

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 16 MAY 2014

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

Economic Development & Tourism

I have worked closely with my colleagues of the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (GLLEP) board in the past few weeks. I am very clear that we must facilitate the ideas and strategies that our private sector partners are proposing. GLLEP's work is set out in the Strategic Economic Plan that we submitted to government on 31 March. I believe that it is a strong and compelling plan that shows our ambition; and I hope that government will agree and award us high levels of funding.

As well as seeking major funding, GLLEP can help us to access small but important sources of funding, for example, working with the LEP has enabled us to attract £18,000 of funding to promote apprenticeships. Because this will benefit both small businesses and young people, I look forward to working with my colleague, Councillor Bradwell, on using this funding effectively.

It is important that we deliver schemes that benefit the business community as well as positioning the county strategically. During the past two months I have opened two new digital hubs, showcasing technology to small and medium sized enterprises; opened a very successful 'Select Lincolnshire' pop-up shop at the Hildreds Centre in Skegness; and my Support Councillor, Jo Churchill, has led seminars to help tourism businesses to tackle the effects of flooding.

Working corporately, my officers have been particularly active over recent weeks in supporting the Lincoln East West Link project. We have successfully secured all the land parcels required to enable the construction of this new road avoiding the need for a confrontational Public Inquiry. This provides increasing confidence that we can move forward on construction of the road through the efforts of my fellow Executive Councillor Richard Davies and the Highways and Transport Service area.

Staying with the theme of economic infrastructure, I am happy to announce that we have completed funding bids to government in respect of growth corridors for Skegness and Grantham. Both of these major developments include proposals for new relief roads that will help ensure the planned growth of these towns is sustainable.

Finally, returning to the theme of collaborative work, working under a commission from Greater Lincolnshire LEP my officers have been working to raise the profile of the county as an investment location. They have recently completed the production of a 'Prospectus of Investment Opportunities', produced punchy video content profiling and fronted by local businesses and attended this year's programme of investment shows and conferences. A return on this work is already being seen in the form of a number of follow up visits to the county by investors.

Flood Risk Management

On 31 March the Secretary of State, Owen Paterson, visited Lincolnshire and as part of his schedule he visited County Offices and sat in on the Strategy Group Meeting

of the Flood Risk and Drainage Management Partnership. He had heard of the excellent work of the Partnership and wanted to see at first-hand how it operated. All flood risk management authorities were represented and the topics discussed included

- Boston Barrier
- Louth and Horncastle flood alleviation schemes
- Lincshire
- Partnership funding and the challenges in collecting contributions
- Capital and revenue budgets
- The timetable and funding arrangements for SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems)

and how all of these issues link to sustainable growth.

It is fair to say that he left very impressed with how we collectively manage flood risk here in Lincolnshire, to such an extent that he made positive press comments to that effect. He also requested that we send him details of how we operate here in terms of the partnership – something he wished to replicate in other parts of the country. He indicated that if the same approach had been in place elsewhere then the scale of the flooding would not have been as great.

On the back of this visit we hope to visit London and meet with Ministers from across various government departments to discuss in more detail some of the issues raised and to put the case for Lincolnshire, particularly in terms of coastal sea defences and the value to UK plc.

Planning

On 4 April the Council held an event open to all County Councillors and also representatives from the District Councils on Unconventional Hydrocarbons Exploration (Fracking). Presentations were given by the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC), Health and Safety Executive, Environment Agency and our Planning Services Team, highlighting the timetable, process and controls that would be in place in to determine any applications received. At this moment in time no applications have been received. A question and answer session then followed and it is intended that more training and support will be offered in due course. A series of frequently asked questions is being produced which will be placed on our website.

Officers are engaging with the industry in a bid to open up a dialogue so that should any applications be received they can be dealt with efficiently and effectively.

Environment

The current Environment projects are:

- Site works to develop Coastal Country Park Huttoft Marsh Nature Reserve with Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust.
- Assessment and award of County Community Wildlife Grants.
- Public Rights of Way survey completed for the Lincolnshire Coastal Country Park to prioritise improvements to access network across the Park.

- Supporting the delivery of landscape-scale partnership projects (conclusion of Coastal Grazing Marshes Project; new phase of South Lincolnshire Fens Project; development of Witham Opportunities projects).
- North Sea Observatory – part of a funding bid to the Coastal Communities Fund.

Challenges

There are presently some interesting challenges for the service, such as:

- The campaign group Motorhomers Against Discrimination has been challenging the Council on a range of issues connected with the byelaws and height barriers at the county owned coastal car parks. The group has organised several protests blockading Huttoft Car Terrace and the barriers have been repeatedly cut down. A meeting has been held with the Police to address these issues and we expect there to be prosecutions in the not too distant future.
- We are working closely with the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust to address the recovery of Gibraltar Point and Donna Nook affected by the December storm surge. Temporary facilities have been put in place at Gibraltar Point as the Visitor Centre has been severely damaged. The future of the site is being developed with all partners to have a creative and innovative centre.

Successes

The recent significant successes in the Service are:

- The Schools Collaboration on Resource Efficiency (SCoRE) takes a whole school approach and supports schools in reducing their energy bills and spend. 126 schools have now completed the programme and it is planned to continue at a rate of 30 schools per term. Investment in proven technologies at those schools has begun as part of the programme.
- We have continued to use our £1million Salix Revolving Fund to invest in energy efficiency with schemes for LED traffic signs and signals and building lighting. Solar photovoltaic panels were installed on Waste Transfer Stations and the Museum of Lincolnshire Life, generating energy, cutting costs and carbon emissions.
- Common flood works programme for 2014-15 is now complete.
- Environmental Scrutiny has welcomed a ground-breaking report that demonstrates the important contribution that effective environmental management makes to the economy and health of the county.
- In partnership with District authorities in the county, we have jointly launched the Switch campaign that invites residents to join forces and potentially save hundreds of pounds on their energy bills by switching supplier. Over 3,500 Lincolnshire households registered and, following the February auction, 999 have switched their supplier. In doing so (dependant on their current tariff)

40-90% of households have made savings. On average, households will reduce annual bills by between £36 and £192.

- Lincolnshire Councils plan to offer residents the opportunity to take part in further June and September 2014 Switch auctions.
- Completion of Anderby Creek car park refurbishment as part of the Lincolnshire Coastal Country Park programme of improvements to visitor facilities.
- Annual events programmes produced for the Lincolnshire Limewoods and Lincolnshire Coastal Country Park.
- Two new walk routes for the Lincolnshire Coastal Country Park have been published (routes from Anderby Creek and Sandilands).
- Section 106 funding of £30k secured for Mareham Pastures LNR to support site management over the next 10 year.

Future ambitions/considerations

The service continues to evolve by considering:

- The Council adopted its second Carbon Management Plan last year and signed the Climate Local commitment. We are committed to reducing our carbon emissions by 22% by 2018 over the full range of county services.