

## **COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 15 MAY 2015**

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

### **Economic Development & Tourism**

In my previous statements I have spoken about major grant awards but, with the purdah period surrounding the general election, there have been fewer opportunities to bid for funding during this period. Our focus, instead, has been on delivery.

I was delighted to attend the launch of Skegness Countryside Business Park. This project will open up land for development, and will also provide the first steps towards a western bypass of the town. We are committed to facilitating projects with private sector partners, and this project is an excellent example of that commitment.

The economic development team, my fellow Executive members, and I work hard to have a positive dialogue with the business community. One of the ways we do this is through the Select Lincolnshire business event, which we hold at the Belton Horse Trials. This year's event was a great success, with around 100 businesses attending in order to network with senior politicians and officers. I understand several business opportunities are now being pursued as a result of the event.

The pinnacle of recent months, and the result of 10 years' work for the council, was the re-opening of Lincoln Castle on 1 April. I thoroughly enjoyed pushing open the doors with my colleague Nick Worth, and I am sure all councillors will agree that the new facilities really make the castle a high quality 21<sup>st</sup> Century visitor facility – a testament to the leadership of the council and the hard work of the teams involved. More than 16,000 people had visited the castle within 10 days of the re-opening. In addition, the provision of the Castle Shuttle running from Whisby to Newport Arch, which was pulled together in a very short period of time, will help offset the potentially negative implications of a reduction in city centre car parking whilst facilities such as Broadgate and the Lawn are refurbished.

We continue to make small, but tactically effective investments to make the most of the opportunities that I have described in this statement. These include:

A £10,000 coastal communities grant to help small businesses benefit from our investments at Gibraltar Point and Chapel Point.

The redevelopment of the [www.visitlincolnshire.com](http://www.visitlincolnshire.com) website - this will enable visitors to learn about attractions, and book accommodation across the county.

A £90,000 Arts Council grant to deliver a cultural festival in late summer, based on Magna Carta, and linking to the 'Signals' and 'Poets' schemes.

We also continue to use our economic infrastructure products to support business growth and expansion - in particular, the recent sale at Kirton Distribution Park to the Sportsbikeshop, and a further impending sale to Duckworth Landrover.

## **Flood Risk Management**

As reported in my last statement, Government announced plans before Christmas to require Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to secure Sustainable urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) on all major developments (10 properties or more), unless demonstrated to be inappropriate. In recognising that LPAs would require expert advice to undertake this new role, county councils (as Lead Local Flood Authorities) were identified as new statutory consultees in the planning process to provide the necessary technical SuDS advice, and to comment holistically on planning applications in relation to local flood risk, surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses.

The new legislation was introduced in early April and, despite the challenging timescale (three months), the county council has incorporated the new responsibilities into the existing highways development management service. This has involved the redeployment and retraining of staff, and the introduction of new systems and information technology packages. At the same time, we are continuing to work with the 25 other flood risk management partner organisations in the county to develop consultation arrangements, and integration with their processes.

In addition, a workshop training day was held for all officers involved at the county council, and the seven LPAs in the new requirements, and two consultants' and developer seminars took place at Woodhall Spa to engage with and inform the development industry. These were very well received, with around 70 developers or consultants attending each day.

Whilst government has provided sufficient funding for this financial year, the ongoing funding they propose is significantly inadequate. This was debated at the last Flood Risk and Drainage Management Scrutiny Committee, and Cllr Strange as Chairman has written to the Secretary of State and all constituent MPs in the county seeking their support to ask Defra to reconsider their funding proposals.