

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 13 SEPTEMBER 2019

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

Planning for Growth

Achieving growth is all about partnership working, with local government partners and government bodies working effectively to facilitate the private sector. The Planning for Growth approach will create that effective partnership working. Local authority leaders have tasked the Greater Lincolnshire Housing and Infrastructure Group (HIG) with leading the preparation of a 'Vision' for Greater Lincolnshire. This covers three work streams:

- The Greater Lincolnshire Vision
- The Strategic Infrastructure Delivery Plan (SIDP)
- Planning for Growth (PfG) – evidence and delivery

These work streams were concluded in June, and were considered and approved by Leaders on 28 June.

The Vision is intended to be a concise document setting out the ambition and vision for Greater Lincolnshire. Based on the evidence and conclusions from the SIDP and PfG reports it will be the public/external facing document that identifies the opportunities for growth and the reason to engage with partners and invest in the area.

The SIDP is now complete and was reported to the Housing Infrastructure Group on 10 June 2019 where it was approved. The document was received favourably whilst noting that there are a number of infrastructure sectors which are under-represented, such as health and digital technology. Further work will be commissioned to plug these gaps providing a more comprehensive and sustainable overview of where new infrastructure is needed to support growth.

The PfG report will contain a business case and linked delivery plan. Amongst other things this will include evidence supporting the vision, a justification for intervention as well as a high-level plan setting out how the programme can be delivered.

Grantham Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF)

The bid is now subject to a very rigorous and exhaustive period of appraisal which has involved, so far, site visits and meetings with Homes England and their assessors, who have requested answers to over eighty questions at relatively short notice. This process is being managed effectively by a dedicated project manager using a 'rapid response' team of LCC/SKDC staff and consultants.

In addition, further work is being undertaken to support delivery of the project:

- A Utility Study is being undertaken with landowners to identify needs.
- A Property Steering Group is being arranged with landowners, LCC, and SKDC to look at Market Making in order to stimulate the market. A scoping

discussion has already taken place to look at linking delivery in co-ordinated way.

- Monitoring will be undertaken with markers and measures put in place and the HIF Board will oversee and intervene when necessary.
- Grantham Southern Relief Road Phase 2 has physically begun onsite.

The established HIF Board, which includes the councils and the main landowners, will drive the delivery of the HIF. A programme team will be established to support the board. This programme team will co-ordinate the programme, and manage programme risks (the risk register identifies two key risks: failure to deliver housing targets and failure to collect assumed s106 contributions). In its role as underwriter of the programme, LCC considers its investment to be affordable and to represent value for money.

Supporting Businesses

We have attracted a substantial grant for the Business Lincolnshire Growth Hub, which allows us to continue delivery of business advice services to roughly eight hundred businesses per year until 2022. We are pleased to say that we have available another £625,000 of grant funding for Greater Lincolnshire businesses, and we will be able to maintain the three grant elements we have currently – Digital Grant, Enterprise Revenue Grant and Enterprise Capital Grant. These programmes will benefit businesses across varying sectors & geography to enable them to grow and stimulate the economy across Greater Lincolnshire.

From May we introduced a new business support programme with the goal of helping micro-to-small businesses to begin exporting overseas. This programme includes face-to-face advice sessions with experienced export professionals, along with a programme of participatory workshops held across the county. The programme is working well, and is encouraging those businesses who have not yet found their exporting potential to branch out into new markets. This programme is essential as a way of helping local businesses to respond to the opportunities that the Government is pursuing for trade deals across the world.

In July, we also launched a programme alongside Trading Standards, providing support to businesses from a professional, fully qualified, experienced Trading Standards Officer on a wide range of Trading Standards laws.

In partnership with Lincoln College & East Lindsey District Council we have launched a new Retail Programme from September to November 2019. This four day programme will be dedicated to helping employees provide good customer service, whilst gaining a broad understanding of the retail sector, along with the knowledge to build customer relationships that last. This programme is a direct response to the recommendations of the Council's High Street Working Group.

The Digital Landscape Survey is now available for businesses across Lincolnshire to explore how digitally-engaged they are. The digital landscape across Greater Lincolnshire is rapidly changing, and it is important for our local businesses to be able to evolve and adapt to this fast-changing digital environment. Business Lincolnshire's aim is for Greater Lincolnshire to become a focus for 'digital' across all sectors, and we want to involve local businesses to make that happen. This survey was available for completion until 31 August and the information collected will be

compiled into a report and used to help shape the future of the sector in Greater Lincolnshire.

In the period between May to August we have held a number of successful business events ranging from Digital topics to Brexit & exporting workshops, and grant funding fairs. These events have been well attended and are ensuring that businesses across Greater Lincolnshire receive a plethora of experienced knowledge & support across the sectors. We also held a Business Promise launch event in partnership with Lincoln City Football Club which was attended by over one hundred businesses. This event was designed to encourage supply chain opportunities across Greater Lincolnshire and work with those businesses who could provide services to the club and beyond.

Our sister-region relationship with Hunan Province, China, continues to go from strength to strength.

We have also been fortunate to attract funding from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in order to develop links with Hunan in the Agri-Food sector – one of our primary strategic areas of focus. This funding will enable us to put in place lines of communication with our Hunan counterparts in this sector, and to identify key projects and commercial relationships which will directly benefit Lincolnshire businesses.

Officers have recently returned from an exploratory trip to Hunan, during which they have held fruitful meetings with Hunan government officials to develop six priority projects. These are:

- Development of projects in relation to the Agri-Food sector and Lincolnshire's three Food Enterprise Zones.
- Education links with the University of Lincoln (UOL), Bishop Grosseteste University (BGU) and Lincoln College, including student exchange and joint courses.
- Business to Business dialogue which supports trade between Lincolnshire and Hunan.
- Lincoln City Football Club/Lincoln College - Summer School for Hunan students.
- Hunan Datong Primary School linkage with Lincoln Minster School.
- Lincolnshire Music Service Cultural Tour of Hunan in 2021.

All of these projects have been given the full support of Hunan's regional government. We are now working hard to progress them with the support of the Department for International Trade and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, and the recent visit paves the way for November's civic and business delegation to Hunan, which I will be leading.

Funding

We are still waiting for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund consultation to be published, which is the fund the Government has said will replace money we have had in the past from the EU.

A very well attended local stakeholder event last year gave partners the opportunity to highlight what is important to our local area and what we would want new funding opportunities to address in preparation for when the consultation is finally announced. We hope that funds will be 'place based' to truly reflect what is needed in our area and for this to be locally determined to use the knowledge, expertise and passion of our stakeholders who are invested in the delivery of economic growth and prosperity.

Council officers are liaising with civil servants on the content of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Investment Update

It has been another busy year with enquiries from MIPIM and interest still being shown regarding further hotel investment into the county.

Team Lincolnshire's event programme is now in full swing with a joint event with SKDC recently taking place on 17 July at St Martin's Park, Stamford (former Cummins site). Representatives from Team Lincolnshire and businesses we met at MIPIM this year attended.

Other events in the pipeline are the MIPIM UK Dinner in London on 15 October and an event in Leeds focusing on innovation, agri-tech, robotics and finance taking place on 5 November. Planning is well underway for MIPIM 2020 working with DIT and the Midlands Engine. Further details on all Team Lincolnshire events will be released in the coming months on www.teamlincolnshire.com.

A focus group with invited Team Lincolnshire members was held on 18 June. A report summarising the key findings has been produced and will be used to provide the focus for moving the Ambassador Programme forward during the next twelve to eighteen months.

I recently received the Government's annual report on foreign investment in Lincolnshire. This more than tripled in 2018/19 and created almost four hundred jobs. Figures released by DIT show that foreign-owned companies invested £456,280,000 into Greater Lincolnshire in 2018/19, an increase of more than 200% on the previous year. In all, twenty separate investments were made in Greater Lincolnshire, which was 25% higher than the previous year. Businesses came from all over the world including Brazil, Japan and South Africa while eight were from companies owned in the USA or Germany. Predominantly in the Agri-Food, advanced manufacturing and renewables sectors, among those investing are:

- Irish company Annyalla Chicks who invested further in a 14 acre site at Butterwick near Boston where it has opened a state-of-the-art hatchery.
- American-owned Bright Lite Structures, an innovative company which works mainly in the automotive and aerospace industries, invested in new premises in Stamford.
- Leonardo, an Italian-owned leader in electronics warfare and education, invested more than £2 million in a new training academy which will educate the technical specialists in cyber and electromagnetic activities.

Skills

The Greater Lincolnshire LEP, of which I am a Board Member, held its Annual Conference in July this year and with more delegates attending than ever it provided a great opportunity for our local businesses to discuss some of Lincolnshire's economic opportunities.

During the Conference, the LEP launched the 'Give an Hour' campaign. 'Give an Hour, Change a Life' is a scheme to get local people and businesses involved in making a difference to the choices that young people make about their careers and twenty eight businesses have signed up so far.

We now have three Enterprise Co-ordinators working with our local secondary schools to help them meet and work with local business so they improve the career advice to young people, and they are managing the Give an Hour initiative. This is a jointly funded approach, through the LEP, LCC, the national Career and Enterprise Company as well as some of our District Councils.

Lincolnshire was involved in a Career learning Pilot with the Department for Education last year as part of an extensive piece of work to understand the barriers facing adults who want to improve their qualifications and careers.

As a result of the research into the impact of those programmes the Government has now announced that they will launch their new national Retraining Scheme, rolling out to adults in 2020, taking into account these barriers including reducing the financial burden of training and making training far more flexible. This is important to Lincolnshire because of the changing nature of jobs and the types of tasks people do at work, the need for a multi-skilled workforce in the future and making the most of the new opportunities that the future economy will bring.

Flood Management September 2019

June this year saw widespread surface water flooding following an unseasonal period of persistent and heavy rain. Of course, the Wainfleet Relief Channel coming out of its banks was what grabbed the headlines, but our sympathies and thoughts go to all those people across the county who suffered from flooding. Indeed, thirty two flood investigations are currently under way just from the two day's rain in mid-June, affecting at least fifty properties although the final figure has yet to be determined.

We will continue to work with our partners to provide cost-effective flood mitigation measures to protect homes and infrastructure around the county, looking for innovative ways of making our communities better protected at a time of national funding challenge and uncertainty. By way of an example, I am pleased to say that early in the new year work will start in Digby, which in 2012 suffered from flooding from a variety of sources. The work will offer better protection to over fifty properties as a result of a partnership scheme involving not just the County Council, the Environment Agency and Anglian Water but a number of local residents and landowners too.

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