



ECONOMIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 12 APRIL 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, Mrs C A Talbot, S M Tweedale and Mrs S Woolley attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Andrea Brown (Democratic Services Officer), Justin Brown (Commissioner for Economic Growth), Jonathan Burgess (LEP Officer), Dr Tony Hill (Executive Director of Community Wellbeing and Public Health), Clare Hughes (Principal Commissioning Officer (LEP)), Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer) and Professor Sara Owen (Pro Vice Chancellor and Head of the College of Social Science, University of Lincoln)

77 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

There were no apologies for absence and all members of the Committee were present.

78 DECLARATIONS OF COUNCILLORS' INTERESTS

Councillor W S Webb had declared an interest in the outcome of the emerging South-East Lincolnshire Plan, which was referred to in Appendix A of Agenda Item 8 – *Agreement of Strategic Economic Plan for Greater Lincolnshire*, and would, therefore, leave the meeting for this item.

79 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 FEBRUARY 2016

Councillor B Adams noted a typographical error on page seven of the agenda pack, at Minute Number 70, where it was quoted that "..... 13k jobs by 2020 was questionable in light of the quoted 100 homes.....". It was confirmed that this figure should read "100k homes".

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Economic Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 23 February 2016, with the amendment noted above, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Note: Following the meeting, Councillor L Wootten asked that her question at bullet point four of Minute Number 71, on page 10, be clarified. The paragraph indicated that it had been hoped to bring the Ceramic Poppy Installation to Grantham. However, the initial request had been made by a member of the public whereby Councillor Wootten had agreed to look in to the possibility. The question was to enable a response to be given having investigated the possibility fully. It was stressed that this was not, at this stage, being considered by Councillor Wootten or South Kesteven District Council.

80 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. It had been reported that the TATA plant in Scunthorpe would be taken over by another company and was to be renamed British Steel. Although this announcement was welcome it was unsure how the change would be implemented;
2. An urgent meeting was being sought with ConocoPhillips following the announcement of the possible closure of its Gas Terminal in Theddlethorpe which would result in the unemployment of highly skilled staff in the area. A further update would be provided to the Committee following the meeting with ConocoPhillips;
3. Team Lincolnshire had been represented at the MIPIM event in Cannes which was an event held for global property investors and where Councillor Davie addressed the conference and showcased the county. Developers indicated their interest in Lincolnshire and positive discussions followed;
4. Team Lincolnshire were hosting a networking event at Belton Horse Trials again this year following a successful event last year; and
5. The county hosted a successful visit of a delegation from the Chinese province of Hunan where a second agreement focussing on international trade opportunities had been signed. Chief Executive Officers from major Chinese companies visited the Dynex Semi-Conductor Plant (owned by a company based in Hunan) and it was hoped that the visit would lead to further investment and expansion to that particular plant in the future. The delegation also held a lunch meeting with the Local Enterprise Partnership. Councillor W S Webb was thanked for welcoming the delegation to Lincolnshire, in his capacity as Chairman of the Council.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Davie for the update.

81 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 of the Act.

82 MEDICAL SECTOR TRAINING IN LINCOLNSHIRE

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Director for Environment and Economy which provided the Committee with an explanation of the potential for medical sector training in Lincolnshire.

During discussion, it was agreed that the Commissioner for Economic Growth would prepare a response to the Government's consultation on healthcare education funding on behalf of the Committee.

RESOLVED

That the recommendations noted within the report be agreed.

The Chairman proposed to close the exempt session and readmit the public and press to the meeting.

RESOLVED

That the exempt session be closed and the meeting move back in to a public forum.

83 ROLE OF APPRENTICESHIPS IN GROWING THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Director for Environment and Economy which provided detailed information regarding apprenticeships in Lincolnshire and the role of Lincolnshire County Council in increasing the levels of apprenticeships.

Clare Hughes, Principal Commissioning Officer (LEP), introduced the report and gave a presentation which consisted of a number of video clips of apprentices within the county. The key points made from the clips were:-

- All apprentices are in paid employment;
- Each apprenticeship is for a particular period of time with agreed level training reached by the end;
- Nationally recognised qualifications transferable to future roles;
- Clear progression paths within larger organisations for apprentices;
- Smaller companies may not be in a position to offer this type of progression;

- Government document – "Apprenticeships 20/20 Vision"
- Apprenticeship Levels, including degree level apprenticeships;
- Government want to see three million people start an apprenticeship by 2020 which would equate to 7800 apprenticeships in Lincolnshire;
- 2013/14 drop in apprenticeships – direct result of a government initiative which meant anyone over the age of 24 would have to take out a loan to complete level 3 training and this included apprenticeships;
- Future – new reforms being implemented where promotion of apprenticeships and the ability to progress on to a higher level apprenticeship could be considered;
- Greater Lincolnshire LEP – pages on social media to promote apprenticeships (Twitter – <https://mobile.twitter.com/lincsapprentice> and Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/lincsapprentice>);
- EU Funding Projects – seven projects were out to procurement, of which some would link to the work to support unemployed people and also to encourage employers to have apprenticeships.

During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- There was no upper age limit for apprentices and the Government were keen to promote this further where there was a significant skills gap;
- In the 1960s, over 35% of males aged 15-17 undertook an apprenticeship. The system was currently looking to make the qualifications gained through apprenticeships interchangeable and to suit individuals. This would need a good balance as it was acknowledged that employers required particular skills in their own work area but also the theoretical training to enable apprenticeships to move on;
- Employers were able to employ young people without this being an apprenticeship but they were also able to convert this to an apprenticeship should they wish to do so;
- It was difficult to maintain a balance as the perception remained that University Degrees were the best option for young people and that vocational training was for those less academic. Work continued to change this perception;
- Apprentices aged 16-18, and also a 19 year old in their first year of an apprenticeship, would earn a minimum of £3.30 per hour. All other apprentices would be entitled to the minimum living wage for their age;
- Work had been ongoing with the Skills Funding Agency in relation to procurements which would support 4500 people in Lincolnshire and included extra support for apprenticeships and training for the business community in providing apprenticeships. It was anticipated that further information would be shared with the Committee in due course;
- The long-term future and strategic view was the focus to ensure that technology companies in Lincolnshire continued to operate and excel in making and developing future technology;
- The requirement for highly skilled workforces across the county was agreed as this was felt to be crucial for economic growth.

RESOLVED

1. That the report, presentation and comments be noted;
2. That the action taken by Lincolnshire County Council, as listed in paragraphs 31-35 of the report be supported; and
3. That a clear statement showing the role of Lincolnshire County Council in skills and Apprenticeships be prepared.

At 12.20pm Councillors C J Davie and B Adams left the meeting and did not return.

84 AGREEMENT OF STRATEGIC ECONOMIC PLAN FOR GREATER LINCOLNSHIRE

Consideration was given to a report from the Executive Director for Environment and Economy which provided the updated version of the Strategic Economic Plan following the discussion points raised at the last meeting of the Committee.

Jon Burgess, LEP Officer, introduced the report and confirmed that the final document had been agreed by all District Councils but that the document was currently being circulated to obtain signatures from each Leader.

RESOLVED

1. That the final version of the Strategic Economic Plan be supported;
2. That Councillor M J Hill MBE be asked to sign the document in order to confirm the support of Lincolnshire County Council for the Strategic Economic Plan.

The Chairman gave formal thanks to Jon Burgess on behalf of the Committee.

85 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 an updated version of the Work Programme had been tabled as a number of amendments had been made.

It was reported that Danwood, who employed 1200 staff within Lincolnshire, had invited the Committee to hold a future meeting at their offices in North Hykeham and this would also include a tour of their facilities. It was suggested that it may be a good opportunity to look at other businesses in the same way and the Committee was asked to suggest potential companies to Justin Brown, Commissioner for Economic Growth.

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RESOLVED

1. That the Economic Scrutiny Committee Work Programme, with the amendments as tabled, be approved; and
2. That the Committee provide suggestions of businesses where future meetings of the Committee could be held.

The meeting closed at 12.30 pm