

**Open Report on behalf of Richard Wills  
Executive Director for Environment and Economy**

Report to:	<b>Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee</b>
Date:	<b>24 October 2017</b>
Subject:	<b>Heritage and Environmental Based Tourism Opportunities</b>

**Summary:**

The £22m spent on Lincoln Castle Revealed, along with a range of other initiatives, has shown that investment in heritage can act as a catalyst to the wider economy. The Tourism, Places and Heritage teams already have close working relationships on a number of projects bringing different skills which are both complementary and strengthening. It is felt that there is still further potential.

**Actions Required:**

Members of the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee are invited to:

1. Discuss the relationship between tourism and heritage, identifying those areas where they believe the biggest impact can be achieved, and;
2. task officers with identifying ways of achieving that impact.

## **1. Background**

Investment in Lincolnshire's natural and historic heritage is a key element in supporting the growth of the visitor economy, and of the economy as a whole. Projects such as Lincoln Castle Revealed demonstrably acted as a catalyst for the Lincolnshire visitor economy and it has also been important for improving perceptions of the county generally and strengthening the sense of place and local pride.

Projects like the on-going archaeological excavations along the Lincoln Eastern Bypass show the enormous public interest and appetite to know more about the county's rich history and archaeology. We experienced a similar effect when the sarcophagus was discovered during the works at the Castle. Close working relationships between the Heritage Service, Tourism and the Places Team were cemented over joint working on the castle and have carried on through projects like Lincolnshire Remembrance, Memories and Memorials and Heritage Open Days. The teams bring different skills, knowledge and perspective to these projects and the overall effect is complementary and strengthening.

This can work in a variety of different ways, so for example the high profile achieved by having the Poppies in 2016 at Lincoln Castle provided an umbrella for wider collaboration. Tourism and Places worked together on an exhibition entitled Lincolnshire Voices from the Great War; the Castle put on several moving commemoration events, Places, through the Remembrance project, produced publications and a range of work across the county and Lincoln BIG developed an over-arching brand used throughout Lincoln. Working together delivers a coherent approach which makes each of the parts stronger, but it also works well for the industry and for the visitor.

We work in partnership to support the Heritage Forum which represents both independent and council run attractions and we believe it could be developed still further as it has much potential. The Heritage Open Days had 107,000 visitors in 2016 and like the Heritage Forum would benefit from more marketing support in particular.

We now look forward much more strongly in our work as the pre-planning for the 2015 anniversaries certainly paid dividends. So we have been working up to 2020 for some time. Strong themes for each year are developed, usually based on upcoming anniversaries. In the near future these include:

- 2018 - RAF 100th and Castle 950th anniversaries and completion of International Bomber Command Centre
- 2019 - a 'Women' theme around Queen Victoria's 200th and 100th of the first woman MP
- 2020 - 400th anniversary of Mayflower Pilgrims and completion of Lincoln Cathedral Connected

Economic Regeneration and Places have been working together on heritage-led regeneration in Holbeach, this aims to bring businesses back into the town and to help them flourish as part of a stronger sense of place and revitalisation of the town centre. The masterplan takes a four pronged approach: targeted public realm and highway enhancements; maximised connectivity to the 2000 proposed new homes; strategic refurbishment of historic properties and policy consideration of vacant land. Future work could look to improve connectivity with surrounding villages and it is hoped to achieve Heritage Action Zone status.

The interest in addressing the quality of the environment of the county both historic and natural provides still greater opportunities for collaboration. In special places like the Lincolnshire Wolds AONB management decisions are taken for the benefit of both. In advising on Countryside Stewardship we are able to secure better management through changes to farming practices to both the natural and historic environment.

The establishment of a Heritage Coast definition for Lincolnshire's coastline between Gibraltar Point and the Humber links a range of Scheduled Ancient Monuments and archaeological sites and the quiet enjoyment of the varied environmental assets such as Gibraltar Point, Donna Nook, the Coastal Country Park area, Coastal Grazing Marshes and Sites of Special Scientific Interest. The purpose of defining a Heritage Coastline is to conserve, protect and enhance the

natural beauty of the coastline, their terrestrial, coastal and marine flora and fauna and their heritage features and at the same time to encourage and help the public to enjoy, understand and appreciate these areas. Other purposes include undertaking to maintain and improve the health of inshore waters affecting heritage coasts and their beaches through appropriate environmental management measures and to take account of the needs of agriculture, forestry and fishing and the economic and social needs of the small communities on these coasts

The opportunity here arises from the capacity to build on existing assets, such as the Coastal Country Park, which improves coastal and inland access points and network, while supporting business ventures predominantly focused on providing services to the visiting public. At the same time national initiatives, for example the establishment of the English Coast Path around Lincolnshire's coast line further promotes greater access to assets such as North Sea Observatory and helps to deliver ongoing local access improvements such as the Go Skegness project.

Away from the coast the County Council continues to seek to ensure that the county's rights of way network is appropriately managed and promoted to encourage enjoyment of the county's countryside and landscapes by both visitors to the county and those who live here. Specifically the Council promotes the Viking Way, the Macmillan Way, various local circular walking opportunities as well as a number of equestrian trails and one of the country's first designated routes for carriage drivers, The Lindsey Trail.

The Council continues to support both the Lincolnshire Wolds Walking Festival and the South Lincolnshire Walking Festival which have seen a significant rise in popularity over the years they have been established aiding to showcase the county's natural environment.

In partnership the Council takes a lead role in management of the Lincolnshire Wolds as a landscape and supports the Love Lincolnshire Wolds brand, recently established to highlight the various tourism opportunities in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its surrounding areas. Also working with the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust Gibraltar Point Nature Reserve and the associated visitor centre was reopened in 2016 following the devastating floods of 2010 which destroyed the old centre. The new visitor centre is proving to be a well-regarded and valued destination for those seeking to enjoy this important coastal environment.

Support has been given to Lincoln Cathedral Connected, sharing our experiences learnt from Lincoln Castle Revealed. We helped with some of their HLF bid documents and now that the project is in delivery are leading on work on uphill movement of people and vehicles. When 'Connected' opens in 2020 it should lead to a further catalyst to Lincolnshire's visitor economy and we will work together on the smooth running of that opening year.

We believe that it is vital that we understand consumer needs and the factors affecting these, not only as they are today, but as they will be in the future. Tourism is a booming industry in England with record tourism spend in recent years for both domestic and international travellers. Visit England believe that there is still significant potential for future growth, particularly in the regions which currently account for less than 40% of the spend of international visitors. However visitors

are more sophisticated in their demands and expect a more versatile tourism offer at their destination of choice.

The success of a new tourism product will depend on how well they fit in with current and future consumer demands, attitudes and behaviours. Visit England have looked at how the consumer organises their journey: the inspiration, pre-planning, the booking process, how travellers stay connected on their trip and how their needs are evolving and affecting the tourism experience on offer.

Visit England also put consumers into the context of the wider market and the societal shifts that are occurring. They report that despite the recent downturn, the longer term trend has seen global affluence rise and leads to a higher demand for tourism. Globalisation has seen consumer choice explode with the world becoming one huge bazaar. Some western countries perceive a crisis of identity in a homogenous society, so identifying distinctive qualities and experiences tied to a destination will make it stand out above the rest.

Connectivity is a significant factor and poor infrastructure can be a barrier to the success of English tourism. Lincolnshire is well aware of its shortcomings here and has undertaken much investment and a considerable lobbying campaign which is beginning to reap change.

Visit England recommends that as people are living longer and more active lives, we should think about travellers less in terms of their age and more in terms of their interests. There is no doubt that Lincolnshire is moving from day tripper to short break territory, but we are still in the transition stage and still very dependent on day trippers who are a nationally declining figure and also much lower spenders.

## **2. Conclusion**

We believe that making the most of our heritage, our buildings and our market towns and villages can only reap economic dividends and strengthen the visitor offer and the sense of place.

## **3. Consultation**

### **a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?**

N/A

### **b) Risks and Impact Analysis**

N/A

#### **4. Background Papers**

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

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