

Open Report on behalf of Andy Gutherson, Executive Director – Place

Report to:	Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee
Date:	08 September 2020
Subject:	Coastal Tourism Infrastructure and Arts Projects

Summary:

This report outlines recent tourism and infrastructure projects completed by the County Council and details those in the pipeline. Recent projects on the Lincolnshire coast have helped overcome negative images of the Lincolnshire coast and encourage new visitors. The proposed new visitor centre at Huttoft and a new artwork to mark the 400th anniversary of the voyage of the Mayflower at Fishtoft, Boston will help build on this positive momentum.

Actions Required:

Members of the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee are invited to consider the approach to providing new facilities and attractions to the Lincolnshire Coast, to attract new visitors and encourage investment.

1. Background

The Lincolnshire Coast provides two very different seaside experiences, the 'fun coast' and the 'rural coast'. The wild areas of the rural coast contain a wealth of wildlife and a significant potential for increasing tourist numbers. The 2016 Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership estimated that the value of nature based tourism and leisure activity could be as much as £325M.

LCC have taken the lead in developing this market through the development of the Lincolnshire Coastal Country Park and new visitor centres at Gibraltar Point and the North Sea Observatory (between them attracting 175,000 visitors a year).

The Lincolnshire Coast has also been a priority area for Arts Council England (ACE) who identified a lack of cultural infrastructure in the area. They backed this with financial support for a gallery in the North Sea Observatory. LCC have also led on a number of arts led projects on the coast. The Bathing Beauties and Structures on the Edge (SOTE) projects have raised the profile of the coast and attracted new visitors.

The longer visitors stay in the county the more the local economy benefits. Day visitors spend £34 per head (20,000 extra day visitors would bring in

£680,000/year). Overnight visitors spend £158/head (20,000 would bring in an extra £3.16M/year). American visitors spend up to 4 times as much as domestic visitors (Visit Britain GB Tourism Survey 2017).

Coastal projects in delivery

Building on recent developments LCC are delivering another new visitor centre on the coast at Huttoft, to be opened this Autumn.

At Scotia Creek, Fishtoft near Boston another coastal project has been developed by LCC to attract new visitors, especially those from abroad, visiting England to mark the 400th anniversary of the voyage of the Mayflower.

Mayflower 400

2020 marked the 400th anniversary of the historic voyage of the Mayflower from England to America. An international partnership was created, Mayflower 400, to encourage international visitors, boost the economy through creative, cultural and tourism sectors and bring communities together through culture and heritage.

Mayflower 400 secured funding from Visit England and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to promote the national Mayflower Pilgrims story overseas and Boston directly benefitted, with new interest from travel operators and positive stories about the towns' historic offer from journalists. Boston was the 3rd highest profile destination amongst the Mayflower 400 destinations.

LCC member support

LCC members were keen for the county to be involved in the celebrations and deliver projects and programmes to mark the anniversary. Members were also keen for LCC to be involved in new projects in the Boston area, building on the momentum from local waterways projects and the Boston Flood Barrier. In 2017 Cllr Davie met RSPB Frampton Marsh, BBC and ACE to discuss their plans for a series of arts-led projects around the River Haven in Boston (the **Haven Arts Project**). It was agreed to set aside LCC capital funding of £35k to help develop and match fund these projects.

The need for Lincolnshire to make the most of Mayflower 400 was discussed at the 24th October 2017 E & E Scrutiny Committee, with it resolving that LCC should continue to take forward projects that had the most significant positive impact in developing the economy through tourism and heritage.

Further discussion took place at the E & E Scrutiny Committee on 10th September 2019. Members were concerned that many Boston residents did not appreciate how much heritage was in their area, and welcomed work being developed by LCC, the University of Lincoln, and ACE in developing a programme to help Boston celebrate the Mayflower 400 in 2020. The Committee was keen for LCC to take the initiative on these projects.

Haven Arts Project

After the initial meetings in 2017 a partnership between BBC, RSPB Frampton Marsh, ACE and LCC came together to deliver the Haven Arts Project. A series of shelters and lookouts were proposed at Frampton Marsh (delivered by the RSPB). A second project (delivered by BBC) would see a series of historic giant mooring bollards (donated by the Port of Boston) positioned in the town. The third project, led by LCC, is to create a new feature at Scotia Creek.

To have the best chance of attracting ACE national funding these projects would take a similar approach to previous LCC arts led projects by using a competition to attract high quality, artists and designers to create iconic, innovative structures.

LCC project at Scotia Creek

On the bank of the River Haven at Scotia Creek, Fishtoft, where the precursors of the Pilgrims tried to sail from, a new landmark structure is being created.

After an international design competition in 2018 an Architectural practice, MSA Gruff, was chosen to design and build the new structure at Scotia Creek. Their proposals were the basis for the bid to ACE.

The architects proposal, using a series of historic navigational instruments, considers themes of navigation relating to migration, flight and exploration of unknown worlds. Visitors can alter seating positions giving views to Boston, the Wash and beyond. The structure is on an elevated deck supported by flood and resilient piles, with a balustrade containing features depicting the navigational journey to the New World, and the stars in the night sky used to get there.

LCC is contributing £25k match funding towards the structure at Scotia Creek and £10k match funding for the project at RSPB Frampton Marsh, if this goes ahead.

LCC and BBC made successful bid to ACE, with LCC receiving a grant offer of £90,000 in November 2019. Unfortunately the RSPB's application was received just after the start of the Covid-19 crisis and was turned down by ACE as they re-directed funding elsewhere. They are planning to re-submit

Extensive consultation took place with the EA, the Marine Management Organisation, BBC and Natural England. Planning permission and EA consent have now been received. The artwork will be installed in late November 2020.

Because of the effects of Covid-19 on travel and tourism the majority of the Mayflower 400 celebrations have been put back to Summer 2021.

3. Conclusion

We hope that members of this committee will agree that Lincolnshire should make the most of its attractive coastline and LCC should continue to lead in delivering coastal tourism and arts projects to develop the facilities and attractions that the coast has to offer.

4. Consultation

a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?

Yes

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

Site specific risk reports have been produced for the Scotia Creek project as part of the consultation and application process with the local planning authority (Boston Borough Council, who also own the land) and the Environment Agency.

5. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Location plans and images

6. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Peter Fender, who can be contacted on 01522550604 or peter.fender@lincolnshire.gov.uk.