

**ECONOMIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
21 JULY 2015**

**PRESENT: COUNCILLOR A BRIDGES (CHAIRMAN)**

Councillors C Pain (Vice-Chairman), B Adams, Mrs J Brockway, G J Ellis, N I Jackson, D McNally, Mrs E J Sneath, W S Webb, P Wood and L Wootten.

Councillor S M Tweedale attended the meeting as an observer.

Officers in attendance:-

Andrea Brown (Democratic Services Officer), Justin Brown (Commissioner for Economic Growth), Samantha L Harrison (Enterprise Growth Manager), Clare Hughes (Principal Development Officer (Enterprise and Skills) and Tracy Johnson (Scrutiny Officer).

Guests in attendance (for part of the meeting):-

Issy Fisher (LCC Apprentice), Mike Johnson MBE (Commercial Manager, LAGAT Ltd), Helen Smith (Health Education East Midlands), Tom Winn (LCC Apprentice) and Stuart Young (East Midlands Councils).

**14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS**

Councillor C J Davie, Executive Councillor for Economic Development, Environment, Planning and Tourism, submitted apologies for the meeting. He was represented by Councillor S M Tweedale, Executive Support Councillor for Economic Development, Environment, Planning and Tourism.

All members of the Committee were present as expected.

**15 DECLARATIONS OF COUNCILLORS' INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of Councillor's interest.

**16 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ECONOMIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 9 JUNE 2015**

**RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the Economic Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 9 June 2015 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**17 IMPROVING EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS IN THE NURSING SECTOR**

Consideration was given to a report from the Executive Director for Environment and Economy which identified ways in which Economic Development could contribute to tackling vacancies within the health and care sector.

The Chairman welcomed Helen Smith from Health Education East Midlands to the meeting and invited Clare Hughes, Principal Development Officer (Enterprise and Skills) to introduce the report. The background to the report was provided following which it was suggested to send a follow-up letter to the Secretary of State under the new Government.

Helen Smith then addressed the Committee and highlighted the following:-

- The workforce supply issue in Lincolnshire within the health sector was, historically, for medical staff and therapies with nursing becoming a recent issue;
- The impact of the report in to the failings in Mid Staffordshire Hospitals had resulted in the required safe staffing levels being much higher than those previously in place;
- A lot of the nursing provision in Lincolnshire came from the University of Nottingham but they had now changed their processes to ensure that Nottinghamshire Hospitals were assisted in the first instance;
- There were approximately 250 nursing vacancies across Lincolnshire which was across the whole sector, i.e. GP Surgeries, hospitals, acute sector, therapies etc. This equated to 10% of the current workforce;
- All NHS organisations were being proactive in recruiting the next cohort of nursing students due to graduate from Lincoln University and it was hoped this would start to reduce the numbers of vacancies;
- Although turnover was not significantly different to other counties, a lot of nurses recruited internationally by United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust (ULHT) had left the Trust in favour of locations nearer to airports to enable them to travel back to their home country with ease;
- Places at Lincoln University had been increased due to the demand for future vacancies although the capacity to support students could be a constraining factor;
- A nursing and midwifery supply programme was being actively pursued which would include consideration of health and care apprenticeships;
- Training was being provided for those already in the county and working within the sector with work placed learning to enable progression in their careers.

The Chairman thanked Helen Smith and asked the Committee to raise any questions or comments as to how to develop and contribute to this.

During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- The quality of care by agency nurses was variable and best dealt with by someone within the acute trust. Unfortunately, the further North and East the higher the shortfall was with turnover between 8-10% and international recruit turnover at 25%. Evidence would suggest that international recruits had

moved to either Nottingham or Birmingham as they were close to the airports. ULHT were now seeking to recruit from some of the A8 countries (Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) as the view was that their culture and support mechanism were similar to those in Lincolnshire;

- It was suggested to liaise with other authorities in a similar position to Lincolnshire, e.g. East Riding and Tees Valley, to put something together to improve retention;
- In response to the suggestion of having a Nursing Cadet Scheme, it was explained that no one under the age of 16 could be subjected to patient care and that the previous scheme provided ward based experience only. This could no longer be supported as nursing was now a degree only profession;
- The Return to Practice Scheme was running nationally and locally for those who had left the service previously. This scheme actively recruited and promoted people to return to work in this sector;
- In addition to working with schools, recruitment of older people who had previous caring experience was also being actively considered. These types of people would not naturally be targeted at careers fayres so discussions were ongoing with the University about how to target those people;
- Within the document produced by Lord Willis, Independent Chair – Shape of Caring Review, Health Education England (HEE) (Title – Raising the Bar – Shape of Caring: A Review of the Future Education and Training of Registered Nurses and Care Assistants), there was mention of an associate type nurse. The sector was, however, unable to actively pursue this until the relevant policy guidance had been received. This was to ensure safe staffing levels were maintained.

Following discussions the Committee agreed that the course of action noted below was appropriate:-

1. Undertake further discussions with Helen Smith, Health Education East Midlands, about how to inform people about the opportunities available within the sector;
2. How issues of irregularity could be addressed;
3. How the wider image of the sector could be improved; and
4. How approaches to flexibility could be improved.

Once those discussions had taken place, it was suggested that a combined letter from Lincolnshire County Council and Health Education East Midlands to Government would be useful.

In the meantime, Councillors were encouraged to promote vocational careers through their roles on governing bodies of schools.

#### RESOLVED

1. That the report be noted;
2. That the next course of action for officers, as noted above, be agreed as a priority for this item.

**18 ENTERPRISE COMMISSIONING STRATEGY**

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Director for Environment and Economy which invited the Committee to consider the Enterprise Commissioning Strategy which would form part of the Council's Business Plan.

Justin Brown, Commissioner for Economic Growth, introduced the report and gave a presentation to the Committee.

The outcomes were dependent on the level of base budget and on a mix between commissioning and delivery for 2015/16 indicators. The following figures were an indication of the outcome aim:-

Jobs created/safeguarded – 758  
Businesses supported – 350  
Qualifications achieved – 902  
External funding attached - £54.8m

It was also felt that there was a need to improve awareness of job/apprenticeship opportunities.

During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- Although the current economic climate meant situations could change fairly dramatically, Members were reassured that the Economic Development Team had approached these changes as they would if they were a business, i.e. looking ahead to find the competitive advantage;
- Income sources from different routes, e.g. primary income source (LCC money) may be reducing but there was also £120m European Funding available to access which LCC had been successful in securing previous bids;
- Strengths include the Councillors (not many organisations were able to bring a democratic perspective whilst providing a lot of local knowledge); the ability to translate what the business community and individuals want into initiatives; each team member was tasked with developing a relationship with six businesses within the county; helping people to understand the local economy; and helping to be effective despite not knowing what the future budget situation may be;
- Each of the District Councils had been asked to do some work on refreshing and relaunching the economic strategic plan within their own area. The District Councils would also run a workshop with a number of local employers or investors which would include Councillors and, if appropriate, a Director from the Local Enterprise Partnership;
- It was expected that the strategy itself would not change but that the way in which it was to be delivered might.

The Committee suggested three areas for consideration:-

1. Image and opportunities;
2. The Council's role as leader in apprenticeships; and

3. Refresh of the economic strategic plan during the summer.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

The Chairman proposed to take Item 7 – Recruitment and Induction Business Support – Summary of a Pilot Programme, as the next item on the agenda as the guest speakers for this item were in attendance. This was agreed by the Committee.

19     RECRUITMENT AND INDUCTION BUSINESS SUPPORT - SUMMARY OF  
A PILOT PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report from the Executive Director of Environment and Economy which provided a summary of the LCC funded pilot project helping businesses recruit new staff and requesting that the scheme be rolled out in the future.

Clare Hughes, Principal Development Officer (Enterprise and Skills), presented the report and introduced Mr Mike Johnson MBE, Commercial Manager of LAGAT Ltd, a private training organisation based in Lincoln.

Mr Johnson addressed the Committee and explained that he had been on both sides of the skills issue in the past and that he was now working with apprentices. Consideration was being given to Further Education (FE) and how this could be successfully linked to businesses. He was currently looking to develop small businesses to provide apprenticeships and to advise what was available to them. Degree level training was now being incorporated in to that also. Mr Johnson introduced Micky, an apprentice with LAGAT Ltd.

Micky introduced himself and gave some information on his journey since leaving school. Whilst at school, he was daunted by the volume of courses available to him and when he left was reluctant to take up an apprenticeship due to the perceived view of apprenticeships, i.e. "for people who weren't good enough to go to sixth form or university". After dropping out of a college course after one year, realising it wasn't for him, apprenticeships were considered and he was then employed by LAGAT Ltd as a Business Administrator. One year on, his role is to place apprentices. It was suggested that making apprenticeships attractive to young people by highlighting the benefits would help in the promotion to school leavers.

Two apprentices currently employed by Lincolnshire County Council were presented to the Committee. Issy Fisher had originally wanted to attend university to study drama. She decided against this and was appointed as an apprentice with Children's Service where her confidence has grown along with her independence.

Tom Winn, a level 3 apprentice for social services in Louth and before that a level 2 apprentice within a building firm which he completed at the Grimsby Institute, was

pleased to have dropped out of university to take up an apprenticeship as it had given him good life experiences.

The Chairman thanked the guest speakers for their attendance and invited the Committee to make comment or ask questions. During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- Despite the benefits of apprenticeships, it seemed to be that parents, schools, tutors, etc, guided young people in to university when this may not be the correct option;
- Education formed part of the learning cycle for apprenticeships as well as life skills. Additionally, if the apprentice required GCSE Maths and English that would also be built in to the scheme;
- Government had announced a review of 16-19 education and training to which it was suggested to the Committee that a strong response would be beneficial;
- It was acknowledged that not every young person applying for an apprenticeship would be successful. The Government had introduced traineeships to enable young people to be upskilled ready for them to apply for an apprenticeship.

The Chairman thanked Mr Johnson and the apprentices for their valuable attendance at the Committee meeting and wished them all well in their future endeavours.

Councillor B Adams proposed that the recruitment and induction pilot and addressing barriers to growth within recruiting be supported should funding be sought. This was seconded by Councillor W S Webb and unanimously agreed by the Committee.

#### RESOLVED

1. That the findings of the pilot project be considered and supported;
2. That the officers be tasked with developing a countywide recruitment project including addressing barriers to growth within recruiting subject to funding being sought.

#### 20 INFLUENCING GOVERNMENT FUNDING FOR BUSINESS SUPPORT

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Director for Environment and Economy which provided information on the work plan for the Commissioning Strategy – sustaining and growing business and the economy including an update on some of the activities undertaken to date.

Samantha Harrison, Enterprise Growth Manager, introduced the report highlighting sections within the report.

During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- It was agreed that UKTI had done, and continued to do, good work in support of small businesses;

- As Government implement their plans for productivity, it was suggested that there was a role for Councillors to seek to influence them. Members agreed and supported the findings within the report.

## RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

## 21 EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor S M Tweedale was invited to update the Committee on recent events within the County.

1. Mark Carney, Governor of the Bank of England, was interviewed by the Lincolnshire Echo during his recent visit to Lincoln. During that interview he praised Lincolnshire for its strong economic performance;
2. Having attended the Mayflower 400 Launch in Gainsborough, it was expected to bring a significant amount of visitors to Lincolnshire in 2020;
3. On the 10 and 11 September 2015, a high level delegation from the Chinese province of Hunan would be welcomed to Lincolnshire. A formal event had been arranged at the end of the visit where it was expected that Lincolnshire and Hunan would sign a formal treaty of friendship and Economic Cooperation. Hunan had an economic footprint bigger than the whole of UK Plc therefore this was a significant step for the county;
4. Although 115k visitors to Lincoln Castle were expected in the first year following the renovations, the Castle had received its 100k visitor suggesting that the yearly visitor total may reach 250k which was a considerable success. Prior to Lincoln Castle Revealed, the Castle received in the region of 80k visitors per year;
5. A number of historical aviation events were expected in the coming year so Tourism colleagues were trying to build these in with events at the Castle in order to further promote tourism in the County.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Tweedale for the update.

## 22 ECONOMIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2015

Consideration was given to a report of the Director Responsible for Democratic Services which provided the Committee with an opportunity to consider its work programme for the coming year.

Tracy Johnson, Scrutiny Officer, introduced the report and highlighted that, following discussion at the meeting, the following amendments would be made:-

- Economic Infrastructure Commissioning Strategy – this would now be considered at the October 2015 meeting of the Committee rather than September 2015 meeting;

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- Environment Commissioning Strategy – this would now be considered at the September 2015 meeting of the Committee rather than the October 2015 meeting;
- Strategic Economic Plan Refresh would be added to the Work Programme twice. Dates for consideration would be agreed after the meeting;

**RESOLVED**

That the Economic Scrutiny Committee Work Programme, with the amendments noted above, be approved.

The meeting closed at 12.38 pm