

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 13 DECEMBER 2013

Statement from: Cllr C J Davie, Executive Councillor for Economic Development, Environment, Planning, Tourism

Economic Development

Since the beginning of 2013 businesses responding to the local Quarterly Economic Survey have reported an improving economic environment, particularly in respect of domestic and overseas sales and business confidence. However, the fledgling economic recovery remains at risk locally from issues such lack of skilled labour, increasing overhead costs and problems with cash-flow. We therefore continue to deliver schemes that build confidence for our business community and which help them to tackle the risks that they are facing.

In order to make sure that we deliver schemes in the most cost effective way, we seek to attract external funding in support of our schemes. We have just, for example, secured £2.750m of EU funding for a programme of business support schemes which will help over 300 businesses in Lincoln City, East Lindsey and Boston (where the funding is targeted to). The programme will join up, strengthen and co-ordinate activity to increase the survival number of business and enterprise start-ups; grow existing businesses and expand opportunities and inward investment for successful businesses.

The Council will take the lead on two schemes in that programme. The first will provide one to one mentoring and advisory support to assist businesses in Lincoln, Boston and East Lindsey. Businesses will be helped to grow through significant improvements in product, processes, technology, access to finance and business practices. A revenue/capital grant up to £2,000, funded by our EU grant, will be available to participants to help them to buy consultancy support e.g. business planning, marketing plans, proof of concept, prototyping equipment etc.

The second scheme will develop the Lincolnshire Supply Chain. Businesses in Lincoln, Boston and East Lindsey will be helped to win public contracts by developing their knowledge and skills in tendering and procurement practices as well as identifying opportunities to form part of local supply chains.

In addition to its facilitation and enablement role, Lincolnshire County Council is proud of its reputation as a deliverer of key economic regeneration schemes such as Teal Park. 2013 has seen us take the lead role in developing an exciting plan for the development of a new aviation heritage facility at RAF Scampton, which we hope will sit alongside continued Royal Air Force use. Our plans for this development have been met with enthusiasm by the media and general public. We are now continuing detailed discussions with the RAF whilst developing a project funding strategy.

Elsewhere around the county we are either developing or completing the delivery of a number of challenging projects designed to support Lincolnshire's SME sector, where we believe there is major potential for growth. We have recently completed a low carbon workspace development at Long Sutton where tenants will be able to occupy business space enjoying either low or no energy bills (due to the sustainable green technology embedded into the building fabric). We are also making progress on the development of a Coastal Observatory project and a leisure marina for Sutton

Bridge. Whilst a number of challenges remain we are confident of delivery during 2014.

Superfast Broadband

Lincolnshire's first superfast broadband cabinets funded through the onlincolnshire programme's contract with BT went live in Spalding on 20 November. Ten cabinets went live on the day with another two since. That means over 1,400 homes and businesses in Spalding can now buy increased speeds to help with their business, study, access to media or access to services. Work was completed more than two months ahead of schedule in what was the largest simultaneous first connection in the country.

We anticipate more cabinets going live before Christmas.

Rollout of fixed wireless access to superfast broadband on the coast continues through our contract with local firm AB Internet and should be complete early in the New Year.

We continue to promote take up of technical solutions through events like LincUp Live, promotional events and facilities like Technology Hubs, the latest of which opened in Louth on 22 November.

Latest news and events can be accessed at www.onlincolnshire.org

Greater Lincolnshire LEP

The Council's relationship with the GLLEP continues to develop as the partnership's growth strategy comes together. We have commissioned research on behalf of the LEP to develop a business case for funding coastal defences as an enabler of economic growth, moving towards a more positive, enabling argument for government investment in flood risk management assets.

Flood Risk Management

This month the Environment Agency have published a revised suite of maps on their website showing the risk of flooding from the sea and rivers alongside entirely new mapping of the risk from surface water.

The County Council has worked closely with the Environment Agency on developing the surface water mapping, which now represents the best science available in Europe. The availability of these maps provides a powerful tool to develop further the comprehensive approach to managing flood risk from all sources that the County Council is pursuing with its partners.

All members have been provided with briefing materials on the flood risk maps, and officers will be pleased to answer any questions that members may have.

Coastal Car Parks

Heavy duty metal height barriers were installed at Huttoft Car Terrace and Marsh Yard and all motorhomes subsequently left the site. This included two vehicles that had been parked there for over a year. Unfortunately, the barriers were cut down

within one month. Motor homes have been seen using both car parks once again, but at a lower number as it is winter. Both barriers are being reinforced and will be replaced in December.

The DCLG have confirmed the byelaws that were approved at a previous Council. We are currently exploring how they can be best enforced.

Minerals and Waste Local Plan

Work is progressing on the Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan. This will eventually replace the existing Minerals Local Plan (1991) and the Waste Local Plan (2006). A six week period of public consultation is currently coming to a close on the 'Draft Core Strategy and Development Management Policies' document which sets out the key principles to guide the future winning and working of minerals and the form of waste management development in the county, and includes Development Management Policies setting out the criteria against which planning applications for minerals and waste development will be considered. Further information can be found at www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/mineralsandwaste

A review of the consultation responses will occur early in the New Year which will be reported to the Environmental Scrutiny Committee in the spring ahead of the formal 6 week pre-submission consultation taking place in April/ May 2014.

Central Lincolnshire Core Strategy

The Core Strategy establishes the framework for growth in Central Lincolnshire over the next 20 years, enabling the area to address the demographic challenges that it faces and striving for a balanced approach to growth based on meeting housing need, employment growth and infrastructure provision. Whilst this is of most interest to County Councillors in West Lindsey, North Kesteven and City of Lincoln the size of the area means there could be effects for the rest of the County. Following informal and more recently statutory consultation the Core Strategy was submitted in October for the purpose of examination in Public, the Hearing is likely to take place in early 2014. The Inspector appointed to examine the Core Strategy is David Vickery Dip. T&CP MRTPI. He will conduct the examination to determine whether the Core Strategy is sound and complies with all legal requirements.

Destination Management Plan (DMP)

A working group from the tourist industry together with tourism officers has taken forward the creation of a Destination Management Plan (DMP) for Lincolnshire and this has been approved by lead economic development councillors and the GLEP. To ensure the DMP develops and drives forward change a strategic tourism group will steer priorities of the Plan and provide direction to the officer group.

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