

**ECONOMIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
 21 FEBRUARY 2017**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR A BRIDGES (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors C Pain (Vice-Chairman), B Adams, Mrs J Brockway, N I Jackson, D McNally, Mrs E J Sneath, P Wood, L Wootten, R Wootten and R A Renshaw

Councillors W S Webb and Mrs C A Talbot attended the meeting as observers.

Officers in attendance:-

Gill Ashton (Engineer), Amanda Bond (Senior Development Officer), Andrea Brown (Democratic Services Officer), Justin Brown (Commissioner for Economic Growth) and Daniel Steel (Scrutiny Officer)

58 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor G J Ellis.

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

59 DECLARATIONS OF COUNCILLORS' INTERESTS

No declarations of Councillors' Interests were received at this stage of the proceedings.

60 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ECONOMIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 10 JANUARY 2017

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Economic Scrutiny Committee held on 10 January 2017 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

61 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR FOR DEVELOPMENT

Councillor W S Webb (Executive Support Councillor for Development) was invited to update the Committee on recent events within the County:-

- a. Apologies for absence were received from Councillor C J Davie (Executive Councillor for Development) who was attending a meeting with Lincoln BIG ;
- b. Since the last meeting of the Committee, the Government had launched a consultation on the industrial strategy and the housing white paper. Both

documents were important to the authority as they would set out the government funding agenda over the next few years. Without ensuring that the champions of these two strategies understood the needs of Lincolnshire it would be difficult to secure additional resources hence the current work to prepare a strong response to both;

- c. The view of the Government in relation to the housing white paper was that it would help people to gain employment by being able to live closer to job opportunities. This showed a clear link between housing and economic growth, a topic which had been discussed by the Committee in recent years;
- d. Work continued to urge Government officials to recognise the benefit of investment in Lincolnshire. Officials from Midlands Connect, the regional transport strategy, addressed the LEP Board in January 2017 and it was noted that little, direct, reference had been made to Lincolnshire or the transport priorities within the ITMEG work. After the meeting, contact was made with Midlands Connect and, as a result, particular reference to the ITMEG priorities had been included within the draft strategy;
- e. A meeting of the Coastal Developers Forum had been held in February 2017 where implications for business, following the recent emergency status of the tidal surge, was discussed. During discussion, it was clear that there was a lot of learning for both businesses and for public bodies, following the incident, and that the Coast Developers Forum was an appropriate forum to explore these issues further. Training needs had also been discussed and a workshop arranged to identify and fulfil any training requirements to assist coastal tourism businesses;
- f. A shortage in fresh vegetables from Spain had highlighted the importance of ongoing investment in new growing techniques for Lincolnshire businesses. It was suggested that there may be a requirement to rebalance the import/export levels in this sector;
- g. It was reported that the next round of funding for LEPs would be announced shortly after the Stoke-on-Trent By-Election as it was anticipated the announcement made would include all LEPs in the East and West Midlands;
- h. Whilst not in the remit of the Committee, the general increase in fly tipping and litter around the county was having a detrimental effect on the welfare and economy of the county. Members were asked to support the suggestion, which would be made to the Environmental Scrutiny Committee, to consider an initiative to educate the general public.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Webb for the update and asked the Committee to email the Executive Councillor, or Executive Support Councillor, for Development directly should there be any questions in relation to the announcements.

62 LINCOLN HIGH STREET PUBLIC REALM ENHANCEMENT SCHEME:
TENTERCROFT STREET TO SOUTH OF THE LEVEL CROSSING

Consideration was given to a report by the Executive Director for Environment and Economy which invited comments from the Committee on the Lincoln High Street Public Realm Enhancement Scheme: Tentercroft Street to the south of the level crossing, prior to consideration of the report, by the Executive Councillor for Governance, Communications, Commissioning, Finance and Property.

Amanda Bond, Senior Development Officer, introduced the report and explained that this project formed part of the East West Link major scheme with access to the High Street from Tentercroft Street to St Mary's Street pedestrianised and converted into a restricted route with access only for service vehicles and car parks.

This area allowed deliveries before 10.00am and after 4.00pm and only permit holders were able to access two private car parks located off this section of the street. Physical changes had been minimal with emphasis aimed at the new traffic arrangements.

The project aimed to have a transformational impact on the following areas:-

- Improved economic activity;
- Enhanced accessibility;
- Enhanced connectivity; and
- Better social interaction.

The proposed project was a public realm enhancement scheme which would enhance the streetscape and character of the area through the provision of natural stone materials, high quality street furniture and a gateway feature.

Some members of the Committee walked to the meeting venue via this area of the High Street with officers to visualise these proposals.

Members were invited to ask questions, during which the following points were noted:-

- A Member of the Committee suggested that the possibility be explored to better link the Tentercroft Street car park to the High Street via the road access to the side of the railway line, as part of the planned improvement works;
- The Committee welcomed the increase in pedestrian capacity of the High Street, as well as the improvements to the economic development of the area. The Committee also welcomed the possibility of the proposed works improving the quality of retailers on this section of the High Street;
- It was recommended that officers and key partners explore how to better connect the individual sections of the High Street, specifically the use of space in relation to events, such as the Lincoln Street Markets to ensure the enhancement scheme was used to reduce congestion further up the High Street. Lincoln BIG, in particular, was expected to use this area more once the scheme was complete;
- A member of the Committee queried what lessons had been learnt from the issues identified using Yorkstone slabs in the Cathedral Quarter and highlighted serious concerns about the quality of the surface proposed to be used as part of the project. Officers confirmed that lessons had been learnt from using Yorkstone slabs elsewhere in Lincolnshire but reassured the Committee that improved methods would be applied to this scheme. These methods included ensuring slabs were mortared in along buildings and that deeper foundations be used to give stronger and more robust results. An

example of these methods was the paving on Flaxengate in Lincoln on the approach to The Collection;

- The project cost was covered by government funding which the Council held. A business plan had been submitted to Government for growth point funding over a 15 year period and, although there were no rules or deadlines as to when the funding should be spent, it was required that the business plan be loosely followed. The Government had the ability to audit the Council on the business plan presented;
- The need for continued joint working with the City of Lincoln Council in relation to High Street improvements was highlighted. Additionally, the Committee recommended that additional work be considered as soon as possible to plan the next phase of improvements for Wigford Way/St Mary's Street, as part of the improvements taking place with the Lincoln Transport Hub to minimise future disruption;
- The tight cost envelope of the proposed project was acknowledged and the Committee welcomed assurance that regular reporting would take place with senior managers and Executive Councillors to ensure the project was undertaken effectively, on time and within the proposed budget;
- It was suggested that consideration be given to the specialist shops further down the High Street and how this area could be further enhanced in the future through greater promotion of the southern part of the High Street past St Marks;
- Improvement works could result in an increased level of comments and complaints from the general public, therefore the Committee recommended that officers continued to ensure local businesses and shoppers were well informed during the works and that consideration be given to suitable access throughout the period the improvement works were taking place. Effective communication was identified as essential to highlight the long-term benefits of the scheme;
- A Committee member highlighted the need to review the integration between the proposed enhancements and East/West Link road, specifically the need to review the capacity of the pedestrian crossing at St Marks Street and Tentercroft Street. These crossings were identified as a current 'pinch point' in the flow of pedestrians moving across the East/West Link road and an area for review and improvement;
- Only one complaint had been received since the start of the works and this was from a user of one of the private car parks who was shouted at by a pedestrian for accessing the car park. It was reported that most feedback received had been positive.

RESOLVED

1. That the recommendations to the Leader of the Council and Executive Councillor for Governance, Communications, Commissioning, Finance and Property, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be supported; and
2. That the comments of the Committee, as noted above, be passed to the Leader of the Council and Executive Councillor for Governance, Communications, Commissioning, Finance and Property in relation to this item.

63 PROGRESS ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE RELATIONSHIP WITH HUNAN, CHINA

Consideration was given to a report from the Executive Director for Environment and Economy which provided an update on progress in relation to the international trade relationship with Hunan, China.

Angela Driver, Senior Commissioning Officer (Enterprise), introduced the report which reported that a Memorandum of Understanding with Hunan Province in China, which formalised an intention to work towards a friendship agreement, was signed in September 2015.

A further delegation, including the Vice Governor of Hunan and a number of senior Hunan government officials and business representatives, visited Lincoln and signed a friendship agreement in March 2016. During that visit, representatives from Lincolnshire were invited to join a 'Week for Educational Exchange with International Friendship Partners' in Hunan in October 2016. The event was hosted by the Foreign and Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the Hunan Provincial People's Government of China, Education Department.

The Committee was introduced to Professor Jayne Mitchell, Deputy Vice Chancellor of Bishop Grosseteste University, who had represented Lincolnshire on the visit alongside an independent businessman, Mr Paul Parkinson. Mr Parkinson had previously worked and lived in China and assisted a number of businesses in developing commercial relationships with Asia.

The Chairman invited Professor Mitchell to address the Committee and give an account of her trip to Hunan Province.

Professor Mitchell thanked Lincolnshire County Council for the opportunity to participate in the visit before giving information on the trip:-

- The funding for the trip was met entirely by the hosts with the exception of the return flights which were purchased by Bishop Grosseteste University;
- The Friendship partners were from 12 different countries across the globe which provided the ability for Lincolnshire to discuss development opportunities with other countries;
- It was noted that Lincolnshire was the only county in the UK who had a friendship agreement with Hunan Province;
- Bishop Grosseteste University had now signed Memorandum of Understandings in place with three universities in Hunan;
- Trust was extremely important to China and third party, trusted, introductions with companies who had a credible offer was welcomed;
- Germany had a successful relationship with China which had been built over a number of years with several visits each year. The country was now working directly with Hunan and a number of educational providers and businesses in order to fill skills gaps. This would also be an opportunity to promote Lincolnshire as a learning destination;

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- The visit had been a valuable experience which had resulted in the development of a number of collaborative initiatives with three universities;

The Chairman thanked Professor Mitchell for her attendance and invited members to ask questions, during which the following points were noted:-

- Qualified and articulate interpreters had been provided by the hosts to facilitate business discussions. It was noted, however, that the language barrier had not caused any major difficulties during the visit;

At 11.35am, Councillor B Adams left the meeting and did not return.

- Partnership arrangements with local schools and further education colleges would be part of the network being built. Parents of Chinese students were keen to know that there was a safe and trusted place of learning for their children;
- During the visit, one region had a strong manufacturing and industrial base but had received considerable investment to transform this into a tourist area. This work was done in partnership with Germany and, in return, the Xiangdi provincial government had imported products and produce from Germany via a direct commercial route;
- One member of the Committee asked how the level of understanding in respect of the Chinese and Nepalese culture would be increased. It was agreed that knowledge of the history and culture may assist in the cultural understanding of each nation which would help to secure ongoing development;
- Advice had been received that investment in the civic relationship would assist in building trust with China but it was unclear at this stage how this would develop. It was recognised that this development would be a series of investments which may not be as successful as anticipated. The opportunities were there but remained a political challenge;
- One member of the Committee raised a concern that the report did not give any indication of caution which may be required. It was noted that these were not usual business arrangements and appeared to be reliant on political relationships rather than business itself.

RESOLVED

1. That the friendship agreement signed with Hunan province, China, had already led to opportunities for Lincolnshire businesses and institutions, be noted; and
2. That the continued work on a trade relationship with Hunan province, China, as a way of increasing levels of export in Lincolnshire, be supported.

64 QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE

Consideration was given to a report from the Executive Director for Environment and Economy which provided an update on performance against the Council's four economic development indicators and described the current situation in the local economy.

Justin Brown, Commissioner for Economic Growth, introduced the report and confirmed that all the Quarter 3 targets had been met. The Committee was referred to page 87 of the agenda pack which showed that employers were starting to anticipate that they would need to make price increases. Following the recession in 2008 there had been very few mass redundancies or jobs lost. Businesses had absorbed price increases, but appear not to be able to do so any more.

During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- A £5m European grant was given to the Business Lincolnshire Growth Hub which would support small and medium sized businesses in Lincolnshire, including North and North East Lincolnshire;
- The council were working with a number of businesses who needed to improve technology and improve product purchase. In order for the businesses to attract a grant to help with their investment, three quotes were required. Discussion was ongoing about this requirement as, occasionally, only one supplier was available;
- A new toolkit was being designed to sell to help directors with developing their business.

RESOLVED

That the report and comments be noted.

65 ECONOMIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - REVIEW OF WORK FROM 2013 TO 2017

Consideration was given to a report from the Executive Director for Environment and Economy which summarised the work of the Economic Scrutiny Committee during this electoral term.

Justin Brown, Commissioner for Economic Growth, introduced the report which provided detail of the achievements within this area during the term of the Committee. Formal thanks were given to the Committee for their support and assistance during this time.

During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- Consideration would be given to look at how pedestrians and traffic moved between Lincoln Castle and Cathedral following the support from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) who had allocated funding of £11.4m for a scheme entitled Lincoln Cathedral Connected. This restoration work was able to commence and would include the creation of a new interpretation centre and additional facilities for visitors. The Committee had been extremely supportive of this scheme and was delighted that it had also received the financial support of the HLF;
- It was suggested that training for individuals within heritage skills within the construction sector would assist in retaining specialist skills and knowledge within the county.

RESOLVED

1. That the report and contents be noted; and
2. That consideration be given to the possibility of offering work experience to students on heritage sites.

66 MEDICAL TRAINING IN LINCOLNSHIRE - UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report by the Executive Director for Environment and Economy which provided an update on progress to broaden the provision of medical training in Lincolnshire. The report also included the progress made by education and training providers in the delivery of medical training and in the planning of future provision.

The Chairman welcomed Professor Sara Owen, Pro Vice Chancellor of Lincoln University, to the meeting and invited her to introduce the report.

Since the last update to the Committee, the Secretary of State for Health, Jeremy Hunt, had announced that a new approach was likely to be taken to increase the number of medical school places.

It was explained that this would be a long process which had only recently commenced. Lincoln University and the health community were jointly committed to the proposed medical school and doing so in such a way where the majority of students would be recruited and retained in Lincolnshire.

There was an expectation that in February 2018, the first cohort of students would commence within Midwifery; Children's Nursing; and Undergraduate Degrees in Paramedic Science; Occupational Therapy; and Physiotherapy. Plans were also in development to deliver a degree in Speech and Language Therapy in the future.

Within the Professional Development Centre, a new programme would be available for advanced clinical nurse practitioners to undertake a Certificate in Rural Health which would be a joint Lincolnshire initiative. This would also be available to current medical staff in addition to students from Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire.

Building works at the University of Lincoln included a new-build (Sarah Swift Building) which would house psychology and a School of Health and Social Care. The Joseph Banks and Isaac Newton Building, housing maths and sciences, had also been refurbished in readiness for the new programmes.

The announcement by the Secretary of State for Health advising that there would be an additional 1500 placements for medical students was a huge commitment.

In October 2016, the HFCE contacted universities and asked the following questions:-

- How many additional students could be facilitated; and
- Was the development of a Medical School on the University's agenda?

A response had been requested by 31 October 2016 therefore urgent meetings were called with the trust Chairmen, Chief Executives and Boards of Governors. The overwhelming response was in support of the development of a Medical School in Lincolnshire. Although no formal announcement had yet been made, it was anticipated that the Department of Health would oversee a consultation sometime in March 2017.

It was suggested that the criteria for deciding which area would be allowed to develop a Medical School would include under-doctored areas; development of a curriculum which was non-traditional and to focus on practitioners remaining in medical care; and universities who had a widening participation ethos.

The 1500 students referred to would be allocated into four cohorts as noted:-

- Cohort 1 – 500 students within existing medical schools who would increase numbers;
- Cohort 2 – students would be taken into existing privately run medical schools who sought to become public funded institutions, e.g. international students;
- Cohort 3 – Universities who would like to develop a Medical School independently and who had commenced the application process with the General Medical Council (GMC); and
- Cohort 4 – those who wished to develop a Medical School in partnership with an existing school.

Lincoln University were giving consideration to tender for Cohort 3 and would have to find a partner to support them through the process but one who would not have the final voice on the curriculum. A group from the University of Lincoln had met with the GMC to explain plans for the future and the GMC had been extremely supportive of the proposals and were aware of the current situation within Lincolnshire in relation to the retention of medical staff.

Members of Parliament and Chief Executives within the health community in Lincolnshire had been contacted, all of whom had also provided overwhelming support.

A job advert was to be issued for a Project Manager as it was thought that someone with strong experience of submitting this type of tender was required to ensure success. A large event was planned for the end of May to include key colleagues in the health community to consider a potential curriculum.

The Chairman thanked Professor Owen for providing a detailed update to the Committee and invited questions. During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- A new role of an Associate Nurse was a pilot funded by Health Education England (HEE), one of which was in the East Midlands and Lincoln University was part of that pilot also;
- There were 48 Associate Nurse trainees currently on work placements within the health community and being trained in clinical practice. They were paid by

their own Trusts and gaining experience. It was hoped that this pilot would be successful and, once rolled out, recruitment into this role from existing Trust staff was thought to be promising;

- It was suggested that links to the military could also be made to attract mature students. If possible, the Ministry of Defence may also be in a position to contribute to the Medical School;
- A cohort of 140-150 students would be built into the business plan and a certain number of those students would have to be international therefore the impact of Brexit would require further consideration;
- It was reported that, despite Brexit, the number of applications from European student applications for other courses had grown.

The Chairman again thanked Professor Owen for the contribution to the meeting which had been most informative. The Commissioner for Economic Growth was asked to respond positively to the consultation.

RESOLVED

1. That the report and comments be noted;
2. That any bids for funding which were made to broaden medical training provision be supported; and
3. That the Commissioner for Economic Growth be asked to respond positively to any consultation in relation to a Medical School in Lincolnshire.

At 12.45pm, Councillor Mrs C A Talbot left the meeting and did not return.

67 ECONOMIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

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

Daniel Steel, Scrutiny Officer, introduced the report and confirmed that, as this was the last meeting of the Committee, there was nothing to report.

The Chairman thanked the Committee for their contributions during this four year term and wished all Members well for the forthcoming election and to those who would not be standing again.

The Chairman also asked that the Committee's thanks be passed to Tracy Johnson, Senior Scrutiny Officer, for her continued support and advice to the Committee. Thanks were also given to Andrea Brown, Clerk to the Committee.

The meeting closed at 12.50 pm