

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 15 SEPTEMBER 2017

Statement from: Councillor C J Davie, Executive Councillor for Economy and Place

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Regeneration

Our work to support Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) businesses based in Lincolnshire has helped us better understand emerging barriers to economic growth. Intelligence gained has pointed to a lack of utility capacity across the county as an obstacle to the provision of new employment sites and premises and the physical expansion of business operations.

To obtain fuller understanding of the issues, we have commissioned new research to identify utility capacity constraints, followed up by a stakeholder workshop. We have also benefitted from an 'employment sites availability study'. Both will help inform future project commissioning strategies and inform lobbying activity.

Looking to promote opportunities for further investment in Lincolnshire we have also utilised consultants, Hotel Solutions, to identify locations across the county where new hotel accommodation is needed and investable. This will lead to a programme of promotional activities over the next 12 months designed to attract hotel investors and operators.

Project Delivery

In addition to researching opportunities for and barriers to growth, my Economic Development service continue to progress projects designed to create new economic infrastructure. In particular, visible progress is currently being made on delivery of a new Food Enterprise Zone employment site at Peppermint Park, Holbeach and the Coastal Observatory at Chapel Point.

In addition to these two projects, work is also due to commence shortly to improve the public realm and street scene of Lincoln's High Street south of the level crossing and to deliver 'grow on' premises in the Deepings.

Enterprise

My Executive Support Councillor, Mark Storer, and I have held meetings with most of the district councils over the past weeks. We have been exploring the issues where economic development priorities are shared. We have identified skills, raising the profile of the area to investors, and supporting our most important businesses as shared priorities.

I have already mentioned the work that we do to meet up with foreign owned businesses. That is very important work, as is the support that we provide to indigenous businesses through the Business Lincolnshire Growth Hub. Taken together, we have a strong relationship with many of the county's businesses and we continue to build up a base of useful information which shapes the activity that we commission.

In terms of skills, the Greater Lincolnshire LEP has recently run a programme to invest £6m of capital into the colleges and other training organisations' buildings so that students have good quality facilities in which to learn. Our major training programme, 'Skills Support for the Workforce', is now actively training 1,300 employees of the county's businesses.

As well as raising skills levels, businesses tell us that they need people to understand about the careers and opportunities that are available to them. We are about to launch videos that will help students, teachers, and parents to understand about the good quality and exciting careers available in our food production sector.

In response to the need to raise the profile of Lincolnshire to investors, we have worked with the Greater Lincolnshire LEP to create a place marketing toolkit. It is a body of high quality images and videos that can be tailored to a specific audience. Businesses are now testing and piloting the toolkit before we launch it widely. The feedback that we are receiving during the pilot stage is very encouraging.

Visitor Economy

Visitor figures for the county are supplied for the previous year in August of each year, and we have just received the 2016 figures which show that the county attracted almost 20 million visitors, almost 3 million more than in 2011. The value of Lincolnshire's tourism industry has risen by more than £300m to £1.37bn over the same period. Prospects are positive with new and improved attractions and accommodation coming on stream for this key industry which employs over 19,000 people. High profile events like the Steam Punk Festival and the prestigious summer loan of Domesday Book to Lincoln Castle, hugely play their part in raising Lincolnshire's national image.

The Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership has brought together twenty public and private sector leaders to sit on its new Visitor Economy Board and this meets for the second time in mid-September. The Board is focused not only on increasing the number of visitors to the area, but also on building knowledge and confidence in the visitor economy sector. One of its initial tasks is to produce a comprehensive body of information about visitors to Greater Lincolnshire. Current data held by ourselves and all the Districts has been analysed and profiled and some fascinating work on 'non-Lincolnshire' visitors has been undertaken to find out what the barriers to visiting the county might be; the more we know about our visitors and non-visitors the more targeted we can be with our marketing effort.

ENVIRONMENT AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

Triton Knoll

The Secretary of State granted consent for the development on 5 September 2016. The Order as applied for would grant development consent under the Act for the construction and operation of:

- a) a submarine cable route for exporting electricity generated by the, consented but not built, Triton Knoll Offshore Wind Farm ('TKOWF'), to the shore along a route of around 66 kilometres in length;

- b) a landfall site with associated jointing of offshore and onshore cables to the north of the village of Anderby Creek (in Lincolnshire);
- c) an onshore underground cable along a route of around 60 kilometres;
- d) an Intermediate Electrical Compound, east of the village of Orby;
- e) a new onshore substation for TKOWF to the north west of the village of Bicker;
- f) a connection to the existing National Grid substation at Bicker Fen.

The Council continues to work with local groups, for example Parish Councils and landowners, to protect the coastal environment. In addition, LCC is represented on four Local Liaison Committees covering the length of the cable. Inaugural meetings have been held in June 2017 and the following progress made:

- approval of a Terms of Reference for the Committee;
- updates on Archaeological Trial Trenching, Ecology Surveys and Consent Amendments;
- improvements to communication methods for reaching the local community, including Facebook and targeted newsletters; and,
- providing a website link and online form for the Community Investment Fund (CIF) consultation.

The developer has committed to a CIF (Community Investment Fund) which will provide £500k as a lump sum upon commencement of the works and £40k per annum for the 25 year life of the development £1m. There was a question about whether the information obtained during the 2015 CIF consultation, such as suggested types and examples of projects, would be taken into the upcoming consultation. The developer confirmed that any relevant information from the 2015 consultation would be considered, but that the 2017 consultation would not consider specific projects, but rather the operational arrangements. This consultation is expected in late 2017 and will cover issues such as assessment criteria for bids and administration of the fund.

Viking Link Interconnector Project

Work continues on this project and it has now reached the planning application stage. National Grid gave a presentation to County Councillors at the end of July confirming the cable route from the landfall site close to Sandilands in East Lindsey to the Converter Station at North Ing Drove in South Holland.

Applications for the proposed development were submitted to East Lindsey District Council, Boston Borough Council, North Kesteven District Council and South Holland District Councils in August and will now be subject to a period of formal public consultation. The County Council will be formally consulted on these applications. It is expected that each District Council will determine the application that relates to the part of the project within their area during December 2017 and January 2018.

Coastal Development

Engagement with the Environment Agency has begun to shape the options for public consultation later this year. This will look at how the east coast of Lincolnshire, between Saltfleet and Gibraltar Point, will be managed in the future. Funding for the current programme of coastal management will take us up to March 2021. The time

up until then will be used to determine the best way of managing coastal defences and improving the vitality of our coastal areas and communities. On 4 November 2016, a workshop was held with County Councillors to get their views. A further series of workshops were then held with various stakeholders to consider a range of options for managing the coast. Feedback from these sessions will help to identify preferred options, on which the public will be consulted to ensure it benefits coastal areas as much as possible, as well as being sustainable and appropriately resourced.

Environment

We are continuing to work with the Environment Agency on the £100m Boston Barrier, which will reduce flood risk to more than 14,000 homes. The Public Inquiry that was called started in April 2017 and was formally closed at the end of May 2017. The Inspector's report was due to the Secretary of State on 31 August 2017. The Environment Agency has completed the tender process for the design and build contract for the scheme. They are expected to announce their preferred supplier imminently.

The Boston Barrier Scheme has recently been awarded an 'Excellent' Whole Team Interim Award by the Civil Engineering, Environment, Quality, Assessment and Award Scheme (CEEQUAL), for their commitment to driving environmental and sustainability innovations and improvements on the scheme. Construction of the barrier is still on track to provide an operational defence in December 2019.

The County Council is also working with Anglian Water on the Water Resources East (WRE) project. This has arisen from Anglian Water's appraisal of its future options to meet public water supply demands, which has identified a storage deficit that equates to approximately 50% of the capacity of Rutland Water. This is potentially a £600m project, and officers have been engaged in the WRE process to support and promote its development in Lincolnshire, and to ensure opportunities to benefit from collaborative working are identified and acted upon. These opportunities include synergies with the GLLEP Water Management Plan, the Council's own flood risk management strategy and Fens Waterways Link. A more detailed report will be presented to Flood & Water Management Scrutiny Committee in October 2017.

Louth and Horncastle Flood Alleviation

The Louth and Horncastle flood alleviation schemes are now completed and operational, and will give much needed protection to over 350 homes. To enable these projects to be constructed, LCC has provided £6m financial support to the overall cost of £14.6m.

Local Flood Risk – Capital Programme

As 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) 6 year medium term plan, attracting approximately 50% of external funding. Each year, we aim to deliver improved protection to at least 100 homes, therefore we are currently working towards constructing flood alleviation schemes around the county, most notably this year at Digby, where 58 homes will be better protected.