

**ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
22 OCTOBER 2019**

PRESENT:

Councillors C R Oxby (Vice-Chairman, in the Chair), Mrs A M Austin, G E Cullen, A G Hagues, C Matthews, Mrs E J Sneath, C L Strange and Dr M E Thompson

Councillors: C J Davie and D McNally attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Ruth Carver (Chief Executive, Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership), John Coates (Head of Waste), Samantha L Harrison (Enterprise Commissioning Manager), David Hickman (Head of Environment), Nicole Hilton (Assistant Director - Communities), Phil Hughes (Strategic Planning Manager), Mick King, Daniel Steel (Scrutiny Officer) and Rachel Wilson (Democratic Services Officer)

35 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs W Bowkett.

36 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

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

37 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 10 SEPTEMBER 2019

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2019 be agreed and signed by the Vice-Chairman.

38 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND LEAD OFFICERS

The Executive Councillor for Economy and Place commented that the UK was due to leave the EU in a few days' time and it was worth noting that the Economic Survey was also due to be discussed by the Chamber of Commerce. It was highlighted that there had been a substantial increase in confidence levels despite Brexit and recruitment levels had also risen since the previous quarter.

The authority was working hard to help businesses to profit from the opportunities arising from Brexit, and had a full seminar programme. Government funding had

been attracted to provide specialist consultancy support to help businesses change to a post-Brexit world and enter into new markets

In terms of new markets, the Executive Councillor reported that he would be accompanying a dozen business and education leaders to Changsha in Hunan Province in November to pursue trade opportunities. The delegation would have one-to-one meetings with potential Chinese business partners and would be meeting Chinese government officials to agree next steps in pursuing Innovate UK funding for agri-tech innovation schemes. If the bid was successful it would greatly strengthen south Lincolnshire's international reputation as a leader in food manufacturing. It was reported that this visit would be the biggest ever delegation from the Midlands to China.

The Committee was informed that there had been an excellent Team Lincolnshire event as part of the MIPIM UK exhibition. 100 businesses attended its business dinner, half of whom were potential clients seeking to invest in the County rather than local businesses. There was a clear momentum for investment in Lincolnshire, as could be evidenced by the authority's announcements about the signing of contracts on Skegness Business Park and the confirmation of the direct rail service between Lincoln and London was a real asset. The Committee was also reminded that plenty of these trains stopped at Grantham and the County's north-south connections were strong and provided the opportunity to attract investment.

It was also reported that work was continuing on the various towns funding projects. The towns that could attract funding if they got their plans right were Holbeach, Boston, Grantham, Lincoln, Mablethorpe and Skegness. District councils would be the applicants, but the County Council and the LEP would have a big role to play in developing their bids and in delivering their schemes.

The latest STEAM data had been released and it showed continuing growth in the county's tourism economy. The Council's investments, whether in Lincoln Castle, the green coast or in the PR work which put stories about Lincolnshire into the travel press, had all contributed to that increase.

A number of queries were raised by members in relation to the update as follows:

- In terms of the towns funding projects, there was surprise that Lincoln was included as it was a city. Members were advised that the project was about return for investment, and there were still large areas of the city that needed improvement. The application process was fairly broad, but in terms of the bidding process, this would be more specific. It was about lifting the whole of the Lincolnshire economy.
- The launch of the extra Lincoln – London trains was good news, but it was commented that it was quite a commitment to be able to keep six trains going each way. It was suggested whether a couple of these trains could go to Grimsby and Cleethorpes too. The Executive Councillor advised that it was very clear that the south bank of the Humber represented a big opportunity for Lincolnshire's economy, and going forward the authority would be happy to support anything that North and North East Lincolnshire wanted to do in terms of improving transport links.

- It was noted that Boston had Lincolnshire's only international port, and there was a need to get the maximum benefit from the rail connections. It was queried whether it was hopeful that the steel trains would continue running. Members were advised that discussions were still ongoing, but society was changing, and young people wanted good public transport. It was also reported that there was to be an increased service between Lincoln and Peterborough, and it was hoped that this would be an hourly service.
- It was also queried whether there was a need to look at improving the train service going north as well, for example, to Leeds.

39 HUTTOFT BOAT SHED VISITOR CENTRE

Consideration was given to a report which outlined the plans for the conversion of the Huttoft Boat Shed into a visitor centre. Members were advised that the project would add another quality tourist facility to the Lincolnshire Coast, and would build on the success of the North Sea Observatory and the Gibraltar Point Visitor Centre.

The project would be funded by the County Council and the GLLEP and the building at Huttoft would replace an existing redundant boat shed, owned by the County Council. The new building would contain a high quality café, a rooftop viewing deck (protected by glass balustrade) and an external ground levels deck for hosting larger pop-up food and other events. The building would benefit from floor to ceiling windows (protected when not in use by shutters) giving views inland to the Wolds and North to Sandilands and Sutton on Sea.

It was also reported that the project would include the refurbishment of the existing public toilets, an external shower for beach users and connecting the site to main services for the first time.

The Committee was updated that since the publication of the agenda, planning permission had been granted, and the deadline for the return of tenders was the previous Friday. Kier were now assessing the tenders and it was expected that the building would open to the public around June 2020.

Members 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:

- Members commented that they were in favour of this project and that it was great news for the area. However, it was highlighted that no reference was made to a car parking strategy, but members were advised that an overarching car parking strategy for the whole of the coast was being developed.
- It was reported that it was being examined how to bring in a parking strategy for the whole of the Lincolnshire coastline, and it was hopeful that this would be agreed in the new year, so there would be uniformity in the approach for the benefit of visitors and the local economy.
- Concerns were raised that only two toilets would be provided and it was queried whether these facilities would be sufficient considering the expected increase in visitor numbers, as well as taking into account the need for baby

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changing facilities. There was also concern that there was not a separate toilet for staff. It was highlighted that at Chapel Point, there were toilets which were used by staff and the public with no issues, and that was a bigger venue. It was suggested whether the toilets could both be unisex to try and alleviate pressure.

- It was queried whether the concerns raised by the Environment Agency in relation to potential flooding had been taken into account, and it was noted that where possible these had been mitigated. It was also noted that the proposal complied with the Sandilands Act.
- There was a need for an offer that would attract younger people to the area. The project would transform this into a much better facility.
- It was highlighted that this area had been used for many years, and with the English Coastal Path and Coastal County Park this would form part of a wider offer for the area.

RESOLVED

1. That the Committee support the recommendations to the Executive Councillor for Commercial and Environmental Management.
2. That the following comments be passed to the Executive Councillor for Commercial and Environmental Management:
 - *The Committee recommended the need for a clear and developed overarching car parking strategy for the coastal area. It was agreed that a parking strategy should be developed with other local councils to promote uniformity of parking, with the aim to promote tourism and benefit the local economy.*
 - *The Committee welcomed the proposals for the refurbishment of the existing public toilets on the site, but highlighted serious concerns in relation to the available capacity of just two toilets to service the facility and surrounding area. The Committee recommended that further consideration was given to ensure adequate toilet facilities were available.*
 - *The Committee queried whether the concerns highlighted by the Environment Agency that the site was at high risk of flooding had been addressed by a flood risk assessment as part of the planning application. Officers confirmed that work had been undertaken to mitigate the risk of flooding to the site.*

40 COUNTY MIXED DRY RECYCLABLES PROCUREMENT

Consideration was given to a report which outlined the strategy behind the procurement of a new mixed dry recycling (MDR) contract commencing in 2020. It was reported that the decision was due to be considered by the Executive on 5 November 2019.

It was also reported that approval would be sought for a short extension of existing arrangements in order to enable the most advantageous procurement process to be

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followed and ensure appropriate transition arrangements to a new service if necessary.

Members 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:

- It was clarified that the term of the contract was 5 years with up to two extensions of one year each.
- Paragraph 8 referred to pre-sorted materials going straight to the re-processor, and it was queried whether this had been agreed. Members were advised that including this within the contract allowed for if source separation was introduced, for example separate paper collection. This would provide flexibility without having to go back out to procurement.
- It was queried how much consideration have been given to the location of collections centres, to ensure that materials were not being transported across the county. It was also queried whether there was scope to have more local specialised collection centres. It was noted that there were no Material Recovery Facilities (MRF's) in Lincolnshire at this time. However, the government's waste strategy was going through parliament which could bring significant change. There was a need to go to market with the greatest degree of flexibility. Officers were relying on the market to provide the best solution to deal with recyclables. It was likely that more source separation would be introduced within the next 5-10 years.
- It was queried whether the existing arrangements could be extended for more than a year. Members were advised that this was not possible. The three month extension had been requested in order to obtain the most beneficial procurement. Legally, there was a need to have something in place.
- The EfW would continue to be an asset and the removal of food from the waste stream would create additional capacity. However, it was also noted that with the increased media interest in plastics, plastics were one material that was going up in value. Source separation was more costly to fund but did provide a better quality product. It was hoped that it would be left to local authorities to decide what they collected.
- It was thought there could be benefits to collecting plastics, however lower grade plastics did go to the EfW.

RESOLVED

1. That the Committee support the recommendations to the Executive as set out in the report.
2. That the following comments be passed to the Executive for consideration:
 - *The Committee recommended that further consideration should be given to reduce the carbon footprint from haulage from the transport of mixed dry recyclables as part of the procurement process.*
 - *The Committee supported the development of more localised infrastructure to process Mixed Dry Recyclables. The Committee highlighted the benefits of building and operating a materials recovery*

facility (MRF), either directly or via a contractor and highlighted this as a future aspiration for greater commercialisation.

41 LINCOLN BIG BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID) UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report which provided an update on the Lincoln Business Improvement Group's (BIG) activity to date and further information about the upcoming vote and timelines. Should they gain majority support from businesses in the next Business Improvement District (BID) ballot, it also outlined their priorities for Lincoln BIG going forward.

Members 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:

- The Executive Councillor for Economy and Place advised that he was the Council's appointed representative.
- BID's had had mixed performance around the Country, but Lincoln BIG was the exception to the national picture. With a successful re-vote it would be the longest running BIG in the Country. It was commented that Lincoln BIG had done fantastic work over the last few years.
- Members commented that they were pleased to see that charity shops were also paying the levy, especially as many also sold new products.
- Lincoln BIG had evolved over time, and the coast could learn from what had been done in Lincoln.
- It was commented that this was a very positive report.
- It was noted that a lot of things outside of Lincoln had to be funded by volunteers or the district councils.

RESOLVED

That the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee note the report and support the continuation of the Business Improvement District for the next five years (2020 – 2025) through Lincoln BIG.

42 GREATER LINCOLNSHIRE LOCAL INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

Consideration was given to a report which set out the development of Greater Lincolnshire's Local Industrial Strategy. Members were advised that Local Industrial Strategies were being developed across the UK with the aim of addressing issues affecting low productivity (in terms of business efficiency) and regional disparities to create growth and improve living standards across the country.

It was reported that the central aim of the strategy was to put Lincolnshire in a strong positions for the future. It was a long term strategy to support the county's growing business sectors. This meant taking into account of how the economy would evolve in the future and how trends such as technological change, globalisation and demographic change were likely to impact on the economy.

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Greater Lincolnshire LEP, alongside central government, public, private and third sector stakeholders had been developing the work on a Local Industrial Strategy over the last 18 months and were now in an advanced stage in relation to the production of the strategy. It would be considered by the LEP board before being sent off to the government.

Members 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:

- The presence of the RAF presented a massive opportunity for Lincolnshire. There were a number of US companies that were considering moving to Lincolnshire to be close to the bases. There was a need to keep people in the county after they left the RAF.
- It was commented that there were a lot of good things taking place in Gainsborough, including the continued success of the Marshall's Yard shopping centre and Ping, a major golfing equipment company was also located in Gainsborough. There were also a lot of smaller engineering firms located in the area, many of these were taking on apprentices. Members were informed that the strategy document was very place based, and it would include a narrative around Gainsborough.
- Each part of Lincolnshire needed to get the investment it required. The Executive Councillor pledged to ensure that no part of Lincolnshire was left behind.
- It was commented that people had to work close to where they lived, due to issues with public transport, which could be a barrier to people working outside of the county.
- It was highlighted that there had been investment in both Caistor and Gainsborough and both of these towns had grammar schools. It was suggested whether education was one thing which could be examined to keep people in the county.
- There were two universities in Lincoln, and the University of Lincoln was now in the top 20 UK universities (The Guardian University Guide 2020). It was also attracting a lot of international students, particularly from China.
- The GLLEP had been working with 5/6 engineering businesses where they had set out the amount of apprentices they would take on for the next few years. It had also been working with Lincoln College so that the right skills were being taught for what would be needed in the future. Businesses were being encouraged to collaborate and work together to identify future skills needs.
- It was highlighted that the big negatives related to the poor connectivity in the east of the county, as people moved away and did not come back due to the poor connectivity. It was acknowledged that there were challenges with the eastern side of the county, including a lack of public transport. However, it was highlighted that Micronclean, one of the biggest businesses located in Skegness, recruited many apprentices from Skegness Grammar School.
- There was a need to understand what businesses were looking for in terms of future work force and then match them up. There was also a need to make young people realise that there were opportunities in the county.

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- It was highlighted that the new medical school was oversubscribed in its first year.
- The final draft of the Strategy should be ready for consideration by the Committee at its next meeting on 26 November 2019. It was requested that the working draft be circulated to members when it was ready.

RESOLVED

1. That the development of the strategy currently underway by Greater Lincolnshire LEP at the request of central government be noted.
2. That the working draft of the Strategy be circulated to members of the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee when it was ready.

43 GREATER LINCOLNSHIRE VISION FOR GROWTH 2050

Consideration was given to a report which provided a summary of the Greater Lincolnshire Vision for Growth 2050 which articulated the ambitions and priorities for the area. This would inform the proposal to Government for capital funding well into the future to ensure the vision became a reality.

It was reported that in term of next steps, the Greater Lincolnshire Chief Executives would take forward this work at their joint committee and a report would be presented to their next meeting. It was acknowledged that it was a very ambitious and futuristic vision, and would provide the opportunity to put this part of the country on the map.

Members 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:

- Members commented that they were pleased to see that the A16 and A17 had been recognised as priority routes. There was a need for more than just north and south connectivity via the A46.
- This was a high level document, and the road corridors were recognised as important. There was huge opportunity for growth along the east coast.
- There would be a connectivity map within the document which would include assets such as airports and ports.
- Resilience was also an issue which needed to be considered as coastal properties were vulnerable to flooding. There was a need to build up resilient housing stock. It was noted that one of the key investment priorities was to provide resilient and well-designed housing in the future.
- Water provision and future need was an issue that was being looked at seriously, and work was underway with Anglian Water to investigate the possibility of a reservoir in the south east part of the county.
- It was reported that the document was almost complete except for a few tweaks and it would be available for circulation and publication shortly.

RESOLVED

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That the work being undertaken on the Greater Lincolnshire Vision for Growth 2050 be noted.

44 ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK
 PROGRAMME

The Committee received a report which provided an opportunity to consider and comment on its work programme for the coming year to ensure that scrutiny activity was focused where it could be of greatest benefit.

It was noted that the Local Industrial Strategy would be added to the agenda for the meeting on 26 November 2019, and would be circulated to members once it was finalised.

RESOLVED

1. That the work programme as set out be noted.
2. That the Local Industrial Strategy be added to the agenda for the meeting on 26 November 2019.

The meeting closed at 11.45 am