

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 17 SEPTEMBER 2010

Statement from: Cllr E J Poll, Executive Councillor for Economic Development

ECONOMIC REGENERATION/SPATIAL PLANNING

Local Enterprise Partnerships – Discussions with the business community and adjoining councils about various options are still ongoing but our proposal will be that whatever final LEP arrangements are set up in Lincolnshire, they will be based on the idea of cooperating with neighbouring authorities and LEPs. The deadline for proposed LEP submissions was 6 September, and we understand it is the intention of Government to make a quick decision.

Local Investment Plans – The Homes and Communities Agency are working with the county and district councils to draw up housing and economic development plans for each of the three Housing Market Areas in Lincolnshire - Central Lincolnshire, Coastal Lincolnshire and Peterborough Partial. These plans will secure the engagement of the HCA and ensure housing and economic development is joined up at the local level.

Regional Growth Fund – We have the opportunity to prepare a bid to the £1bn Regional Growth Fund which will be deployed in two tranches over the next two years. The bid will be allocated to those places most at risk from public sector job losses, and where there is a good prospect of private sector matched funding to support proposals.

CULTURAL SERVICES

Future Libraries Programme: Breaking Borders – Lincolnshire County Council has been successful in a bid to the Government to work with other local authorities on the Future Libraries Programme. The aim of the Breaking Borders programme is to design services around the needs of the public, rather than based on organisational boundaries. For example, working with Peterborough and North East Lincolnshire, it is possible that communities in areas such as Louth, Deepings and Stamford can have increased access to shared services across the traditional administrative boundaries. This is an exciting opportunity in which communities, councillors, colleagues and the voluntary sector will help to influence a library service to meet the existing and future needs of our local communities.

The National Archives Inspection of Lincolnshire Archives – Lincolnshire County Council's Archive Office has been approved against the national Standard for Record Repositories, and as a place of deposit for the care of public records by The National Archives (the inspecting body for archives). The National Archives remarked on the high standard of work and the benefits of the integrated approach adopted. Particular note was made of Lincolnshire's work with volunteers and work to widen access through digitisation.

Volunteers Project – As part of the Enhancing Engagement with Volunteers project, the County Council is working in partnership with the WRVS and Age Concern to develop and expand services to the housebound. Housebound customers in Gainsborough, Boston and Horncastle will benefit from volunteers delivering library and information services to them in their own homes. The WRVS will recruit and train volunteers to work with library staff in these areas, offering them the opportunity to acquire a range of skills including the use of computers. The partnership with Age Concern means that volunteers will also have the opportunity to attend training courses developed and delivered by Age Concern. This training will enable volunteers to promote the Lincolnshire 'Goodlife' magazine and help housebound customers in identifying, and applying for, potential sources of support

New Members & Book Issues for the Library Service - I am pleased to report that we have seen an increase in some key library performance indicators in the first part of 2010/11. The number of books being borrowed by Lincolnshire's readers has increased by 1.6% between April and June 2010 to an impressive 863,402. This has also seen an increase in active borrowers each month by 7% and new members of 36%. The use of the virtual catalogue remains very popular with nearly half a million interactions in quarter 1.