

**ECONOMIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
23 JULY 2013**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR CHRISTOPHER PAIN (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors T Bridges (Vice-Chairman), B Adams, J W Beaver, Mrs J Brockway, G J Ellis, R B Parker, W S Webb, L Wootten, R Wootten and A M Austin

Councillors: attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Jenny Gammon (Assistant Director Economy and Culture), Tracy Johnson, Ian Kitchen (Transport Manager - Policy and Orders), Susannah Lewis (Team Leader (Funding and Regeneration)), David O'Connor (Executive Director Performance and Governance), Rachel Thomas (Castle Manager), Paul Wheatley (Head of Regeneration) and Richard Wills (Executive Director for Communities)

9 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Wood and Mrs E J Sneath.

An apology for absence was also received from Councillor J Churchill, Executive Support Councillor for Economic Development, Environment, Planning and Tourism.

The Chief Executive reported that, having received notice under Regulation 13 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups Regulations 1990), he had appointed Councillors Mrs A M Austin and R Wootten as replacement members on the Committee in place of Councillors P Wood and Mrs E J Sneath, respectively, for this meeting only.

10 DECLARATION OF COUNCILLORS' INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest at this point in the meeting.

11 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 JUNE 2013

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 June 2013 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

12 EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND APPLICATION FOR £5M

Consideration was given to a report which provided an update on progress with the bid that had been submitted by Lincolnshire County Council to the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) programme.

It was reported that there were 12 areas in the East Midlands identified as 'disadvantaged', including East Lindsey, City of Lincoln and Boston. As the current funding scheme was ending, there were tight timescales and projects were finding it difficult to draw down the remaining funding. Therefore the County Council took on the role of 'accountable body' to ensure that the available funding was not lost for these areas and pulled together one strategic bid in order to try and secure the funding. This bid had now been submitted and was being appraised.

Projects that could be funded by this money included a business support package which would provide support to over 250 businesses and help them to grow, an infrastructure scheme for Brayford Wharf in Lincoln, and also the Esplanade in Skegness, to make it an all year round attraction. It was hoped that between £2-2.5m of funding could be drawn down.

Members of the Committee were provided with an opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report, and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- It was noted that there was no particular project identified for Boston as when the indices of deprivation for Boston were calculated, it was actually removed from the list of the 12 most disadvantaged areas. However, officers wanted to ensure that the town could benefit from the funding through the business support project. The Boston market place project had also recently been completed successfully;
- There was a need to encourage tourism to the county;
- The authority was working in partnership to ensure that the businesses in each area got the support they needed;
- Tourism drove the economy in East Lindsey;
- It was important that there was no risk for any private sector businesses which wanted to get involved in the projects;
- It could be extremely difficult to bring in private sector investment for projects such as these;
- Going forward into the 2014 programme, where the County had been allocated £110m, the authority would ensure that any funding coming in would be match funded;
- It was thought that the business support projects would be very deliverable, and also that they would be relatively low risk.

Councillors B Adams and R B Parker volunteered to represent the County Council on the informal board which would review and sign off the contract. The informal board would be comprised of two county councillors, a councillor from each of the three districts and a LEP member.

RESOLVED

1. That progress on the bid which was under full appraisal with the Department for Communities and Local Government be noted;
2. That Councillors B Adams and R B Parker join the Local Enterprise Partnership and district members to establish an informal board to advise on the delivery of the bid.

13 THE USE OF CARAVANS AS A PLACE OF RESIDENCE ON THE LINCOLNSHIRE COAST

The Committee received a report which outlined the work of a report previously undertaken by East Lindsey District Council, through DEFRA National Pathfinder monies, into the use of caravans as a main residence on the Lincolnshire coast and listed some recommendations as a way forward.

It was reported that this issue has re-emerged following a task and finish group which was carried out by East Lindsey District Council in 2010 to examine this issue. It was noted that this issue was a problem due to the unknown numbers of people who were using caravans as their main residence and the impact that this had on local services and funding.

Members of the Committee were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report, and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- One of the impacts of a 'hidden community' on the coast was that the district did not get the right amount of funding through the financial settlement from central government;
- There were also many caravan sites inland;
- This issue had social as well as economic implications, and it was suggested that a joint working group should be set up with the Community and Public Safety Scrutiny Committee to identify some policy ideas;
- Some of the sites which were operating had 9, 10 and 11 month occupancy, and the people that were living in them were registering at local doctors surgeries;
- There were approximately 26,000 caravans in East Lindsey;
- Members found the report which had been carried out by East Lindsey District Council to be interesting and indepth;
- The report highlighted the potential underfunding of the county and district, and the pressure on certain services that this situation created;
- There were concerns that as some of the sites were not permitted to be occupied for 12 months, that people were forced to leave their homes for a certain portion of the year;
- It was estimated that there were 4,600 people living all year round in caravans, which was approximately £936,000 in grant allocation which the district was not receiving. This funding could help the area address some of its problems;

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- The Council had a responsibility to evacuate people in times of emergency, and if it was not known which of the caravans were permanently occupied, this would be more difficult and put people at risk;
- It was noted that Lincolnshire was not the only coastal county with this problem, and it was suggested that other coastal counties be consulted to establish how they deal with the issue;
- It was hoped that a working group would be able to provide the evidence necessary to be able to push this issue further up the national agenda.

It was suggested that a working group be put forward with members from both the Economic Scrutiny Committee and the Community and Public Safety Scrutiny Committee. Councillors L Wootten and A Bridges volunteered to be part of this working group.

RESOLVED

That a working group be established with members from the Community and Public Safety Scrutiny Committee to produce a report which could be used as evidence to establish a strong approach to future Coastal Communities Funding applications and involved the Resources and Planning teams to consider fiscal impact and a way forward.

14 INTERPRETATION FIT OUT CONTRACT IN THE PRISON COMPLEX OF LINCOLN CASTLE

Consideration was given to a report which provided the Committee with information relating to the Lincoln Castle Revealed Project, as well as requesting comments on the Interpretation Fit Out Contract in advance of an Executive Councillor decision.

The Committee was advised that this contract referred to the explanation and interpretation of the site for visitors, and would include things such as the design of text panels and screens, as well as the fitting out of the equipment and the furniture and finish of the building. The status of the contract was that it had gone through the OJEU process and the PQQ had been completed, and five tenders had been shortlisted and interviews would commence at the beginning of August. The value of the contract was £1.4m, and if it followed other contracts it was likely to come in under budget.

Members of the Committee were provided with an opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report, and some of the points raised during discussion included the following;

- There were concerns that poor road and rail links would be a problem in attracting visitors to the County and the Castle in the future;
- The work at the Castle was fully supported;
- It was thought important that the Magna Carta was interpreted in a way that would engage children of all ages;

- Members were assured that the Castle site would be interpreted for a broad range of visitors, and there would be a strong family friendly interpretative approach;
- It was reported that it was planned to have digital screens and family engagement areas with volunteers in these areas;
- There would be a slightly different interpretative approach for pre-school children;
- There would also be a schools programme that would run alongside the visitor programme;
- A transport study for Lincoln was underway and the report was due by September 2013 and would inform the whole issue around preparations for 2015. A parking strategy for Lincoln needed to be resolved as quickly as possible;
- The visitor experience began when people started their journey, either by car or by train. It was important that the private sector was involved to ensure that hotels were of a standard that visitors would expect;
- There was also a need to promote the County's attractions to its own residents as well as those from outside the county;
- The LEP was to receive a report to its next meeting regarding promoting Lincolnshire as a tourist destination. The quality of staff in the tourism industry and the way they presented themselves also would need to be addressed;
- Officers continued to make an argument for more money to be spent on marketing, and were trying to get private sector businesses more involved in this;
- There was a need for more to be done with co-ordinating activities for a range of organisations, as there was a lot that people were doing individually but needed bringing together;
- The County Council had restrictions on spending money on marketing and branding activities;
- It was suggested that live re-enactments could encourage people to visit the castle;
- Promotion was key, as many people outside Lincolnshire had only heard of the Cathedral;
- There was a need for a joined up tourist approach, including North and North East Lincolnshire, as visitors would not differentiate between the administrative areas;
- The castle did not have visual impact from the surrounding landscape when compared to other castles, and so it was important to get visitors interested through other means;
- Marketing was very much part of the plan for the strategy;
- One of the major changes when the work was completed would be that entrance to the castle grounds would be free. It was also planned to hold more events within the castle and discussions were taking place with the cathedral to link the two sites together;
- It was important that the Lincoln Eastern Bypass was in place for a longer term transport solution to be implemented;
- It was suggested that hotel groups should be used to promote the County's attractions through their websites.

RESOLVED

1. That the progress on the Lincoln Castle Revealed project be noted;
2. That the comments made in relation to the Interpretation Fit Out proposal be noted;

15 ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

The Committee received a report which outlined the links between economic growth and improved transport infrastructure and suggested the setting up of a Task and Finish Group to examine this issue in the context of Lincolnshire's highway network.

Members of the Committee were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained in the report, and some of the points raised during discussion included the following;

- Both rail and road had a role to play in relation to driving economic benefits;
- Feedback had been received from the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee indicating that they would be unable to take part in a joint Task and Finish Group with the Economic Scrutiny Committee;
- Transport infrastructure was a big restriction to businesses in the county;
- Looking at the economic drivers for growth would be a good starting point for the task and finish group;
- It was thought that work should be done on trying to get the M11 extended through Lincolnshire, as this would bring benefits to the County;
- Buses, cycles and walking were also forms of transport that should be improved as well as roads. There was a need to broaden the transport network for Lincolnshire, not just improve roads;
- It was also important to emphasise the importance of place, and acknowledge that different places would have different transport needs;
- The concept of a park and ride system for Lincoln was dependent on the roads being freed up from traffic, which would happen once the Lincoln East West Link and Lincoln Eastern Bypass open. It was reported that potential sites had been identified on Wragby road, and also near to the A46;
- The authority was working to get more trains per day between Lincoln and London;
- The A15 was not considered to be a priority for improvement as it would be a huge project due to the road needing to be moved as it runs alongside a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and it was also not the most dangerous road or the busiest of Lincolnshire's roads;
- More money was needed from central government to improve Lincolnshire's transport infrastructure, which needed to include a combination of rail and road;
- Businesses within Lincolnshire relied solely on the roads to get vegetables to the packing houses;

- The fourth Lincolnshire Transport Plan (LTP4) encapsulated all aspirations for the transport network in Lincolnshire;
- The dualling of the A15 would open up the eastern side of the county;
- There was a correlation between economic development, transport and growth;
- Connectivity was important, this included IT and access to broadband;
- There would be a lot of funding mechanisms through the LEP;
- There was a need to look at what could be achieved and which projects were deliverable;
- There was not necessarily a need for more trains to run between places such as Lincoln and Doncaster, but that there was better use of what was available, such as running at better times or having longer trains;
- It was important for a task and finish group to focus on the economic drivers and activities which would promote growth.

RESOLVED

1. That a task and finish group should be set up to consider the issues outlined in the report;
2. That a draft Section 1 of the scoping document be brought back to the next meeting of the committee for consideration and agreement.

16 ECONOMIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2013

Consideration was given to a report which enabled the Economic Scrutiny Committee to consider its own work programme for the coming year. It was reported that there were no amendments to the work programme, however, it was noted that the meeting in September 2013 would be taking place at County Offices and not Teal Park. It was suggested that the Committee visit Teal Park later in the year, when there was a relevant report on the agenda.

It was suggested that the following items be added to the Work Programme for future meetings:

- Scoping document for Task and Finish Group – September 2013
- Promotion of Lincolnshire as a destination for tourists and businesses by the Communications department. It was agreed that this could be incorporated in the Investor Development report.

RESOLVED

That the work programme be noted.

17 CONSIDERATION OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

RESOLVED

That, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that

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the following item of business contained exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

18 SUTTON BRIDGE MARINA

Consideration was given to a report which provided the Committee with details of the progress which had been made in delivering the Sutton Bridge Marina Project following approval by the Executive of the Capital Scheme Appraisal in June 2012.

RESOLVED

That the contents of the report be noted and that support be offered to the Executive in respect of a decision to use powers available to the authority.

The meeting closed at 1.10 pm