

**ECONOMIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
 12 JANUARY 2016**

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

Councillors: C J Davie, S L W Palmer, Mrs A E Reynolds and S M Tweedale attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Andrea Brown (Democratic Services Officer), Justin Brown (Commissioner for Economic Growth), Michelle Grady (Head of Finance (Communities)), Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer), Mary Powell (Commissioning Manager (Tourism)), Nicola Radford (Senior Commissioning Officer (Regeneration Programmes)) and Lydia Rusling (Senior Commissioning Officer (Investment))

Guests in attendance:-

Mablethorpe Area Partnership CIC Representatives – Adrian Benjamin, Karen Froggatt and John Handley

56 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

There were no apologies for absence received. All members of the Committee were present.

57 DECLARATIONS OF COUNCILLORS' INTERESTS

There were no declarations of Councillors' interests at this stage of the proceedings.

The Chairman asked the Committee to note that, in relation to Item 9 – Coastal Town Team (including Mablethorpe), the guests in attendance for the item were known to him (John Handley and Adrian Benjamin). Councillor Bridges also knew the officer presenting the report, Nicola Radford.

58 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ECONOMIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 8 DECEMBER 2015

RESOLVED

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

59 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. The national economy had been described by the Chancellor as "mission critical" with global trading being suggested as key to rebuilding the economy. LCC's approach to the global challenge was to establish and develop strong relationships with regions which would present opportunities for international trade. Streets & Co., a local accountancy firm, were hosting a business breakfast with Chinese companies which Councillor Davie would attend. Progress on the potential to trade with the USA would be provided at the next meeting;
2. Further to the last meeting, it was reported that the request to agree to participate in a pan-county financial instrument had been granted. It was also reported that the LEADER funding programme had been open for one month and had already received 25 applications;
3. Following the announcement of the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), the team were working closely with colleagues to consider the impact. It was reported that a small amount of funding had been received for additional apprenticeships, business growth would have continued funding for a further two years as well as support for the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP);
4. On 10 March 2016, Gainsborough Golf Club would host a manufacturing conference, similar to that held in 2015. It was hoped that this event would be as successful.

The Chairman thanks Councillor Davie for the update.

60 BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2016/17

Consideration was given to a report from the Executive Director of Environment and Economy which provided details of potential implications for Economy within the Budget Proposals for 2016/17, considered by the Executive on 5 January 2016.

Michelle Grady, Head of Finance (Communities) introduced the report and the overview of the budget as a whole and Justin Brown, Commissioner for Economic Growth, provided detail of the impact on Economy. It was confirmed that the budget position considered at the Financial Challenges Workshop for the Committee, held in December 2015, had remained the same, i.e. a reduction from £1.8m to £1.3m.

Despite the reduction in budget, successful applications for grants would give the potential to increase that budget to somewhere in the region of £5m. Work was ongoing with managers to implement appropriate plans and targets across each of the budget lines.

During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- Members felt that the budget could not be reduced any further without being unable to successfully deliver services at the current standard. 75% of the overall Council budget was for statutory services with the remaining 25% being apportioned across remaining, discretionary services, of which this was one;
- It was disappointing that the settlement received was wholly inadequate for rural communities and that urban areas appeared to be the focus;
- The reduction in budget could mean the Council were unable to influence the economy resulting in the inability to shape the county;
- Paragraph 1.6 of the report noted that 630 adults were anticipated to be assisted to achieve qualifications. It was clarified that this specific number was the amount of adults trained by teams within Economic Development. These were generally disadvantaged people being helped to gain qualifications so that they were able to move on to further education/training. The Committee was advised that a report on Vocational Training was scheduled to be considered at the meeting in April 2016 and would provide further explanation of training available;
- Partnership working would be key to delivering what was required and a message would be sent to Government that Lincolnshire had a defined strategy working alongside the LEP Board and District Leaders in making a difference in each community;
- Employers and District Councils were reporting great difficulty in accessing schools to discuss future employment of their pupils as there continued to be encouragement, by schools, for young people to continue into further education rather than employment. It was suggested that it would be beneficial to revisit the "Narrowing the Gap" report, a previous workstream undertaken by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, to consider the recommendations and ascertain the progress made. This report focussed on providing young people with the options available to them at an earlier stage;
- Although the budget available was not as much as hoped, it was enough to engage businesses in the creation of apprenticeships;
- Poor connectivity for areas of deprivation and the opportunities that increased transport would provide for young people in those areas was acknowledged;
- Government was being lobbied to increase the settlement figure to rural authorities but, should this prove unsuccessful, there was little which could be done to improve the position as it currently stood;
- Round 3 growth funding would open in coming months and the team would bid for that funding;
- Comments to be submitted to the Executive on behalf of the Committee were to emphasise the need for additional funding, should the resettlement figure be adjusted in favour of rural areas, to be increased in this area.

RESOLVED

1. That the report and comments be noted; and

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2. That the following comment be submitted to the Executive on behalf of the Committee:-

"The Committee requested that an increase in the budget for Economy should seriously be considered by the Executive, depending on the final settlement. The Committee felt that if there was to be a reduction in the budget it would seriously affect the economy of the County and the essential work programme required in the future"

61 AGREEMENT OF EU FUNDING BIDS FOR SCHEMES THAT MEET THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

Consideration was given to a report from the Executive Director of Environment and Economy which invited consideration of the agreement of EU funding bids for schemes meeting the Council's priorities. The report was due to be considered by the Executive Councillor for Economic Development, Environment, Planning and Tourism on 2 February 2016.

Justin Brown, Commissioner for Economic Growth, introduced the item which presented the report to be considered by the Executive Councillor on 2 February 2016. It was confirmed that there was an intention to make five bids to extend the Council's resources.

At this stage of the proceedings, Councillor W S Webb declared an interest as a member of the Anglian North Regional Flood Committee.

During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- It was acknowledged that the Environment Agency was under huge pressure to assist with the alleviation of existing flood problems across areas of the country and, as a result, it was suggested that some work would have to be reprioritised. Further to discussions with the Environment Agency, their priority was, as thought, to address the extreme flooding experienced during the Christmas period. However, their advice was to continue to bid for this funding to ensure that these requests remained within the relevant processes rather than withdrawing the bids and starting again at a later date. This approach was endorsed by the Committee;
- In relation to the bid for the "Sustain Business" project, it was queried about the need for match funding. It was reported that a European grant would pay for 60% of the match funding and the Council would need to find 40% which would be made up of £300,000 from a government grant, £150,000-£160,000 out of the Council's staffing budget with the rest being charged to private businesses for the service;
- A possible bid in the region of £2m may be submitted in relation to the ABLE marine energy park on the Humber;
- It was anticipated that the bid for Broadband would be successful. The final part of the project was complex as different areas required different solutions although it was confirmed that one of those solutions may be rolling out suitable cabinets in rural areas;

- The Committee agreed that the bids were key to assist with regeneration and looked forward to receiving the outcome of each bid.

RESOLVED

That the recommendations in the Executive Councillor report be supported and the comments be passed on to the Executive Councillor for his consideration.

62 LINCOLN CASTLE REVEALED - UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Director for Environment and Economy which provided details of the impact of Lincoln Castle in 2015.

Mary Powell, Commissioning Manager (Tourism), introduced the report and guided the Committee through the "*Lincoln Castle Revealed: Marketing & Engagement Report November 2015*" by way of a presentation.

The Chairman took the opportunity to thank Mary Powell (Commissioning Manager (Tourism)), Lydia Rusling (Senior Commissioning Officer (Investment)) and the wider team for the success at the Castle and continuing with the momentum.

During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- Confirmation was received that there were a number of strong anniversaries for Lincolnshire between 2017 and 2020 which were to be built upon in respect of tourism to the County. Concern for the team had been for 2016 and the lack of something to build on following the success of the Magna Carta 800. However, an application had been made for the touring Poppies from the Tower of London for 2016 which had been successful and had already provoked a strong response from previous visitors confirming their return;
- A target of 110k of paying visitors to Lincoln Castle had been exceeded and, between April and December 2015, the confirmed number of paying visitors was 249,647;
- Businesses, particularly hotels and accommodation, restaurants and bars, etc., had reported it had been their most successful year so far. Additionally, Lincoln Cathedral had been delighted with the success of joint ticketing to both attractions. Virgin East Coast trains from London to Lincoln had been doubled for 2016 due to the success in 2015. It was agreed, therefore, that the project had been a great success for the whole city;
- Concern remained that visitors from neighbouring counties were unable to reach Lincoln by train on a Sunday, a day when it was felt most families would spend time together. In response, it was reported that Network Rail were also looking to increase services in 2016 as a result of the Poppies coming to Lincoln Castle;
- The lack of capacity within hotels in Lincoln was mentioned as an issue for large numbers of visitors. The Committee was advised that an application had been submitted for the extension of the Hilton Doubletree and also for an additional two hotels;

- It had been intended that the Castle Shuttle would run from Easter to October 2015 half term but was terminated three weeks early as part of the traffic strategy for the city. Due to the amount of roadworks in the city during 2015, it was agreed that the Castle Shuttle would be implemented to alleviate any additional traffic pressure. However, the existing infrastructure had coped much better than expected;
- Lincoln BIG were giving consideration to a bus service with parking included although this was in the early stages of consideration;
- Upcoming anniversaries were not all Lincoln centric and it was felt that Lincolnshire as a whole could be promoted for tourism over the next few years therefore the team would give focus on how to link them;
- Review of ticketing over the last year was ongoing with availability of certain ticket packages being reconsidered and amended or withdrawn in favour of the more popular offers;
- A suggestion was made to commence monitoring of the actual number of visitors to the grounds of Lincoln Castle as well as paying visitors to the Victorian Prison, Magna Carta Vault or Castle Walls.

RESOLVED

That the report and comments be noted.

63 PLACE MARKETING - INVOLVING THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Consideration was given to a report from the Executive Director for Environment and Economy which provided information on the potentially effective tool of place marketing which could assist in reaching the ambitious targets for growth within Greater Lincolnshire.

Lydia Rusling, Senior Commissioning Officer (Investment), introduced the report and invited the Committee to ask any questions.

During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- The Committee agreed that the concept was good and would be achievable as suggested within the report;
- It was advised that the RAF were open to discussion about their personnel and roles after leaving the RAF but this was limited to generic roles, for example HGV Drivers. With more specialised roles, such as engineering, they were less engaged as a lot of the work within the MOD was now contracted out so a lot of personnel left the RAF but were reemployed with these contractors, hence keeping the skills and knowledge within the camps;
- Members requested that the action plan alluded to on page 45 of the report be circulated for their information;
- Given the importance of place marketing it was agreed that an update be brought to the Committee three times yearly;

RESOLVED

1. That the report and comments be noted; and
2. That a thrice-yearly update on Place Marketing be added to the Committee's Work Programme.

64 COASTAL TOWN TEAM (INCLUDING MABLETHORPE)

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Director for Environment and Economy which provided details of economic planning taking place in Mablethorpe.

Justin Brown, Commissioner for Economic Growth, gave the Committee an explanation of the boxes shown at Appendix A to the report to assist the Committee with their consideration of this item. The boxes showed the overlap of responsibility between the County Council, District Council and Local Partners and the Committee was reminded that only support which was in the remit of the County Council could be considered.

The Chairman welcomed John Handley, Adrian Benjamin and Karen Froggatt, all members of the Mablethorpe CIC, to the meeting and invited presentation of the report.

Nicola Radford, Senior Commissioning Officer (Regeneration Programmes) introduced the report and gave the Committee an overview which had been requested by Councillor D McNally. It was advised that as one of the country's most deprived communities, Mablethorpe needed support in order to be in a position to bid toward additional resources. The Government's "Coastal Town Team" approach aimed to help communities to achieve this.

Karen Froggatt, Operations Manager for Mablethorpe Area Partnership CIC (MAPCIC), was invited to address the Committee with progress to-date. The post of Operations Manager had been funded by East Lindsey District Council from 2009 until March 2016 and was to set up a local partnership board to look at how to improve vitality in Mablethorpe and Sutton-on-Sea.

In February 2014 Mablethorpe Area Partnership CIC was set up with a board of nine volunteer directors and 35 business paid members and had since developed good relations with businesses in the area. There had been considerable private investment recently with the Dunes Entertainment Complex and Theatre being revived. There was also a full size bowling alley and refurbished arcades to attract visitors. MAPCIC had been granted £10k, some of which had been used on professional support as they wanted to ensure that a comprehensive and up-to-date plan was developed although this was not yet complete. Consultation with businesses and residents had highlighted key themes for focus:-

1. Unemployment;
2. Low skills;
3. Poor transport;
4. Flood risk;

5. Poor health; and
6. Low income

A SWOT analysis had then been undertaken with the findings presented to a number of key stakeholders. MAPCIC were looking at the infrastructure and how to improve the public realm and other themes included within the framework included tourism and retail, employment, low skills, enterprise, business growth and community and social enterprises.

East Lindsey District Council was in the process of submitting a coastal destination bid and the fear of the CIC was that Mablethorpe may be overlooked in favour of Skegness. Lincolnshire County Council was asked to support partnership working in order to regenerate Mablethorpe.

The Chairman thanked the representatives of Mablethorpe CIC and invited comments from the Committee. During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- Despite the unemployment figures and rise in deprivation, a considerable number of people who had moved to Mablethorpe were not unemployed and had moved there to enjoy retirement;
- It was suggested that lengthening the seasonal opening times for Caravan parks in the area would increase the economy by way of seasonal employment for local people, restaurants, shops, visitor attractions and the sites themselves;
- It was acknowledged that Mablethorpe had a rundown appearance and did not attract new visitors hence one of the options to revitalise shop fronts, etc.;
- Although Skegness had a direct bus route from Lincoln, Mablethorpe did not which made it difficult for people to visit for days out;
- Market Towns in Lincolnshire were faced with the same issues and in, for example, Grantham, a business improvement district was being considered which would decide what the town required, in conjunction with its District Council. This scheme would require buy-in from local businesses, via increased business rates, to enable any improvements to be made to the town;
- A unique selling point was also encouraged as this would give focus for improvements and marketing strategies;
- Coastal development was ongoing in Lincolnshire but to be included within this, any project needed to be led by the community with achieved outcomes justifying the funding committed;
- The Coastal Economic Plan would bring all those projects together but it was acknowledged that not every proposal would be successful therefore identification of three or four strategic projects was encouraged;
- It was requested that the outcomes agreed at the meeting of Mablethorpe Area Partnership CIC on 19 January 2016 be shared with the Senior Commissioning Officer (Regeneration Programmes). As explained at the start of the item, anything which would fall in to the overlap of responsibility for the County Council would be discussed with the team but it was expected that the ageing population and tourism would be the two areas of interest;

The Chairman thanked representatives of Mablethorpe Area Partnership CIC for their attendance and presentation at the Committee.

RESOLVED

That the report and comments be noted.

65 ECONOMIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2016

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 advised that there were no amendments to the work programme since it was published and that, following discussion at the meeting, the following addition would be made:-

Place Marketing – Update Report (thrice yearly)

It was also requested, and agreed, to include Pharmaceutical education in the report on "University of Lincoln's Plan for a Medical School", scheduled for consideration by the Committee on Tuesday 12 April 2016.

RESOLVED

That the Economic Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2016, with the amendments noted above, be approved.

The meeting closed at 1.07 pm