

REPORT UNDER RULE 2(vi) OF THE COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

Report by Councillor Neil Murray, Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth

OVERVIEW

Economic growth remains at the heart of the council's 2020 vision for Lincoln. We recognise the importance of the council playing a full role in the economic life of the city itself and the wider area around us. Our city is unrecognisable from the rundown dispirited place it was in the 1980s. Today Lincoln is a thriving city with a great future. Our economy is now diverse and not over reliant on one economic sector.

The council has played a vital strategic role in this transformation of the city and we continue to do so. Our role is broad, using our different tools to influence, to facilitate or to do directly what needs to be done to improve the city. We are an economic growth player in the direct sense, the planning authority and the biggest social landlord in the city.

However, our ability to deliver services and to work on behalf of the community is limited by the dead hand of Austerity and the hopeless national government. We could do so much more with a national government which was more supportive of local initiative and giving us the support we need to regenerate the most deprived areas of the city. Lincoln is thriving in places but not everyone is sharing in the benefits of growth and there is much more to do to eradicate poverty.

There is poverty in Lincoln and a lot of people are worse off now than they were in 2010. Median annual earnings for men in 2010 in Lincoln were £25,821. In 2017 they were less, £25,275. The numbers for women are even worse at £21,295 in 2010 and £18,292.

Median annual earnings also decreased for men and women between 2016 and 2017. Perhaps this is the Brexit effect.

The portfolio is broad. Here are some of the highlights.

WESTERN GROWTH CORRIDOR

This is of huge significance for Lincoln and we are now close to starting what has been a long standing aspiration of the council. The project is all about building good quality housing and a leisure village to improve the range of recreational facilities available to people in Lincoln.

Public consultation takes place in November with a target date of January for a planning application. Nearly £2million has been committed through the Accelerated construction programme towards the costs of infrastructure to kick start the project. In return the council will undertake to build 118 market properties at a rate of 5.6 per month after the infrastructure is completed.

PARKING AND TRANSPORT

The new bus station is a much better facility for bus passengers than the old, unwelcoming station and makes for a better journey hopefully encouraging greater use of buses in the city. Along with the Central car park it has improved the look and feel of the area which was very tired and not pleasant.

The Central car park is a high quality facility which is proving increasingly popular and has added substantially to the car parking stock available in the city. Pay on exit has been very well received. We are investing in all our car parks, increasing CCTV coverage and installing the latest type of payment machines and renewing lifts.

Residential parking is particularly important in the central area of the city. We are looking to increase the coverage of the Resident's Parking Scheme (RPS) to assist residents who find their streets crowded by commuters and shoppers. We will start in the north of the city and then consult residents in Park and Boultham wards.

We have listened carefully to residents regarding the terms and conditions of the RPS scheme and responded to an overwhelming vote to reduce the maximum number of permits per property from three to two. We are hoping to consult further on improving the way the scheme works for residents.

HERITAGE

Our ability to look after our Heritage properties has been severely limited in the last few years and we have had to look for partners to try to do what we can to keep them in a decent condition. For example we are hopeful that we can work with Heritage Lincolnshire to refurbish the Greyfriars building. The building was once part of a much bigger estate and was most recently used as the City and County museum before the building of the Collection.

Our new online Historic Environment record ARCADE was launched earlier this year after two years of work by council officers with the Getty conservation institute and Historic England. Officers are helping the City of London adopt the system.

PLANNING POLICY

The implementation of the Article 4 directive two and a half years ago is making a difference in areas with an over concentration of Houses in Multiple Occupation. It will take some time to rebalance some communities but progress is being made. The council undertook a consultation on prohibiting "To let" signs in the central areas of the city. Residents were clearly in favour of prohibiting the signs and we now await the formal permission from government to introduce the regulation 7 notice.

We are hopeful that we will be involved in a scheme to improve shop fronts in the lower High Street area and are working with English Heritage.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Without any doubt the growth of the University sector of our economy is driving us forward. Much of the University campus is built on formerly derelict land as is some of the specialist student housing. The two universities had 16,330 students between them in 2016/17. There is no doubt that Lincoln University is going from strength to strength and it is good to see Bishop Grosseteste University in similar mode.

TOURISM

Visitor numbers to the city have increased year on year and our city is an increasingly popular destination. Our flagship Christmas Market event is as popular as ever. Stall bookings for the event are healthy and our staff are working as hard as ever to make the event as good as it can be with an interesting mix of good quality stalls and attractions. Officers are fine tuning the event to ensure it is safe and enjoyable in co-

operation with the emergency services. We are working with stakeholders to envision how we see the market developing in the future.

SUPPORTING LINCOLN BUSINESSES

The council runs two managed workspaces in the city and provides support for new businesses as well as helping businesses who are thinking of coming to Lincoln. We are also an Investor Member of Lincoln Business Improvement Group and have regular contact with the various business groups in the city.

PARK WARD REGENERATION

The council recognises that the Sincil Bank area of Park ward should be the focus of our social inclusion agenda and I hope we will agree to be more active in making physical improvements to the townscape as we go forward. Some excellent work has taken place in the last two years or so supported by Lincolnshire Economic Action Partnership and Investors in Lincoln. It has been good to see lots of Sincil Bank area residents getting involved in community projects supported by my Park ward councillor colleagues.

Councillor Neil Murray.

Executive Member for Economic Growth.