

BRIEFING NOTE ON THE BOSTON PLACECHECK PROJECT SINCE JANUARY 2012

At the meeting of 28th November 2012, BTAC Members requested an update on the Boston Placecheck Project since the submission of the End of Project Report to LCC Health and Well-Being in January 2012 and the future of Placecheck in Boston.

BACKGROUND:

The Boston Placecheck Project was set up in March 2009 as a consequence of a pilot in Boston's Skirbeck Ward (Daisy Dale) and as a result of securing £105,000 of funding from Lincolnshire County Council's Health and Well-Being Programme to increase the scope of the project to include 5 more neighbourhoods within the 6 most deprived wards of Boston. Up to £70,000 of this funding was subsequently devolved to local communities, in the form of 5 neighbourhood action groups; High Street South, Main Ridge East, Carlton Road, Witham East and Witham Central, to develop community projects and to direct funding towards facilities and services that residents felt were needed in their respective areas, over and above existing provision. Each group were supported to become autonomous with their own governance, set of aims and objectives and a bank account. This funding was also utilised to cover each neighbourhood action group's ongoing running costs to enable them to function effectively and efficiently.

Distribution of £50,000 of this funding was carried out using the small grants allocation model of participatory budgeting. £10,000 was given to each neighbourhood action group who then requested applications from groups, organisations and agencies for projects which helped to resolve some of the issues identified by each group during the consultation process (placecheck walking audit). Each neighbourhood action group developed a voting system to allow all residents in each of the respective areas to have a say in how the money was spent. Since the beginning of this project over 30 projects have been developed, funded and completed. **See Appendix A**

OUTCOMES FOR PLACECHECK SINCE JANUARY 2012:

- All 5 neighbourhood action groups continue to meet on a regular basis in some form or another and continue to tackle issues of concern in their particular neighbourhoods and to work with service providers/agencies, as well as to challenge service provision where appropriate to do so. They are confident in now knowing which service providers to approach and continue to value and build on those working partnerships.
- Subsidiary projects have started as a consequence of resident involvement i.e. Boston Greenscapers formed by residents from a number of the neighbourhood action groups who successfully applied to BTAC community grant scheme in November 2012.
- Action plans set up by each neighbourhood action group continue to evolve to ensure they meet the existing needs of the group and their respective neighbourhoods.
- All 5 neighbourhood groups formed the Placecheck Executive Committee and agreed to meet on an ad hoc basis to discuss shared issues which have a

wider impact on the town centre of Boston i.e. issues around the DPPO, street drinking and associated anti-social behaviour.

- As a consequence of the Good Relations Programme a number of residents involved in Placecheck have come together with other residents to form the Boston Community Forum as a result of continuing talks around tackling the issues around high levels of immigration on the town and the impact therein. A number of residents have attended training in civic mediation, conflict awareness workshops and monitoring of projects.
- All the groups carry out regular community litter picking in their respective neighbourhoods
- Over 75 volunteers have been involved in the Placecheck project across the board at one stage or another during the lifetime of the project.
- Completion of works to 116 High Street which the High Street South Neighbourhood Action Group have championed and been involved in during the initial consultation and continued to report progress to the rest of the community through their newsletter and minutes of meetings.
- There is now an additional residents group which is supported by the High Street South group specifically to address issues of concern in Haven Village.
- High Street South Group are continuing to tackle issues around stray animals and fouling issues with regular communication from the group to all residents within the neighbourhood.
- Lobbying LCC Highways for further yellow lining provision in Main Ridge East area as a result of a 'planning for real' exercise.
- In the Main Ridge East area particularly residents remain vigilant in monitoring anti-social behaviour in the neighbourhood most specifically in ensuring that Burgess Pitt continues to be fit for purpose for the whole community.
- Amalgamation of Carlton Road Neighbourhood group with Witham Central Neighbourhood Action Group to maximise membership and resources.
- Witham East Neighbourhood raised funds for St Barnabas Hospice through their community event (see Udecide Projects list at Appendix A)
- LCC Councillors Big Society funds allocated to 3 of the 5 placecheck groups.
- Residents involved in the Boston Placecheck Project have been briefed about the Big Local programme and will be offering assistance to the Big Local mentor in promoting the process to the wider community.

CONCLUSION:

As a result of the Boston Placecheck Project it is felt that:

- Communities are able to identify local needs and take action in response to them.
- People have increased their skills and confidence so that they can continue to identify and respond to need in the future.
- People have made a difference to their communities by prioritising needs and working together.