

**ECONOMIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
 20 OCTOBER 2015**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR A BRIDGES (CHAIRMAN)

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

Councillors: C J Davie, R G Davies, Mrs H N J Powell and S M Tweedale attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Andrea Brown (Democratic Services Officer), Liz Burnley (Technical Manager for Development North), Justin Brown (Commissioner for Economic Growth), Halina Davies (Growth Plan Project Manager, GLLEP), David Hickman (Environmental Services Team Leader (Strategy and Partnership), Phil Hughes (Strategic Planning Manager), Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer), Mary Powell (Commissioning Manager - Tourism), Paul Rusted (Infrastructure Commissioner) and Mark Welsh (Flood Risk and Development Manager)

35 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

An apology for absence was received from Councillor G J Ellis.

The Chief Executive reported that, under Local Government (Committee and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, he had appointed Councillor D C Morgan in place of Councillor G J Ellis for this meeting only.

Councillor W S Webb advised that he would have to leave the meeting no later than 12.30pm as he was expected at a civic engagement in his role as Chairman of the County Council.

36 DECLARATIONS OF COUNCILLORS' INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest at this stage of the proceedings.

The Chairman proposed to take Item 4 – *Announcements by the Executive Councillor for Economic Development, Environment, Planning and Tourism*, before Item 3 – *Minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2015* to allow Councillor C J Davie to leave the meeting due to another engagement.

RESOLVED

That item 4 – *Announcements by the Executive Councillor for Economic Development, Environment, Planning and Tourism* be considered before item 3 – *Minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2015*.

37 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR FOR
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND
TOURISM

Councillor C J Davie, Executive Councillor for Economic Development, Environment, Planning and Tourism, was invited to update the Committee on recent events within the County.

1. A briefing was taking place, following which an announcement would be made regarding the closure of Tata Steel which would have huge implications for Scunthorpe. Over 3000 people commuted to North Lincolnshire, from Lincolnshire, each day and work had commenced to ensure that anyone faced with job loss would be supported in terms of reemployment. Despite the closure, North Lincolnshire would be supported as there remained a number of opportunities on the south bank of the Humber;
2. It was reported that Tesco were to, potentially, invest in a major distribution centre in Kent. The food industry in South Lincolnshire was important also so a case would continue to be made that it was the best in the country and, therefore, the relationship with the food industry and its strategic national importance would be prioritised;
3. The Coastal Observatory had passed a milestone which would increase tourism in the Chapel areas;
4. Despite winning the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) East Midlands Regional Award for Building Conservation, Lincoln Castle Revealed was the highly commended runner up in the National Award for Building Conservation. It was an excellent achievement for the project and tribute was given to Mary Powell for her leadership of this project;
5. Visitors to Lincoln Castle continued to increase and latest figures confirmed that 191,000 had visited since the relaunch. It was anticipated that 200,000 visitors would be reached during the October half-term break;
6. Good progress had been made with the Devolution agenda for Greater Lincolnshire, with the focus being on economic growth. Making the deal would be the first step but the key would be to deliver on it. The bid included 28 government initiatives on skills and 23 on business support;
7. Since the formal treaty of friendship was signed with the Chinese Province of Hunan, business opportunities in education and agri-tech were emerging. International business relations were stressed as important and the authority must be prepared to earn their place in that market and so relationship building was crucial;
8. MIPIM UK forms part of the world's biggest property event and was to be held in London in October 2015. Councillor Davie would be hosting a dinner for 70 investors at the RAF Club in London which showed the confidence of these investors in Lincolnshire as a county;

9. It was announced that Elton John would hold a concert at Lincolnshire Showground on 10 June 2016 which was hoped to be a catalyst for other, equally successful artists to perform in Lincolnshire.

During discussion the following points were noted:-

- It was agreed that the county needed to be secure in terms of energy and food supply and, as part of national food security, need to be given that regard in that sector;
- Concern was noted that the loss of expertise and relying on overseas support and knowledge in sectors such as energy, given the electricity supply was already below safe levels, was also an issue for the British economy;
- It was possible that any money allocated through the Growth Deal to North Lincolnshire in respect of Scunthorpe could be accelerated and this would likely be given consideration by the Leader of North Lincolnshire Council.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Davie for the update and, on behalf of the Committee, congratulated Mary Powell for the success of Lincoln Castle Revealed.

38 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ECONOMIC SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE HELD ON 8 SEPTEMBER 2015

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Economic Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 8 September 2015 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

39 ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE COMMISSIONING STRATEGY

Consideration was given to a report from the Executive Director for Environment and Economy which provided information on the activity supporting the strategy which focussed on the management and maintenance of a high quality highway network and encouraged new investment by supporting business and work with the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (GLLEP).

Paul Rusted, Infrastructure Commissioner, introduced the report and explained that the Commissioning Strategy would facilitate growth and prosperity through the encouragement of investment and enhancement of the economic potential of the County. This would be achieved by:-

- a. Commissioning and encouragement of a reliable and accessible transport service;
- b. Management and maintenance of a high quality highway network;
- c. Encouragement of new investment, including transport and economic development projects, by supporting business and working with the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (GLLEP) and other funding bodies;
- d. Management of other assets such as farms, property and heritage sites to encourage prosperity.

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Councillor R J Davies, Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT, stressed that infrastructure was the key and feedback from businesses had compounded that view. Maintenance of the current infrastructure was also a key element although it was acknowledged that this was a national issue.

During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- Local Area Managers were available to help with any issues Parish Councils may have in their own areas;
- An improvement in repairing potholes had been noted following the implementation of a Pothole Policy. The contractors were informed of the potholes requiring repair and were given the responsibility to decide what would be the most cost effective route to do the repairs;
- The Pothole Policy also provided guidelines on prioritisation of location and depth with a deadline of a month to complete the repair;
- It was suggested that there was an imbalance in the use of Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO's) in some areas of the county which were having a negative impact on the local economy. Members were encouraged to contact Local Area Managers about specific issues of this nature;
- The Asset Management Strategy focussed on the highways network and improving the condition of the minor roads although the magnitude of this task was acknowledged;
- Further structural testing was undertaken to supplement the surface condition testing that was also carried out. This was to ensure that there was a comprehensive understanding of the overall condition of the highway network.

RESOLVED

That the report and comments be noted.

40 LCC'S ROLE IN PLANNING

Consideration was given to a presentation by Phil Hughes, Strategic Planning Manager, and Mark Welsh, Flood Risk and Development Manager, which provided a detailed account of the role of Lincolnshire County Council within the Planning process.

The first presentation, given by Phil Hughes, Strategic Planning Manager, covered the following areas:-

- Introduction (including Plan Making, Infrastructure and Funding, Development Management (Local), Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (National) and House Members Can Engage);
- Changes Since 2010 (including LEP, Devolution, Local Plans and Localism, NPFF, Deregulation and Public Spending);
- Plan Making (including Growth Agenda, LCC Minerals & Waste Plan, District Local Plans, LCC Statutory Partnerships, Financial and Officer Support to Districts, Duty to Cooperate and Central Government Policy Consultations);

- Infrastructure and Funding (including Infrastructure Delivery Plans (IDP), Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), LCC Officer/Member Roles and County Coverage);
- Development Management (Local) (including Processing County Council, Minerals and Waste Planning Application, Monitor landfill and mineral sites, enforcement of minerals and waste planning conditions, respond to District planning applications and Planning Appeals);
- Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) (including New Planning Regime (Planning Act 2008), developments include energy, transport, water and waste (thresholds) and Triton Knoll OWF and Onshore Electrical System);
- NSIP Process Chart;
- Member Engagement

The second presentation was given by Mark Welsh, Flood Risk and Development Manager, and covered the following areas:-

- Introduction;
- Development Management (Flood Risk & Highways) and Floods & Water Structure;
- Statutory Consultees (Development Management Procedure Order);
- Statutory Role – Highway Authority and Lead Local Flood Authority;
- We Are A Consultee (highway authority) – explanation provided of the consultation process;
- Consider Impact and Facilitate Growth;
- Pre-application engagement;
- What is considered as a consultee (including Highway Authority: Capacity (NPPF, Safety and Sustainability) and Lead Local Flood Authority (local sources, EA previous role, flood risk to/from, safety, second consultations and SuDS for majors);
- SW Flooding;
- Formal Response to the LPA (to the point and short);
- Highways Authority Consultee (pre-applications, planning applications, S38 – road adoption, S106 – contributions and S278 – improvements);
- Construction and Adoption (duty, construction and adoption);
- S278 Highways Act 1980;
- Questions

The Chairman thanked officers for providing a detailed presentation and invited Members to ask questions. During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- During the presentation it was reported that one district council were not preparing a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) due to the land values in that particular area of the county. It was explained that these were decisions to be taken by Members within the district councils and a decision which would be taken after carrying out the necessary viability assessments;
- The district councils had an obligation to produce a local plan by 2017 but joint plans were expected from the seven district councils in Lincolnshire – three districts would provide a combined plan for Central Lincolnshire and two districts would provide a combined plan for South East Lincolnshire;

- Within new legislation, there had been a change in role for water companies. Drainage on highways was adopted by the Local Planning Authority but wider drainage was open to a number of mechanisms. It was hoped that Anglian Water would adopt those areas but, having sought advice from ROSPA, fencing would be required. Impact of this, on the surrounding area, was not permissible therefore the new development was required to contain that impact. Overland flows would also be a consideration;
- It was confirmed that in a known area of flooding an application would be recommended for refusal;
- Sustainability and impact on the network were both considerations for recommending refusal or approval of a planning application. Where there was a reluctance to provide a suitable bus route, the authority would usually recommend refusal;
- All roads must be built to adoptable standards even if adoption was not intended;
- It was advised that officers should not be engaging with members of the public on pending planning applications and all responses would be given to the planning authority or applicant. A development would be recommended for refusal should the land be susceptible to flooding;
- Comments on an application would only be provided to the planning authority or applicant if there was an issue with the proposal or if recommendation for refusal was to be made;
- The current road specification was ten years old and was currently being updated.

The Chairman thanked the Committee for their questions and asked that any further queries be directed to Officers via email after the meeting.

RESOLVED

That the presentation and comments made be noted.

41 TOURISM REVIEW

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Director for Environment and Economy which detailed the progress of the tourism review including the tourism schemes led by the team. An explanation of the importance of the visitor economy and input from tourism businesses in the county was also included.

Mary Powell, Commissioning Manager (Tourism), introduced the report and requested Members' input as the review was in still in development.

During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- Frustration was noted regarding the number of information leaflets available in Town Information Centres about additional counties to Lincolnshire. Although acknowledged it was explained that these centres were obliged to stock brochures for all counties despite any potential detriment to the host county;

- Although investment in certain tourist attractions in the county was key to the success of tourism, it was agreed that, on occasion, there was a need to lead with the story of the moment. For example, Lincoln Castle had been pertinent to the county in 2015 due to the £22m restoration and the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta which had resulted in more promotion internationally than it had received previously. The success of Lincoln Castle Revealed had proved that this investment had been worthwhile;
- Income to the Castle had far exceeded that anticipated but work was ongoing to ensure that visitor numbers continued in to 2016/17;
- An application for a large 'installation attraction' at Lincoln Castle had been made for 2016 and the outcome was imminent;
- Concern was noted that visitors were unable to reach Lincoln, via rail, on Sundays before late afternoon which limited visits to attractions. Consideration was being given to this issue;
- Although the Barons' Trail had been a huge success, it had been a novelty for the city. Forthcoming events were being planned, including other novelty items, which would attract more visitors to Lincolnshire.

The Chairman requested volunteers to form an informal working group to assist officers in taking forward the Tourism Review and that this group should meet several times before bringing a final version back to the Committee.

Councillors Mrs J Brockway, B Adams and the Chairman, A Bridges, agreed to form the working group.

RESOLVED

1. That the report be noted;
2. That an informal working group, as agreed above, be established.

At 12.25pm, Councillors W S Webb and Mrs H N J Powell left the meeting and did not return.

42 GREATER LINCOLNSHIRE LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP/SINGLE LOCAL GROWTH FUND - SIX MONTHLY PERFORMANCE REPORT

Consideration was given to a report from the Executive Director for Environment and Economy which provided an update on progress with the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (GLLEP) Growth Deal Programme and Invest and Grow Fund.

Halina Davies, Growth Plan Project Manager, introduced the report and invited the Committee to comment on the progress being made on the Growth Deal Programme for Greater Lincolnshire.

During discussion, the following point was noted:-

- Responsibility for the programme was split between the GLLEP and the county council, as the accountable body. As noted on page 37 of the report, £26.4m must be spent as there was a strong risk that any unspent money would have to be returned. There may be a requirement to move money between projects to ensure their success and this was done in conjunction with the County Treasurer to ensure that any movement adhered to the relevant guidelines. Although funding for one project may be used on another, this would not be lost to that project and would be available once the project required it.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

43 STRATEGIC ECONOMIC PLAN - REFRESH

Consideration was given to a report from the Executive Director for Environment and Economy which provided the Committee with information about the process and content of the Greater Lincolnshire Strategic Economic Plan refresh.

Justin Brown, Commissioner for Economic Growth, introduced the report stressing the importance of the Strategic Economic Plan. A number of events would be taking place, in relation to the plan, to which members were encouraged to attend and, if possible, invite at least one other person to attend with them. A list of these events would be circulated following the meeting.

On Friday 23 October 2015, the LEP Business Live Event was to be held at the Lincolnshire Showground. This event was scheduled to start at 10.00am and would give an opportunity to engage with Board Members.

There were no comments or questions from the Committee.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

44 GREATER LINCOLNSHIRE LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP
COASTAL VISION AND WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Director for Environment and Economy which outlined recent initiatives led by the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership to develop a clear set of objectives for Lincolnshire's coastal areas and to establish a Water Management Plan.

David Hickman, Environmental Services Team Leader, introduced the report and invited the Committee to ask any questions.

During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- Although a draw for visitors it was acknowledged that Nature Reserves were not the same type of attraction as, for example, Butlins and were visited by people with different needs so it was key to find a balance between the two to ensure the success of the coastal strip;
- It was agreed that major opportunities for the coast were being considered to join up the whole coast therefore close working with partners within the environmental sector were ongoing to ensure this was successful;
- The flood risk on the coast and the visitor economy could be dealt with together. Geographically, 40% of the county was at, or below, sea level and the LEP was considering this as activities in that area were available due to the nature of them. In order to promote Lincolnshire's coastal economy, the ability to sustain those areas was essential;
- Coastal defences had been funded by Government due to the scale and potential economic damage to the county should they breach. For every pound of capital funding, some element of local funding would be needed to match this. The Boston Barrier was the last to be wholly funded by Government;
- Methods for funding of the coastal defence scheme depended on a number of factors, including people and property with economy a consideration but not a priority despite being a key consideration for Lincolnshire. In order to unlock growth across Lincolnshire, Government would have to be persuaded that protection of the area and, in particular, coastal defence, was essential;
- Plans were being finalised to bid for approximately £5m funding for projects in the Skegness and Wrangle areas.

RESOLVED

1. That the report and comments be noted; and
2. That an update to the Committee be scheduled in February 2016.

45 ECONOMIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16

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, Senior Scrutiny Officer, introduced the report and confirmed that a Financial Workshop for the Committee would be held on the afternoon of 8 December 2015, following the Committee meeting. The workshop would be held in the Council Chamber.

Following discussion, it was suggested that the following additions be made to the Work Programme:-

- Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (GLLEP) Coastal Vision and Water Management Plan – Update (February 2016)
- Mablethorpe Development (TBC)
- Skills Position (TBC)

10
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RESOLVED

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

The meeting closed at 1.00 pm