

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 16 SEPTEMBER 2016

Statement from: Councillor C J Davie, Executive Councillor for Development

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM

Economic matters have been dominated by the results of the EU Referendum. Clearly the outcome of the referendum represents a major shift. However, all of the businesses that I have spoken to since the vote have told me that what they need is certainty in order to give them the confidence to keep investing. The economic plan that we have been following is just as relevant, perhaps even more so, than it was before the referendum. That plan involves creating a climate for investment, facilitating private sector initiatives, and supporting a drive for high level skills.

Creating a Climate for Investment

Our tourism development work has the purpose of attracting visitors to Lincolnshire, encouraging them to visit places across the whole of the county, and in doing so encouraging tourism businesses to invest further because there are more visitors.

The latest figures for the value of tourism in Lincolnshire were released in the middle of August 2016. They show that the value of tourism has risen from £1.19bn in 2013/14 to £1.34bn in 2015/16, an increase of £148m. As a board director of the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership I set the target of doubling the value of tourism within 10 years, and these figures show that Lincolnshire is well on the way to achieving that target.

At a practical level, LCC has played a leading role in a number of tourism projects. These include the Poppies: Wave at Lincoln Castle. Councillor Nick Worth and I are delighted to see that there have been just under 500,000 visitors (487,138) at the end of August. In addition the new visitor centre at Gibraltar Point has now opened. LCC developed this centre in partnership with Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust and by the end of August there had been more than 32,000 visitors.

Another element of creating climate for investment is through supporting bids for funding. The Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership has recently made an ambitious bid to Government for £106m to be spent on projects that will improve transport, increase housing levels, broaden skills provision, and encourage enterprise. The projects that sit in this overall bid cover all parts of Lincolnshire including business investments in South Kesteven to health and care investments in Lincoln and agri-food investments in West Lindsey. We will hear in the autumn how that bid has fared.

One of the matters of process following the EU referendum was that Government had temporarily stopped approving bids for EU funding. This was to enable them to design domestic programmes that will be implemented when we leave the EU. The delay in approvals was temporary but it had a negative impact on bids made by LCC, our partners and small businesses. When I wrote to the new ministerial teams in the Department for Communities and Local Government and Business Energy and Industrial Strategy, I stressed the need to unblock this temporary problem. Her Majesty's Treasury have now issued guidance about how projects can now be approved by Government.

Facilitating Private Sector Projects

The 'Made in Lincolnshire' awards were held recently and, at a time when we need to promote Lincolnshire as far and wide as possible, it is excellent that we have awards ceremonies like this. There will soon be an online 'Made in Lincolnshire' brochure, and the range of businesses who applied for an award is wide and impressive. To name some examples, Lincolnshire can boast a horse carriage manufacturer with a Queen's Award; a speedboat hull manufacturer; a global mentholated sweet manufacturer; major agricultural machinery manufacturers; and sector leaders in golf equipment. Our manufacturing sector is strong, and I am keen to help it strengthen further through various approaches.

The Government is promoting an increase in exporting. The Economic Scrutiny Committee discussed the importance of councils like LCC taking a leading role in export, using our civic profile and responsibilities to promote the area and create opportunities for Lincolnshire businesses to trade internationally. This is a priority for me and may lead to a small amount of expenditure by LCC but the benefits to businesses and the wider economy will be substantial.

We are already hearing examples of where Lincolnshire's businesses are using the current economic situation to boost their exports – for example, a Lincoln area manufacturing company that our team visited recently has just secured new orders from Australia. Exporting is important not just because it creates extra jobs. Studies show that businesses who actively export are more likely to invest in new products and technology and that they are more likely to have an active training plan in place. Therefore, by increasing exporting, we are also increasing investment in the local economy and in the supply chain to our exporters.

Most of our exporting work, however, will be to encourage the Government's export programmes to be tailored to opportunities for Lincolnshire businesses. Senior officers and I have met with Directors in UK Trade and Investment, and agencies who promote UK exports to China and to India. The Greater Lincolnshire Devolution Deal, which has the aim of a joint export promotion strategy between UKTI and Lincolnshire councils, has been particularly useful. There will be additional export promotion events in October as a result of this work.

We have a focus on the most important sectors in the economy. The Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership recently started a series of 'Big Debates', and in August held a major debate about the food sector. The format is that business leaders are invited to join a panel in debating the issues that matter to their sector. Roythornes Solicitors in Spalding hosted the food production debate with around 40 food sector business leaders. It was a very lively debate and there was real support for creating a food sector centre of excellence which puts south east Lincolnshire firmly on the international food map. My Executive Support Councillor, William Webb, is taking a lead role in agriculture and food, and will continue to engage with food businesses on this subject.

Higher Level Skills

LCC continues to deliver Adult Learning programmes and I am pleased to work with Councillors Bradwell and Brailsford on these programmes. The headline figure of 8,224 learners is very impressive, but some of the examples of how learners are

building up skills in our very important health and social care sector or have developed their own business are even more impressive.

These include a learner at Boston College who, as a result of attending our *'Introduction to the Care Certificate and Health and Social Care'* course enrolled on an apprenticeship programme to work towards her Level 2 QCF Diploma in Health and Social Care, as well as undertaking the necessary maths qualifications. The Care Home Deputy Manager where the learner works commented that her *"knowledge and work ethic has increased since she started her Care Certificate and QCF Apprenticeship with Boston College"*. Another example of how learners are using the skills gained on our provision is a female learner studying on our *'Start Your Own Business'* course, being delivered in partnership with RAF bases and the Prince's Trust. She had been in an abusive relationship and felt very exposed with tradesmen in her own home. As a consequence, she has retrained as an electrician and as a result of the skills gained on the *'Start Your Own Business'* course, has set up her own business employing other tradeswomen to offer services to vulnerable women.

I have updated you previously on the work that officers are doing with the Skills Funding Agency to create additional training places in the skills that employers need. Tender submissions from colleges and private training providers that will provide training to 3,735 learners will be being considered by the Skills Funding Agency and our officers in September and October, with delivery due to commence in November.

Finally, an area review of Post 16 learning will commence in October. This is part of a national programme of reviews and it will be valuable in ensuring that Lincolnshire's individuals, communities, and businesses benefit from an effective further education service. Members from the Economic and Children & Young People Scrutiny Committees have debated the objectives that we want to see achieved through the area review and as a result, Councillor Bradwell and I have agreed a joint statement of the County Council's objectives for this review.

ENVIRONMENT AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

Sustainability

Salix Revolving Energy Fund

The £1m fund has been used to fund 82 projects totalling £1.9m and is saving LCC £400,000 and 2,000 tonnes of CO₂ annually.

Carbon Management Plan

Work has been completed on the collation of data from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016 and shows a reduction of 4.2% from the previous year. This means that LCC is on target to meet the 22% reduction target by 2018.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reporting

Work has been completed on the collation of data from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016, from 40 data sources, that will allow LCC to publish its Greenhouse Gas Emissions report. Data is showing a reduction in Greenhouse Gas emissions of 7.4% from the previous year. The greater difference in reduction from the Carbon

Management Plan is due to the source data set being slightly different and the conversion factors being used to calculate the emissions are updated annually from Government. However, the emissions for the Carbon Management Plan are the same each year.

Electrically Heated Schools

After a successful trial of radiant heater panels at Rauceby Primary School, funding has been secured to replace electric night time storage heaters in all of the remaining electrically heated schools. The storage heaters will be replaced with radiant heater panels in all teaching areas and halls. The radiant heater panels are much more efficient and will allow far more control over the heating within classrooms.

England Coastal Path

Work continues on the first two stretches of the proposed route which, once complete, will form Lincolnshire's only National Trail. For the section between Sutton Bridge and Skegness, officers have continued to work with Natural England colleagues to assist in reviewing where the route may be laid out. Particular consideration has been given in relation to some of the stretches such as at Gibraltar Point, where discussions with the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust are helping to form an understanding of how the path can be laid out in this sensitive environment and how the Steeping river can be crossed. Meetings with other affected landowners and interested parties have also been undertaken on other stretches of the route.

For the section between Skegness Pier and Mablethorpe, Natural England are currently processing the data gathered from walking a proposed route so that report maps can be prepared and establishment and maintenance costs estimated. A publication date of mid-November is being worked towards when there will be an 8 week period for representations and objections. The norm is then a 6 month turnaround for a decision from the Secretary of State, followed by an establishment period (usually 6-9 months). It is expected that this section of the route will be open by 2018.

Preparatory work on the section from Mablethorpe to the Humber Bridge is due to begin in 2017.

Natural Environment

Officers are preparing the Wild Coast Vision with the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust and other partners. This will seek to join up various coastal environment assets such as the Coastal Grazing Marshes and the Lincolnshire Coastal Country Park along with Local and National Nature Reserves such as Theddlethorpe Dunes and Gibraltar Point. This new document will ensure the County Council makes the most of opportunities to align with the LEP's Strategic Economic Plan to ensure enhancement to the visitor and county economy.

Gibraltar Point Visitor Centre

The official opening of the Gibraltar Point Visitor Centre is to be held on 7 October 2016. Renowned naturalist and patron of The Wildlife Trust, Dr Simon King OBE will be in attendance together with the Chief Executive of the Lincolnshire

Wildlife Trust and invited dignitaries. This is a great opportunity to celebrate the successful partnership working that has made this Centre a first class visitor destination to enjoy the beautiful and diverse national nature reserve.

Public Rights of Way

The section continues to ensure that wherever possible the rights of way network in Lincolnshire is open and available for use. The summer months have seen a significant increase in reports to the section as visitors to the county and residents take the opportunity to visit the countryside during the holiday period.

Coastal Development

As previously reported in May, the Environment Agency has agreed to join a workshop with major coastal developers to explore how coastal protection schemes can be designed to protect the area and to promote investment at the same time. Joint working of this nature will be a feature of our future relationship with the Environment Agency and we are seeking to make this integral to ongoing deliberations about the long-term approach to managing Greater Lincolnshire's coastline.

Central Lincolnshire Local Plan

The area is expected to grow considerably over the next 20 years and the role of the Local Plan is to identify the correct level of growth and to plan for where this growth should occur. Suitable locations for growth are to be identified, based upon the evidence that has been collected. The focus is to ensure that growth is steered towards the most sustainable locations, balancing the planned levels of growth with the clear need to protect Central Lincolnshire's rich heritage and rural character. The draft plan will show proposed land allocations so that all consultees can clearly identify what kind of development will take place and where. LCC officers have been fully engaged in supporting this work, particularly in the areas of demographics, housing targets, infrastructure delivery and energy policy and will provide support at the examination in public.

Before the new Central Lincolnshire Local Plan can be adopted it will go through several rounds of consultation and will undergo an examination where the 'soundness' of the document will be assessed. An independent Inspector will review all the evidence that has been used to inform and define the policies, the consultation that has taken place, and the process that was taken to prepare the document, before writing a report that will set out whether the document can be adopted as policy. The examination hearings are expected to take place in November of this year which will hopefully enable the plan to be adopted in early 2017.

South East Lincolnshire Local Plan

Comments were invited on 'Preferred Sites for Development' for residential, employment and other uses between 15 July and 12 August 2106. These are sites which the Joint Committee proposes to identify as allocations for development in the 'Publication' version of the Local Plan, which will be submitted to the Secretary of State. Since some of these Preferred Sites have not been the subject of previous

public consultation, it is important that there is a final opportunity for everyone to offer their views on their suitability.

LCC has made detailed and robust representations regarding the proposed uses and location of the development sites. In particular, land which can be used to facilitate investment in infrastructure has been identified in Holbeach and Boston. It is hoped that the Local Plan can be formally submitted to the Planning Inspectorate just before Christmas 2016.

East Lindsey Local Plan

A consultation (<http://www.e-lindsey.gov.uk/localplan>) seeks views on East Lindsey's vision and strategic policies for growth and development up to 2031. Officers have already given their preliminary views on the overall approach of the Plan, and in particular, the relationship between the Lincolnshire Coastal Study Principles and the growth ambitions of the Greater Lincolnshire LEP Strategic Economic Plan, in a report to the Overview and Management Scrutiny Committee (OMSC) on 28 July 2016.

The main issues identified are:

Coastal Flood Risk and Inland Spatial Strategy – LCC is generally supportive of East Lindsey's approach to managing growth and development. In particular, it appreciates the challenge of responding to the serious threat of coastal flood risk and the proposed strategy of coastal housing restraint and inland growth. However, there is a need for a more refined and targeted approach to matching particular land uses to particular locations. LCC supports the desires of business to see an extended season with better designed sites and formal evacuation procedures as part of an industry approach to a more economically vibrant coastline, which does not increase the volume of people at risk from coastal inundation.

Housing – LCC supports the overall housing target based on 2012 household projections and the implementation of existing planning permissions in Coastal East Lindsey (significant at 1308 dwellings) plus brownfield market housing and affordable housing in the coastal strip to maintain the level of population. There is a need to address the visitor economy long term labour supply issues and it is suggested that a key worker approach for market housing is adopted. The redirection of housing growth further inland is welcomed. However, a better targeted distribution which focuses on the most sustainable towns (especially Horncastle) would enable much needed infrastructure such as a new primary school and road improvements to be built. The need to identify a Horncastle bypass and start the process of identifying a potential route has been raised strongly.

Economy and Tourism – a more ambitious approach to diversifying and upgrading the tourism offer along the coast is suggested in the LCC response. To drive a vibrant economy, better sites, more expensive vans, hard standings and an extended season will drive the economy without necessarily increasing the number of people on the coast. Homes for workers to grow the economy and an extended season to deliver more of a full employment ratio, rather than seasonal, is a key requirement. In addition, the use of exceptional policies along the coastal strip to deliver market housing on brownfield sites and unconstrained affordable housing should be focused on supporting the local economy by prioritising tourist worker accommodation and key worker housing respectively. However, LCC officers have a

concern about the Plan meeting the SEP economic growth targets along the coast, which can be achieved by diversifying the tourism offer without increasing the population at risk from coastal flooding by using suitable design and mitigation.

Transport, Infrastructure and Funding – LCC has concerns regarding the content and quality of East Lindsey's interim Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP). Detailed comments by Education and Transport have been made to improve the relevance and accuracy of the document. It should be noted that no Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is proposed because of the relatively low land values in the district, resulting in more reliance on site-specific Section 106 Obligations. An offer has been made to work closely with ELDC to improve the content and quality of the IDP.

Renewable Energy – the approach to large-scale renewable energy development is considered too permissive and not fully compliant with recent Government policy changes. Officers have suggested amendments to bring East Lindsey policy in line with national guidance.

A detailed and technical response which comprised LCC's formal reply to the consultation has been sent to East Lindsey.

Planning

Minerals and Waste Local Plan

The Minerals and Waste Local Plan Core Strategy and Development Management policies was adopted on 1 June 2016. The Core Strategy sets out the key principles to guide the future winning and workings of minerals and the nature of waste management development in the County. The Development Management policies set out the criteria against which planning applications for minerals and waste development will be assessed against.

The second part of the Local Plan is the site location document which sets out the Council's preferred waste and minerals sites to meet the projected need for minerals and waste sites over the plan period to 2031. The initial site location document was subject to the first round of public consultation in early 2016. A total of 100 representations were received. Following on from this consultation and in response to the representations received a number of meetings have taken place over the summer with the minerals industry to discuss making changes to their sites and/or provide further information. Officers are now preparing a submissions document capturing these changes which will be presented to the Environmental Scrutiny Committee and Executive later this year for approval. Subject to the agreement of the Scrutiny Committee and Executive this document will go out for further public consultation before the end of the year. The site location document will then be submitted for examination in summer 2017 and presented for adoption towards the end of 2017.

Environment

Flood Risk Management

The Greater Lincolnshire LEP continues to implement its Water Management Plan, with a high-profile Parliamentary launch at the House of Commons on 7 September and a local event planned for later in the year. In the meantime, officers are

preparing final detailed submissions to Government for external monies to support the first round of projects promoted in the Water Management Plan.

Effective coastal management is a key element in our shared ambitions for Lincolnshire's future economic prosperity, and following confirmation that funding for the existing scheme known as 'Lincshore' – covering Mablethorpe to Skegness – is now secure up to 2021, the Lincolnshire Flood Management Partnership and the LEP are working to agree and implement a costed and sustainable approach to managing the coast from 2021 onwards. As the operating authority for the area, the Environment Agency are responsible for putting in place a strategy for coastal flood risk, while through the partnership we are seeking to ensure that this strategy supports and promotes our common wider objectives for Greater Lincolnshire's communities, economy and environment.

Boston Barrier

We are continuing to work with the Environment Agency to secure the Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO) for the £100m Boston Barrier – the consultation on the TWAO opened on 23 August and runs until 5 October 2016. The Barrier will protect over 14,000 homes and is programmed for completion by December 2019.

On the 31 August, I met with James Bevan the Chief Executive of the Environment Agency at the Barrier project and we discussed the opportunity for economic growth arising from projects such as the Boston Barrier. He also reaffirmed that the agency's position on the development was positive. This bodes well for Greater Lincolnshire's ambition for economic growth and new homes in the years ahead.

Louth and Horncastle Flood Alleviation

The Louth and Horncastle flood alleviation schemes will be completed this year giving much needed protection to these towns. We have provided £6m financial support to the overall cost of £15m to enable these projects to be constructed.

Local Flood Risk – Capital Programme

As the lead local flood authority we continue to deliver an annual programme of local flood risk schemes of around £1.2m, through the national Flood Defence Grant in Aid (FDGiA) six year medium term plan, attracting over 50% of external funding.