

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

Report to:	Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee
Date:	13 July 2021
Subject:	Lincolnshire Extensive Urban Survey – Progress Report

Summary:

This report will set out the background to this project, which is being funded by Historic England, the government's advisor on the historic environment. The project is producing a report for each of the thirty historic towns of Greater Lincolnshire and forms part of a national programme. We shall explain the progress to date and how the challenges of the pandemic have been met to drive the project forward.

Actions Required:

The Committee is required to:

1. note the progress being made on the project and the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic has had;
2. consider ways in which the information being gathered can be used to further benefit the economic and social well-being of the people who live and work in Lincolnshire's towns; and
3. explore ways in which the project can be integrated into future planning for improvements in the viability and attractiveness of Lincolnshire's historic towns.

1. Background

This paper sets out the progress on this project first introduced to the committee on 26 February 2019. The project is part of a national suite of projects being funded by Historic England to better understand the character of the country's historic places. While we have laws, which can be used to protect our most important buildings, monuments and landscapes it is often the unique and locally distinctive features of places which mean the most to local residents. Such features may have no protection but form the backdrop to everyday life for everyone and all too often are taken for granted.

This project is part of the national programme of Extensive Urban Surveys (EUS) promoted and funded by Historic England. The Lincolnshire survey covers a total of 30 towns and the

main aim of the project is to increase our understanding of the historical development of each town and to identify how the history of each place can be read in how the town looks today. The survey will cover the towns of the historic county of Lincolnshire, so we are working in partnership with colleagues from North Lincolnshire (NLC) and North East Lincolnshire (NELC).

The towns will be evaluated to assess their historic character and identify the nature and extent of surviving heritage assets whether as standing structures, below ground archaeological deposits or in the surviving historic town plan. The towns of Lincolnshire vary greatly in their origins. Some towns date back to the Roman period (Caistor, Horncastle) while at the other extreme are towns which result from industrialisation (Scunthorpe) or the growth in the leisure sector (Skegness, Woodhall Spa). The towns are as diverse as the internationally acknowledged beauty represented by Stamford to the post-war suburban growth of North Hykeham.

The results will be held as part of the Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record (HER) and the HERs of NLC and NELC both in a database and spatially in a Geographic Information System (computerised mapping). The principal outputs will be an Historic Character Assessment report for each town. Due to limited resources these will not be available in hard copy form but will be made available digitally through the project's bespoke website (www.lincsabout.town) and will be archived with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS).

The project outputs will be used to support and inform a variety of planning policies from national objectives as reflected in the NPPF to the local policies of respective local planning authorities. This improved evidence base will assist the local authorities of the historic county of Lincolnshire and their partners in planning for the care of the county's historic urban settlements, protecting historic character and promoting sympathetic regeneration at a time of intense development pressure.

We have set about characterising the environment of the towns of Lincolnshire, one town at a time. Great progress is being made and we are getting really good cooperation from partners across the county. We shall explain what has been achieved so far.

Inevitably the pandemic has had an impact upon the delivery of aspects of the project. With resources such as the County Archives and Local Studies Libraries being inaccessible for large parts of the last year progress has been slowed. The pandemic has also hugely impacted the amount and type of community engagement we have been able to do.

2. Conclusion

The Lincolnshire Extensive Urban Survey is a model for how rapid characterisation exercises should be done. The work is attracting attention across the country and is contributing to new developments in the way such projects are approached. Despite the huge challenges presented to us by the last year we shall demonstrate that the project is proving a great success and will be delivered within its original projected budget. Despite the scaling back of community engagement activities we are still managing to speak to local people and involve them in the project.

3. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

None.

4. Background Papers

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

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