations • Bins on Streets • Licensing consultations • Littering • Management of Safety Warden service • Noise • Pests/ conditions of gardens • Housing referrals <p>The PPASB team receives an average of 4,000 service requests per year.</p>
13.2	<p><u>Enforcement Action</u></p> <p>Formal enforcement action is the last option when responding to service requests. Informal tools are prioritised, these tools include advice and guidance, letters, visits, informal mediation and partnership working. It is only when informal action fails, that the team will consider taking formal enforcement action. Formal enforcement action includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal notices • Fixed penalty notices • Injunctions • Closure notices/ orders • Prosecutions • Joint working with Housing to seek possession • Acceptable behaviour contracts • Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) <p>Appendix A sets out more detail on enforcement action taken.</p>
13.3	<p><u>Youth ASB</u></p> <p>Youth ASB has been a focus for both the PPASB team and the Police. There is a joint protocol agreed at the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership (Community Safety Partnership), which allows for an incremental approach to addressing Youth ASB. This process includes a stage warning system, the use of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs), referrals into youth support services and ultimately applications for injunctions.</p> <p>The team have established effective partnership working arrangements with the Police. This allows for identification of youths and effective enforcement/ engagement action. The teams ran a media campaign to spread awareness of the work that has taken place to address youth ASB. For the period of Jan 2024 to April 2025, the teams issued 197</p>

	<p>stage 1 warnings, 53 stage 2 warnings and 20 ABC's. Visits are carried out by the Police and PPASB Officers to the parents' houses, in an attempt to control the behaviours. The team are currently progressing an injunction application against a youth. Action is also taken against the parent's tenancy if the parents of the problematic youths are City of Lincoln Council tenants.</p>
13.4	<p><u>Safer Lincolnshire Partnership (SLP)</u></p> <p>The PPASB manager continues to represent City of Lincoln Council at the SLP, at an operational level. Community safety partnerships are a legal requirement for local authorities. Priorities are set for addressing ASB across the County. Useful processes have been created through the SLP. This includes the Youth ASB protocol and a Noxious Odour policy. These policies are used often by Officers within the PPASB and Policing teams.</p>
13.5	<p><u>City Centre Management</u></p> <p>City Centre Tasking meetings enable information sharing, priorities to be set, resources to be co-ordinated and understood, as well as emerging issues to be identified and fed into the City Centre and Uphill Management meeting.</p> <p>CCTV, Police, Car Parking Services, Lincoln BIG, Project Compass and the Rough Sleeper Team meet on a fortnightly basis to discuss ongoing and emerging issues within the city centre and our multi-Story Car Parks. This group share intelligence and formulate an operational response to issues, alongside setting and reviewing priorities for the two weeks ahead at each meeting.</p> <p>All the partners came together to create a City Centre Policing plan, which is currently at the stage of being signed off. The final plan will be published shortly.</p>
13.6	<p><u>Public Space Protection Orders</u></p> <p>There are currently three active PSPOs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A PSPO that covers the City Centre (and wider) that prohibits the consumption of intoxicating substances or having an open container of alcohol. 2. A PSPO that covers three Multi-Storey Car parks. 3. A PSPO, which prevents access to St Peters Passage. This PSPO was renewed in October 2024.
13.7	<p><u>Anti-Social Behaviour Risk Assessment Conference (ASBRAC)</u></p> <p>ASBRAC is co-ordinated by the PPASB team and chaired by the PPASB manager. This forum allows for partnership working to resolve high risk cases of ASB. These meetings are held monthly and have representation from all the relevant partner agencies. The group have dealt with approximately 4 cases per month and resolutions have been reached for all referrals into the group. This includes joint enforcement plans alongside support processes for the victims.</p> <p>The PPASB manager acts as an independent chair for cases where victims have requested an ASB Case review. These meetings have allowed for an independent oversight on cases across the county. City of Lincoln Council's case review requests</p>

	are chaired by an independent chair from one of the other partner agencies, that form the SLP.
13.8	<p><u>Safety Warden Service</u></p> <p>The Council submitted a bid into the Serious Violence fund. The total grant award is £54,384. This bid was successful and means that the Safety Warden service can continue to operate on a Friday and Saturday night. The service has proven to be invaluable in not only reducing crime and ASB, but also helping to ease the pressure on our emergency services by offering immediate support to those who need it. The successful bid will allow the service to continue through to April 2026.</p> <p>The Safety Warden service will also be operating on Saturday afternoons between the hours of 16:00pm and 22:00pm. This will be funded out of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioners 'Hot Spot patrol fund'. The estimated annual cost for this is £13,300.</p>
13.9	<p><u>PPASB Service Forward Look</u></p> <p>The focus for the next 12 months will include continuing to improve working relationships with Housing to tackle ASB within CoLC's housing stock. A service level agreement is currently going through the internal approval process. This agreement will clearly identify each team's responsibilities when it comes to tackling ASB.</p> <p>Two of the other District Councils have signed an extension to the contract for stray dog collection. This resulted in additional funding into the PPASB team to allow them to collect stray dogs for North Kesteven and South Kesteven, up until April 2026. The Police and Crime Commissioners Office (PCC) has received further funding for financial year 25/26, to provide a visible presence in identified hot spots of the City. CoLC's allocation of this funding is going to fund the Safety Wardens Service in the City Centre on Saturday afternoons.</p>
14	CCTV Service
14.1	From January 2024 to January 2025 the Council's CCTV service monitored 12,192 incidents, a 16% increase on the 2023 figures for this period. This can be accounted for by the return to double staffing of the CCTV control room. During this period the service also processed 816 reviews, an 18% increase on the previous period. Significantly, 1,028 Police evidence disks have been produced for criminal prosecutions as part of the Council's ongoing support for the police and commitment to public safety, which is an increase of 30%. It should also be noted that 227 internal and external reviews were completed, indicating an increase in support for other Council services with a growing demand for insurance and freedom of information requests.
14.2	The CCTV service continues to engage with multi-agency working to support the day and nighttime economy in the city. The service has continued to develop closer working relationships and present a transparent service as part of this work.
14.3	We are pleased to announce that two more members of the public have agreed to become lay visitors. This independent public group play an important role in quality assuring the work the service provides is transparent. This ensures that everyone's human rights and personal data, is protected and managed in accordance with

	government legislation. Visits to the Control Room from stakeholders, community groups and Councillors remain popular and have continued to increase.
14.4	The CCTV service has benefitted from additional Safer Street funding, which has enabled an extensive recruitment process attracting a record number of applicants for vacant positions. The service has been able to successfully fill these positions with high quality individuals. The new recruits have completed the SIA course and have been working alongside experienced operators for the past sixteen months. They are all now competent to manage the control room on their own if the need arises.
14.5	<p>Safer Street funding has also allowed the service to install 9 new cameras to the system. The camera locations were decided in consultation with the Police and Public Protection and Anti-Social Behaviour Team with the aim to cover further areas of the city.</p> <p>A server room upgrade to support the addition of extra cameras to the system has also been completed and cameras have been installed internally and externally at the refurbished Cornhill Market. The service has also completed installations at the Moorland and Sudbrooke community centres and the Terrace on Flaxengate.</p> <p>Plans have been approved for a camera system to be installed at Temple Gardens and to upgrade and adopt the CCTV system at the Council run managed workspace on Limekiln Way.</p>
14.6	<p>Alongside the city centre, the service has continued to monitor various Council sites including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arboretum • Birchwood Leisure Centre • Boultham Park • City Hall • Derek Miller Court • Hamilton House • Hartsholme Park • Jarvis House • St Botolph's Court • Trent View • Yarborough Leisure Centre • Moorland Community Centre • Sudbrook Drive Community Centre • The Terrace
14.7	<p>Events hosted in the city have also been supported by the CCTV service, including football matches, the Lincoln 10k, cycling events, Lincoln Pride, Christmas lights switch on and any marches or protests.</p> <p>Footfall data for key events in the city including Steampunk and the Lincoln History weekend continues to be requested. Events in our parks are also monitored for numbers attending and any public order or health and safety concerns. This data enables officials to make informed decisions to ensure that these and any future events can take place with minimal issues.</p>

14.8	<p>The figures below provide a reminder of the incident numbers for the last 4 years recorded by the CCTV service; these are relatively consistent until the introduction of 24/7 double staffing which marks a distinct uplift in incidents recorded.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2021 - 9,637 • 2022 – 9,566 • 2023 – 9,905 • 2024 – 12,192
14.9	<p>Fly tipping incidents are still numerous; however, funding has been found for two dedicated PPASB officers to tackle this issue. Along with bins on streets, the service will continue to produce evidence disks for prosecution. The CCTV evidence has enabled the Public Protection & Anti-Social Behaviour Team to issue penalty notices to individuals who have been identified and so it is envisaged this robust enforcement approach to fly tipping will dissuade offenders moving forward.</p>
15	Lincoln Community Lottery
15.1	<p>Lincoln Community Lottery was launched in 2018 by the Council as a tool to help local causes to raise additional funds to support the work of their cause within the city. For each £1 ticket purchased, 50 pence goes towards the supporters chosen good cause, with an additional 10 pence supporting the Lincoln Lottery Community Fund.</p> <p>Since the lottery was launched, over £230k has been raised by the lottery to support local causes. This includes a mix of funds raised directly for causes, together with funds raised within the Lincoln Lottery Community Fund. For the period August 2023 to August 2024, £19,822 was raised directly for local causes by the lottery, with an additional £8,135 being raised towards the community fund. At the time of writing this report, 75 local causes are signed up to the lottery to use this as a fundraising tool.</p> <p>The Lincoln Lottery Community Fund is allocated on an annual basis. This involves consultation with supporters of the lottery / local residents, which is followed by an application and selection process. Information on the 2024 allocations from the fund is detailed on the lottery section of the Council's website, which can be accessed via this link – https://www.lincoln.gov.uk/people-community/lincoln-community-lottery/10.</p> <p>To help ensure the lottery remains fair for all supporters and causes taking part, all causes joining the lottery are required to meet the lottery terms and conditions. Each cause is contacted annually to gain confirmation that they still continue to meet the required criteria and to obtain an update on how they have used the funds raised to support the delivery of their services. All lottery good causes must either be a constituted group, registered charity or community interest company.</p> <p>With the lottery being a type of gambling, the Council is extremely cautious when raising awareness of the lottery. All promotion by the Council is focused on raising awareness of how the lottery can support local causes, rather than focused on encouraging local residents to purchase tickets and the prizes on offer. Information on support with problem gambling is also included in all communications.</p> <p>Further information on the lottery is available via the Council website, https://www.lincoln.gov.uk/people-community/lincoln-community-lottery/10, and via the lottery website itself https://www.lincolnlottery.co.uk.</p>

16	Social Value Policy
16.1	Where relevant and proportionate to the contract/provision being procured, Social Value (SV) will be used as part of the quality assessment. We currently ask bidders to provide a proposed Social Value Plan (SVP) which they would then deliver and this forms part of the contract with the successful bidder. An example of this is the Hermit Street Housing Regeneration Project where SV was delivered in respect of local labour and supply chains being engaged on the contract as well as additional elements where local school were engaged and given access to local construction programmes etc.
16.2	Internally as part of Vision 2030, officers from various sections including Procurement, Housing and Major Developments will be working together to review and update the current Social Value Policy. In addition, it is being proposed that the development of a corporate wide Social Value Toolkit which will underpin the policy is undertaken so moving forward we can ensure that we capture the SV derived and ensure it aligns with the Council's aspirations.
17	Lincoln Social Responsibility Charter
17.1	<p>Launched in 2018 the Lincoln Social Responsibility Charter is a Council initiative aimed at recognising those organisations locally, which go above the statutory minimum to support their local employees and the local community. All organisations gaining accreditation to the charter must meet set criteria, which helps to ensure accreditation remains fair for all organisations regardless of size. For example, those organisations with over 50 employees are required to demonstrate they undertake a larger number of socially responsible activities to support their employees and the local community than those with a lower number of employees. All accredited organisations must either have a base in the city and / or employ staff which live within the city boundary.</p> <p>Currently there are 103 local organisations accredited to the charter and these range from very small to very large employers and are from across a wide range of sectors. To raise awareness of both the charter and those organisations accredited to this, the Council promotes the charter on a routine basis via the Council's corporate communication channels. This promotion includes case studies from charter signatories, both written and video, together graphics raising awareness of all organisations accredited, alongside general promotion of the charter.</p>
17.2	<p>The Council's website also includes a dedicated section on the charter. Within this section includes the charter itself, a guide to the charter, examples of socially responsible activities, which organisations could undertake to support their employees and the local community, together with the video case studies and a directory of all organisations who have gained accreditation. Within the directory includes the name of each organisation under the sector they operate within. Also included is an individual page for each organisation containing their logo, website address and case study.</p> <p>To keep all organisations up to date with the charter, on a quarterly basis a newsletter is distributed to all accredited organisations. Included as standard is the current list of charter signatories, a selection of case studies from organisations gaining accreditation, details of how the Council is promoting those accredited and importantly information on opportunities locally, which organisations accredited to the charter may wish to support as part of their ongoing corporate social responsibility activity within the city.</p>

17.3	<p>To also help ensure the charter remains fair for all, each organisation is required to complete a declaration questionnaire on an annual basis. Together with gaining confirmation that each organisation continues to meet the accreditation criteria, this contact also enables the Council to keep up to date with the socially responsible opportunities being undertaken and the positive impact of this.</p> <p>To find out more about the charter and which organisations are accredited to this locally, please visit www.lincoln.gov.uk/socialresponsibility.</p>
18	Looking ahead
18.1	<p>Our top priority remains in supporting all residents and businesses with the cost of living challenges they face. Regardless of stretched resources, I am confident in the Council's ability to continue to offer the high level of support it always has, and I am fortunate enough to see this outstanding work first hand.</p> <p>The success stories referenced, and figures shown within this report, are a testament to the dedication of the service areas involved, who not only help those in need but emulate our Council's vision and its priorities. It is also important to add that the portfolio includes some of the most emotionally challenging work undertaken by staff in the Council and I am immensely proud of what they do, day in and day out. I am excited for the year ahead and look forward to working with officers as we move forward with projects that make our communities even more resilient, vibrant and proud to be Lincoln.</p>

Cllr Lucinda Preston
Portfolio Holder for Reducing Inequality

Appendix A – Enforcement Action

	1 st Nov 2023 to 31 st May 2024	1 st Nov 2024 to 31 st May 2025
WARNINGS		
Community Protection Warnings	78	100
ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES		
Fly tipping Community Protection Warnings	10	27
Fly tipping Community Protection Notices	1	11
Fly tipping Fixed Penalty Notices	15	15
Bins on streets Community Protection Warnings	112	48
Bins on streets Community Protection Notices	42	10
Bins on streets Fixed Penalty Notices	21	2
NOISE ISSUES		
Noise Abatement Notices	1	10
GENERAL ASB ISSUES		
ASB Community Protection Notices	10	13
CONDITION OF PROPERTY RELATED ISSUES		
Prevention of Damage by Pests Notices	2	11
Community Protection Notices	1	5
OTHER ENFORCEMENTS		
Microchipping Notice	2	1

APPENDIX B – Performance Monitoring

Below provides the latest performance measure outturns and supporting service area commentary for those performance measures linked to my portfolio. The data presented is for Quarter 4 2024/25:

Status Key



Assistant Director	Service Area	PH	Measure ID	Measure	Unit	High Or Low is Good	Low Target	High Target	Previous Data Period	Previous Value	Current Quarter	Current Value	Status	Service Area Commentary
CX	Martin Walmsley - Assistant Director of Shared Revenues and Benefits	Housing Benefit Administration	RI BE 1	Average days to process new housing benefit claims from date received (cumulative)	Days	Low is good	19.00	17.00	Q4 - 23/24	14.32	Q4 - 24/25	13.20	G ▲	The service area reports a further decrease in the number of days to process new housing benefit claims from date received during quarter 4. The team continue to prioritise new claims to ensure people are receiving help to pay their rent. Compared to the same quarter last year performance has improved by 1.12 days.
		Housing Benefit Administration	RI BE 2	Average days to process housing benefit claim changes of circumstances from date received (cumulative)	Days	Low is good	7.00	5.50	Q4 - 23/24	3.42	Q4 - 24/25	3.72	G ▼	Performance has further improved in the final quarter, due to the number of changes made in advance of the quarter end (these count as 1 day), as customers report increases in rent and income, due to the new financial year.
		Housing Benefit Administration	RI BE 3	Number of Housing Benefits / Council Tax support customers awaiting assessment	Number	Low is good	2000.00	1900.00	Q4 - 23/24	2274.00	Q4 - 24/25	2567.00	R ▼	Extremely high volumes of demand are experienced in Quarter 4, alongside resourcing pressures and other areas of vital work (such as cost of living support), this has led to outstanding work levels increasing. Of the 2,567 reported, 2,228 customers are awaiting a first contact, officers are working hard to reduce these levels through Quarter 1, by allocating resources accordingly. The impact of Universal Credit is also increasing the team's workload, as well as higher volumes or pensioner Housing Benefit claims being expected due to increased take-up of Pension Credit, - these matters are being factored into performance targets moving forward.

		Housing Benefit Administration	RI	BE 4	Percentage of risk-based quality checks made where benefit entitlement is correct (cumulative)	%	High is good	91.00	94.00	Q4 - 23/24	93.05	Q4 - 24/25	95.05	G	<p>Throughout quarter 4, the Benefits and Subsidy team completed 614 checks on benefits assessments, with 594 of the checks correctly assessed in both the Subsidy checks and assessment checks. This is an reduction of 236 checks on the previous quarter, with 95.05% correctly assessed.</p> <p>Cumulatively this year the Benefit and Subsidy team have completed 2,183 checks on benefits assessments, with 2,075 of the checks correctly assessed in both the Subsidy checks and assessment checks.</p> <p>The service area have reduced the number of Quality Checks completed for new members of the team due to the increased percentage of correct claims processed in previous quarters by the newest members, as well as year-end reports completed by the staff members, which has reduced the time available to deal with quality checks.</p>
		Housing Benefit Administration	RI	BE 5	The number of new benefit claims year to date (Housing Benefits/Council Tax Support)	Number	N/A	Volumetric	Volumetric	Q3 - 24/25	3519.00	Q4 - 24/25	4709.00	V	This year the Benefits Team have processed 4,709 new claims in total, of these 1,023 were for Housing Benefit and 3,686 were for Council Tax Support.
DCE	Simon Colburn - Assistant Director of Health & Environmental Services	Public Protection and Anti-Social Behaviour Team	RI	PPASB 1	Number of cases received in the quarter (ASB cases only)	Number	N/A	Volumetric	Volumetric	Q3 - 24/25	185.00	Q4 - 24/25	173.00	V	<p>This is a 6.5% decrease when compared to the last quarter. It is a 31.1% increase when compared with Q4 of 23/24. This measure appears to be stabilising following the increase in cases the team received during Q's 1 and 2 of 24/25.</p> <p>This measure has been revised for 2025/26 to report cases received across the full service, which will provide a more</p>

	Public Protection and Anti-Social Behaviour Team	RI	PPASB 2	Number of cases closed in the quarter (across full PPASB service)	Number	N/A	Volumetric	Volumetric	Q3 - 24/25	1114.00	Q4 - 24/25	1083.00	V	The outturn for the measure is a 4.6% decrease when compared with Q3 of 24/25 and a 4.8% increase when compared Q4 of 23/24. This outturn is relatively stable.
	Public Protection and Anti-Social Behaviour Team	RI	PPASB 3	Number of live cases open at the end of the quarter (across full PPASB service)	Number	Low is good	240.00	200.00	Q3 - 24/25	272.00	Q4 - 24/25	280.00	R	<p>This outturn has remained stable over the past financial year. It is also stable when compared with Q4 of 23/24 which was 279.</p> <p>This measure is being replaced for 2025/26 to report on the average days to close a case in quarter across the full service, to better reflect the volume of work undertaken by the team on case management.</p>
Steve Bird - Assistant Director of Communities and Street Scene	CCTV	RI	CCTV 1	Total number of incidents handled by CCTV operators	Number	N/A	Volumetric	Volumetric	Q3 - 24/25	3102.00	Q4 - 24/25	2262.00	V	<p>Incident numbers have reduced in Q4 following Christmas and New Year, plus the poor weather keeps numbers in the city down.</p> <p>All incident areas report a decrease consistent with the overall reduction, apart from PPASB where numbers are significantly down compared to the last quarter, which is attributed to a designated police officer working with the service area and COLC ASB team to target these groups.</p>

Source – COLC Performance Information Management System (PIMS)

APPENDIX C – Neighbourhood Working Evaluation

Introduction

In June 2016 the [City of Lincoln Council](#) appointed OpenPlan to prepare a [Place Shaping Framework](#) for the Sincil Bank area – defined by the railway to the north, Canwick Road to the east, South Park to the south, and High street to the west. The brief was to work with the local community and stakeholders to come up with recommendations to make the area a better place for the people who live and work here.

The Framework was published in April 2017. It described Sincil Bank as a *‘community of communities – a very diverse place shared by people from many different backgrounds’* – and contained 42 recommendations to make physical improvements to the area, as well as promote social and economic development and develop opportunity sites. While the Framework was being developed, City of Lincoln Council reviewed its neighbourhood working programme and decided to prioritise its resources in Sincil Bank. Since then the Council has been running a Neighbourhood Working pilot to implement as many of the 42 Place Shaping Framework recommendations as possible alongside local residents, Community Partners and stakeholders.

In March 2024 Rose Regeneration was commissioned by the City of Lincoln Council to undertake an external evaluation of Neighbourhood Working in Sincil Bank. The evaluation has followed HM Treasury guidance and covered 3 main areas:

1. How was the Neighbourhood Working pilot designed – and how it is being implemented?
2. What difference is the pilot making to residents, Community Partners and stakeholders?
3. Is the pilot offering value-for-money?

This report summarises the key findings and insights from the evaluation.

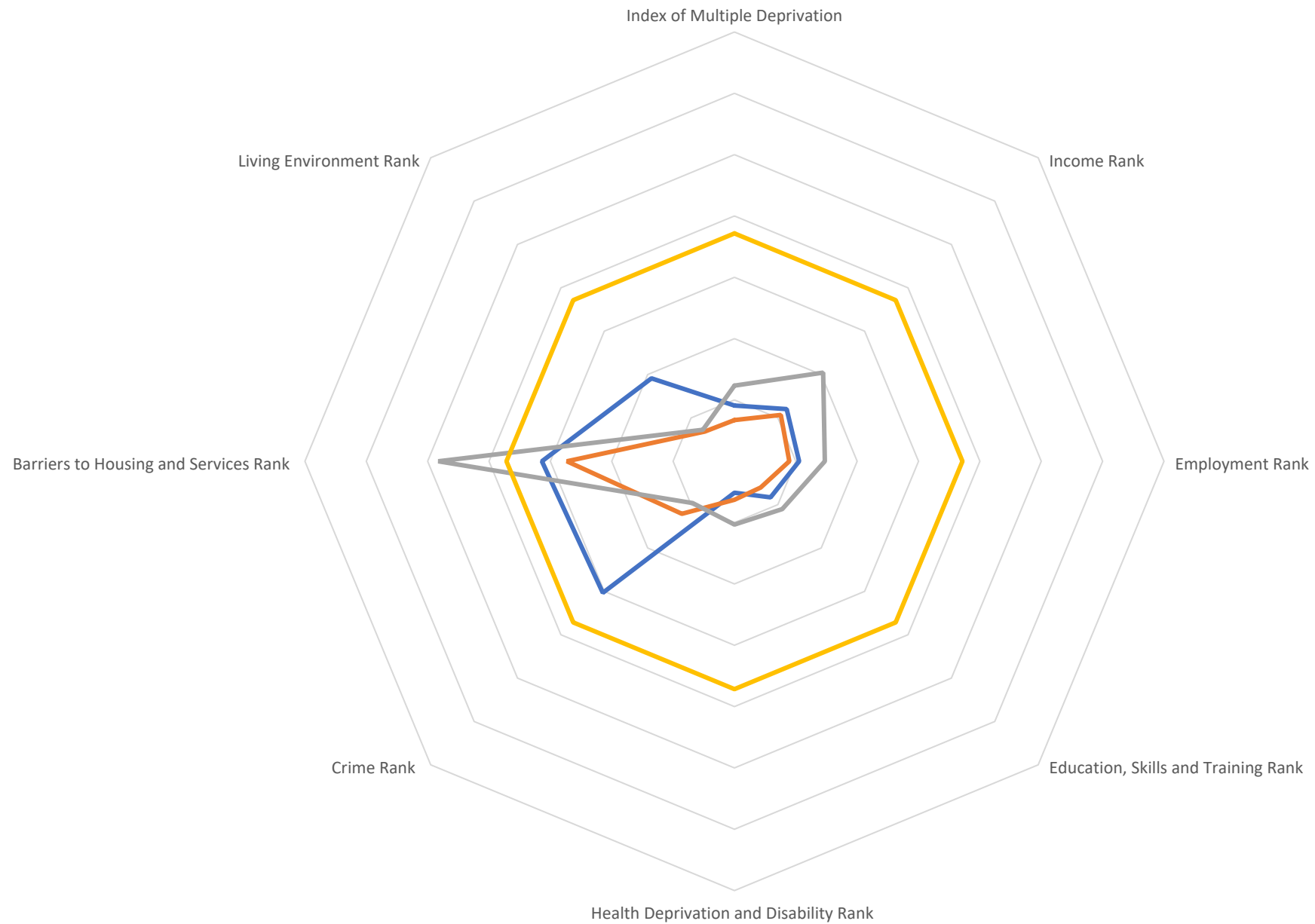
What was the Neighbourhood Working pilot set up to do?

Central government publishes local measures of deprivation in England. The last Statistical Release was published in September 2019. It is based on seven domains of deprivation which draw on 39 separate indicators. These are then weighted to give an overall measure of multiple deprivation experienced by people living in a neighbourhood [known as a Lower-layer Super Output Area, LSOA]. Each neighbourhood, or LSOA, is ranked from most deprived (1st) to least deprived (32,844th).

Rose Regeneration compared the 2019 data for Sincil Street area, where the Neighbourhood Working pilot is taking place, with the data releases from 2015 and 2010. These results are shown in the chart overleaf.

English Indices of Deprivation (2010-2019)

— 2019 — 2015 — 2010 — England Mid Point



The chart shows considerable deterioration in levels of deprivation between 2010 and 2015, with only a modest bounce back in 2019. Overall, the neighbourhood was ranked 4,011 in 2010; 5,504 in 2015; and 2,387 [placing it in the 7% most deprived neighbourhoods in England].

Community consultations for the Place Shaping Framework also highlighted:

- Streets marred by littering and fly-tipping.
- People commuting to Lincoln for work treating the area as a free car park or as a rat run.
- Energy-inefficient homes, including a high proportion of housing stock rented as Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs).
- A number of high profile crimes increasing residents' fear of crime.

Between December 2018 and March 2025 a small, dedicated Neighbourhood Working team (mainly 2 staff) are based at the [Community Hub](#) on Portland Street. As well as having a physical base, they are delivering a programme of key projects and activities with residents and organisations. Between 2018 and 2020 this included:

- Introducing and monitoring a ban on the display of to-let boards on certain streets.
- Installing CCTV at suitable locations.
- The development of open spaces, including St Andrew's Garden (where a neglected open space has been transformed into a pocket park for the local community).
- Delivering a series of community events and activities.

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the neighbourhood team refocused their priorities to include:

- Hermit Street redevelopment (building 11 new affordable homes on a site previously occupied by garages).
- Implementing residents parking (to increase the availability of parking for local residents and reduce commuter parking).
- Highways redesign (e.g. one-way traffic system, a green corridor for cyclists and pedestrians).
- Creating and enhancing open spaces.
- Cleaner and safer streets.

"COVID-19 both lost and gained them [Neighbourhood Working team] something during and after this time. During the pandemic they had to work City wide and sometimes even county wide. A lot of specific Sincil Bank community support then fell to other groups. After COVID they refocused their priorities but I would like to think the team has thought continually about the legacy of their time here and built sustainability into the organisations and projects they've funded", Community Partner.

The external environment during which the pilot is being delivered has changed significantly – from welfare reforms and Brexit through to the COVID-19 pandemic and cost-of-living pressures.

What impact is the pilot having on local communities?

On average, 20-30 people a week visit the Community Hub to access information, advice and services (from the City of Lincoln Council and from Community Partners). Analysis of the visit log over a 12-month period found the top 3 presenting issues were around general advice, access to space or services from another organisation at the Community Hub, and residents parking.

Resident surveys carried out in 2019, 2020 and 2023 show an increase in people reporting that they know what to do and where to go if they have a problem. Comparing survey data between 2019 and 2023 reveals:

- 20% more residents reported knowing which organisation to contact if they have a problem.
- 11% more residents knowing where to go for help with a housing issue, and 9% more residents knowing where to go for help if they have a problem with fly tipping or litter.
- A 5% increase in the number of residents reporting Sincil Bank is getting better and improving as a place to live.

“Residents work hard to do their bit to keep the area clean and tidy and a number of projects have been delivered to brighten up the area”, local resident.

“There has been a definite change in perception about the Portland Street area and that things can be achieved here”, local resident.

For the evaluation residents and local organisations were asked to use one (or two!) words to describe the Neighbourhood Working pilot. Their responses are shown in the word cloud overleaf:



Back in 2019, the City of Lincoln Council and Investors in Lincoln introduced a 'Community Chest' to kickstart activity in the area. During the pilot, £50,073.09 has been awarded to 31 local projects – from street play, holiday clubs and family fun days through to archaeological digs and setting up community gardening and growing clubs.

The Neighbourhood Working team has encouraged residents to come forward with ideas, and they have embedded community ownership in the initiatives they have funded. A short survey was circulated to all groups and organisations that had received funding from the Community Chest. Representatives from 22 organisations completed the survey.

- 50% of respondents said they would not have done their project without support from Neighbourhood Working – and 68% went on to apply to other funders to continue their existing project, or to start new work.
- 68% of respondents delivered their project or activity with the support of another local organisation – with 16 different voluntary & community sector organisations, charities and statutory sector bodies listed by respondents.
- 75% rated their overall experience of delivering an activity funded by the Community Chest as 'very positive', 5% as 'positive' and 20% as 'neutral'.
- 77% rated the impact of Neighbourhood Working on building the capacity of local groups and residents to run projects and activities as being 'very strong' or 'strong'.

"The [name of project] is important to the local community and sets an example about the future of the Sincil area...the project has encouraged people to volunteer, to learn and share practical skills as well as providing good visual and actual space for wildlife and making the area more attractive".

"[Name of project] wouldn't happen without the Neighbourhood Working team – they get it, they see the need, and they invest in looking at good practice outside of Lincoln and how to make it happen in Sincil Bank...they play the long game".

"Residents are willing to help with maintenance and ongoing works and that community ownership will bring sustainability".

The Neighbourhood Working team has monitored the implementation of the 42 Place Shaping Framework recommendations, carrying out annual reviews. In 2021, six recommendations were implemented, in 2022 twenty-nine recommendations, and in 2023 three recommendations. For four recommendations no work is planned to take place before 2025.

A range of stakeholders offered external perspectives on Neighbourhood Working. They highlighted the new and different ways of working it has provided to organisations (e.g. greater partnership working and collaboration) and to residents (e.g. reducing dependency and recognising the skills, knowledge and experience that they bring). Some stakeholders want Neighbourhood Working to focus on small, hyperlocal, street-based work; while other stakeholders had a preference for larger projects and tackling broader, systemic issues.

Social Return on Investment (SROI) is a way of developing a value for the less tangible outcomes delivered through Neighbourhood Working. The evaluation has looked at how the Community Hub and Programme have increased access to services and improved the appearance of streets and green spaces. The analysis shows for every £1.00 invested in Neighbourhood Working, £3.20 of social value has been generated. HM Treasury ranks anything over £2.00 as delivering a 'good' level of social value.

Is the pilot offering value-for-money?

For the Community Chest, volunteer contributions to projects, as well as items or resources being offered in-kind (e.g. training, marketing and promotion, computers, sports equipment, gardening tools), provided match funding worth £72,887.

The Neighbourhood Working team has played a key role in working with external organisations to harness other investment for the local area that would not have happened without the pilot. For example, City of Lincoln Council secured £235,000 from the Government's Controlling Migration Fund to tackle rogue landlords; and Lincoln City Foundation successfully bid to deliver a 5-year Place Based Social Action (PBSA) community activities programme.

A Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) analysis was undertaken to assess the value-for-money being delivered. The analysis reveals that Neighbourhood Working has a BCR of £2.48/£1. The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) ranks BCR; with anything above 2 as offering 'high' value for money.

Where next?

Residents, Community Partners and stakeholders have expressed some concern about the gaps that will be left when the pilot ends – particularly around providing residents with a drop-in, and a safe space for organisational information sharing. Some stakeholders also queried whether Community Partners and residents will be able to step-up and scale-up what they do to fill these gaps. Planning the legacy, and what local communities want to see happen beyond March 2025, was highlighted as important.

The external evaluation is intended to inform wider Neighbourhood Working discussions across the city. Future delivery of Neighbourhood Working by City of Lincoln Council will need to take account of the resources that can be made available. It has become clear that there is considerable merit in exploring how multi-agency working can be scaled up across the city. Initial discussions with Lincolnshire County Council and Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board have highlighted scope for a pilot to enable all three bodies to work together with Community Partners and residents to deliver preventative impacts at the neighbourhood level.