

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 20 MAY 2016

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

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

Investment

Team Lincolnshire, a group of commercial developers and businesses work with us to promote Lincolnshire and the development opportunities that are associated with the County's economic growth. The Economic Development investment team facilitates the Team Lincolnshire approach. Team Lincolnshire was very well represented at March's MIPIM business investment fair. There were 70 attendees at Team Lincolnshire's event to showcase the county. In April more than 100 businesses and intermediaries attended Team Lincolnshire's business networking event.

UK Trade and Industry and LCC will establish a combined approach to working with the 80 foreign owned businesses in Lincolnshire. Foreign owned businesses traditionally make around two thirds of all investments in the UK economy, so it is important that we work effectively with them. Our officers will write out to these businesses and will offer to visit them in the coming weeks to help to facilitate their development plans.

Export

A recent report showed that there has been a reduction in the number of Lincolnshire businesses that trade internationally over the past decade. This has been due to international economic conditions, and we are working hard to increase the number of exporters. Giving Lincolnshire businesses and organisations the opportunity to meet helpful contacts from an area, and then giving them the opportunity to meet businesses directly, are two good ways of increasing export. I have developed relationships with Hunan (China) and increasingly with Pinellas (USA). The Vice-Governor of Hunan led a delegation to Lincolnshire just before March, and members of his delegation included business directors and top ranking civil servants. The delegation visited Dynex Semiconductors, which is three quarters owned by a major Hunan business, and a number of other Lincolnshire organisations including the board of the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership.

I expect to welcome a similar delegation from Pinellas - focused on the defence engineering, health, and flood management sectors- later in the year.

At a more operational level, because of our links to UKTI we recently hosted an exporting day in partnership with University of Lincoln. The day included a drop-in session and various seminars. It was focused primarily on small businesses, and each of the seminars was well attended with around 24 small businesses directly benefitting.

Supply Chains

We have focused our work with the manufacturing sector onto supply chain improvements. In March we held a manufacturing conference in partnership with Nat West. Over 130 businesses attended, and heard how to win contracts in the HS2 and Jaguar Land Rover supply chains.

Information about supply chain opportunities, along with plenty of other advice for businesses, is held on our website www.businesslincolnshire.com.

Coastal Development

Conoco Phillips recently announced that they are reviewing the future of their operation at Theddlethorpe. Whilst any change to the centre could have devastating effects on the local community it should be recognized that Conoco Phillips's review will be done in the context of national energy conditions. Due to that, I have written to Amber Rudd, secretary of state at the Department for Energy and Climate Change asking for her assistance in this matter. I will also be meeting the UK President of Conoco Phillips soon; I wrote to him explaining about how important an employer Conoco Phillips is to Lincolnshire and he has agreed to meet me.

Turning to tourism, we have a long-term aim of broadening the coastal tourism season. The North Sea Observatory at Chapel Point is one of the ways that we will achieve this, and I am delighted to say that the construction phase is now underway and the piling is being installed –by a Lincolnshire based construction business.

Clearly the risk of coastal flooding affects investment decisions. The Environment Agency have 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. I hope that joint working of this nature can be a feature of our future relationship with the Environment Agency.

Lincoln Tourism

Both Councillor Nick Worth and I have regularly updated you on progress at Lincoln Castle.

1st April 2016 was the first anniversary of the castle's re-opening. 287,440 visitors enjoyed the castle during that year. As part of our lottery grant we have started to undertake a formal evaluation of the economic impact of the project, and I will be able to give you the formal figures from this review at a future council meeting. However, it is clear from our discussions with tourism businesses particularly the accommodation sector in both Lincoln and Lincolnshire that the project has had a significant benefit to their operation. The economic development team has spoken with many businesses who have seen a benefit from the project –and these businesses are not just in Lincoln but are from across the county.

The POPPIES: Wave exhibition will open from 28 May 2016, and this promises to be another highlight, attracting visitors from across the country to Lincoln. I hope that this influx of visitors will have the same impact on the local economy.

We are all very proud of the Lincoln Castle project, but it is good to be recognised more widely for our achievements. Lincoln Castle has recently won the Royal

Institute of British Architects (RIBA) East Midlands Award for architectural excellence. These awards are very important because they keep the project in the news –coverage of this award, for example, featured on the national BBC website.

Looking ahead –skills, devolution, and Midlands Engine

For some time now we have identified the need to tackle Lincolnshire's skills gap. Developing a flexible approach to apprenticeships, providing a fund for employers to design training which directly meets their business need, and increasing the relationship between schools and employers have all been mentioned. The economic development team has been working closely with the Skills Funding Agency to design activity that meets these objectives, and we hope that training providers will be able to bid to deliver this work in the next couple of months and that training for an extra 4,500 Lincolnshire people will be starting in September.

The devolution agreement for greater Lincolnshire has a clear focus on economic growth. It will provide flexibilities and funding for growth schemes, and it has a strong focus on adapting government business support schemes to directly meet our local sectors' needs.

Government is promoting Midlands Engine, an initiative to raise the productivity of the whole of the Midlands ('From the Wash to Wales'). It is very important that Lincolnshire is seen as an important part of the Midlands Engine –our food production sector is critical to the region's economy, our advanced engineering contributes directly, and our educational institutions provide skills to grow the economy. In order to really make our mark on Midlands Engine, Greater Lincolnshire LEP organized a major business seminar on the event on 4 May 2016 which will be addressed by the Midlands Engine director.

ENVIRONMENT AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

Sustainability

Salix Revolving Energy Fund

The £1 million fund has been used to fund 72 projects totalling £1.8 Million and is saving LCC £370,000 and 1,900 tonnes of CO₂ annually.

SCoRE Project rollout

The project is due to finish in August 2016 and has been delivered to 230 schools and 763 children have been trained as Lincolnshire Carbon Ambassadors. Additional investment triggered by SCoRE is valued at £2.2m, which is almost a 7:1 multiplier on the initial investment in project officers. Schools that have taken part in SCoRE have seen a reduction of 15% in electricity and 34% in gas between 2010/11 to 2015/16.

Verge Biomass

Work aiming to lead up to a pilot trial of the collection of verge vegetation used as a feedstock for biomass is continuing. Staff from the Sustainability Team have been briefing DEFRA who have expressed interest in the project.

Lincolnshire Energy Switch

Registrations are been taken for the 7th round of the Lincolnshire Energy Switch. To date the previous 6 rounds have attracted 8,205 registrations, of which 2,788 decided to switch. This totals £616,100 savings which equated to an average household saving of £208.

Climate Local – Work has continued toward Climate Local with future actions including the following:

- Continued investment under the Council's Carbon Management Plan, including £5,000,000 investment in street lighting energy efficiency (full report to be considered as agenda item for this meeting).
- Considering how best to continue with the Lincolnshire Energy Switching scheme and fuel poverty schemes.
- Next stages of the District heat network study will be completed by December 2016.

Carbon Management Plan

Work is beginning on the collation of data from the 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016, that will show how well LCC is progressing towards its target of a 22% reduction by 2018. However, due to varying dates of utility billing, some data is not available until the end of July and this will mean that a complete picture is not available until August 2016.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reporting

Work is beginning on the collation of data from the 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016, from 40 data sources, that will allow LCC to publish its Greenhouse Gas Emissions report. However, due to varying dates of utility billing, some data is not available until the end of July and this will mean that a complete picture is not available until August 2016.

Property Rationalisation

Working with the property team to give advice that will allow LCC building stock to be as energy efficient as possible. This currently includes Keily House, Orchard House and Lancaster House.

William Farr

After successful projects to completely upgrade the schools lighting to LED and the installation of 185kWp of Soar PV the team are working with the school on a project that will completely replace all the schools heating system with 3 biomass boilers. If successful this would lead to the school being in the top few percent of energy efficient schools in the country.

England Coastal Path

Work continues on the first two stretches of the proposed route which once complete will form Lincolnshire's only National Trail. Officers have continued to meet with

Natural England colleagues to assist in reviewing where the route may be laid out, in particular in relation to some of the stretches which need special consideration such as at Gibraltar Point where discussions with the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust are helping to understand how the path can be laid out in this sensitive environment. Meetings with other affected landowners and interested parties have also assisted on other stretches of the route.

The section between Skegness Pier and Mablethorpe has nearly reached the stage where Natural England will conduct a full survey of the proposed route with a view to understanding what physical features, such as gates and signage, may be required. This includes reviewing the feasibility of constructing a boardwalk at Chapel St Leonards to provide better access to the promenade, a scheme that has been highlighted as desirable in the Lincolnshire Coastal Country Park Project.

Natural Environment

Officers are currently reviewing the property portfolio of Environmental Services include all land held and leased to the Wildlife Trust and Countryside picnic sites. This review will assist in the decision making for the Council in determining how these sites can be managed in the future.

Also for this section the successful Tree and Woodland Grants scheme has enabled the Council to provide 22,000 trees and hedge plants to landowners. This scheme does not cost the Council anything and landowners pay the reduced cost of the trees utilising the buying power of the Council. Twenty-four Community Wildlife Grants were also awarded to the value of £7,815, which attracted 153% community match funding. Grants were used for projects such as community gardens, churchyard wildlife improvements and village tree planting.

Gibraltar Point Visitors Centre

The Centre is substantially completed and is due to be open to the public in May. This project has been constructed within time, is within the budget and will provide a fantastic tourism attraction as one of 'jewels in the crown' along the Lincolnshire coastline for both holidaymakers and residents.

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. Aside from this statutory duty, officers have also been reviewing the Viking Way long distance route to improve its alignment and structures as part of the 40 year anniversary of the opening of the route.

Officers are also working towards ensuring that access in the Coastal Country Park area is improved through sensible diversions and improvements to infrastructure.

Central Lincolnshire Local Plan

The next stage in the process is a Proposed Submission Local Plan which was approved by the Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee on 14

March 2016 for the purposes of public consultation. It is classified as an 'emerging' plan. All the policies have been reviewed to ensure they are up to date with the latest available evidence on, amongst other things, economic growth, job creation and housing needs. 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.

The proposed submission draft Local Plan is on target and under budget. Officers are of the opinion it is a sound plan and ready for formal consultation. Following approval of the Proposed Submission Local Plan, it is now subject to a final round of public consultation which will take place between 15 April and 26 May 2016.

Representations during this consultation will not be submitted to the Joint Committee as at previous stages, but will be considered by an Independent Inspector. Final consultation will start afresh and previous representations will have to be resubmitted if they are to be considered. At the conclusion of the consultation period, the representations will be uploaded to the consultation portal on the Central Lincolnshire website (<http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/central-lincolnshire/local-plan>) and key issues will be summarised.

The representations together with evidence material and the Local Plan and associated material will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for consideration. The scheduled time frame for this is late June 2016. Once the inspector has considered the representations, a 'Hearing session' will be held inviting those who wish their representations to be heard verbally. Officers will be invited to this hearing to defend the contents of the Local Plan. Finally, the Inspector will publish his findings in a report containing a list of main modifications. The main modifications would be binding on the Joint Committee in order to approve the Local Plan.

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.

South East Lincolnshire Local Plan

At its meetings held on 11 September 2015 and 27 November 2015, the South East Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee (the Joint Committee) gave consideration to reports relating to the approval of the contents of the 'Draft Local Plan' for the purpose of public consultation. Following approval by the Joint Committee, a public consultation exercise was held between Friday 8 January and Friday 19 February 2016 inclusive.

A total of 433 individuals and organisations responded to the consultation, giving rise to 1666 separate comments. A number of key issues have been identified which are fundamental to the next stage of work on the Local Plan, that is evaluating new sites submitted as part of the recent consultation and then identifying the preferred sites. Part and parcel of this work will also be considering whether changes need to be made to the settlement hierarchy and also the levels of housing put forward for each

settlement. Other site-related work on employment land, retail and open space will also be ongoing. Key issues identified are:

- Objectively Assessed Housing Need
- A more permissive/flexible approach to housing development in the designated Countryside, particularly adjacent to settlement boundaries
- Whether to change the status of settlements in the settlement hierarchy
- Distribution of New Housing
- Sustainable Urban Extension for housing in Spalding
- Spalding Rail-Freight Interchange (RFI)
- Additional Retail Provision

These matters were discussed at the Joint Committee on 22 April 2016. LCC officers are playing a key role in supporting this plan through their work on infrastructure, viability, demographics and transport.

Triton Knoll

The Examination in Public began on 1 September 2015 and closed on 3 March 2016. Lincolnshire County Council instructed a barrister to represent its interests during the examination and made robust representations to the Examining Authority in the form of a Local Impact Report and Written Representations. Officers worked closely with the Applicant (RWE) in agreeing a Statement of Common Ground which covered all relevant issues. Of particular concern to LCC were:

- The impact of the landfall and cable route at Anderby Creek and on the grazing marshes;
- The negative impact on the Coastal Country Park and tourism in the area;
- The effect on soil conditions and drainage of the chosen route;
- The cumulative impact of the proposed Viking Link Interconnector;
- Compulsory purchase of LCC land; and
- Impact on holiday traffic during the construction phase (if approved)

All of the above matters have been addressed by the LCC legal team and officers attending open floor sessions and issue specific hearings. I will keep you updated on the progress of the application and any matters arising. In the meantime, I have written to Amber Rudd, Secretary of State for Energy, to explain the local issues and why the scheme should be refused.

Planning

Minerals and Waste Local Plan

The examination of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan Core Strategy and Development Management policies was completed in front of a Planning Inspector in October 2015. The Core Strategy will set 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 considered.

The Council received the Inspector's final report in February which confirmed that, subject to some minor modifications, the Core Strategy is sound and legally compliant and can proceed to adoption. Subject to Council resolving to accept the Inspectors report today the Core Strategy can be adopted and the Council will have made significant progress to adopting a Minerals and Waste Local Plan for the County.

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 site location document was subject to the first round of public consultation in early 2016. A total of 100 representations were received which are currently being assessed. It is intended the meetings will be held with the minerals and waste industry over the summer to discuss making changes to their sites and/or provide further information in seeking to address the issues raised from public consultation. Following this a submissions document will be prepared capturing these changes and will be presented to the Environmental Scrutiny Committee and Executive before going out to consultation in autumn 2016. The site location document will then be submitted for examination in summer 2017 and presented for adoption in winter 2017.

Processing of planning applications for waste and minerals developments has been under taken significantly ahead of Government targets. In the first quarter of 2016 80% of applications for minerals and waste developments were determined within 13 weeks, well ahead of the Government's target of 65%. In addition, 80% of applications for the Council's own development were determined in eight weeks or less. This ensures that appropriate developments are coming forward in suitable locations with minimal delay caused by the planning process.

Finally enforcement and Monitoring Officers have been checking sites to ensure compliance with planning conditions and reports of unauthorised developments are investigated and resolved. To date over 75 monitoring and enforcement site inspections have been undertaken in the first quarter of this year.

Environment

Flood Risk Management

Last time I reported on the LEP's water management plan for Greater Lincolnshire. I am pleased to confirm that two bids have been made for a total of £1.5m of European funding to support improved sea defences at Wrangle and in Boston. Further bids have been also been made by our colleagues in North East and North Lincolnshire. Our bids have successfully passed their first hurdle, and my officers are now drafting detailed documentation in pursuit of these monies. If successful this will be the first time that EU funding will have been made available for flood risk management in the county, and it is an important step in opening up broader prospects for funding this area of work that is so important to sustaining Lincolnshire economy and environment.

Boston Barrier

This is proceeding to schedule and we are working with the Environment Agency to secure the Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO).