

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

Report by Councillor Neil Murray, Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth

Our local economy continues to be buoyant despite the chaotic political atmosphere and the uncertainties created by the Brexit standoff. This is mainly due to the activities around the expansion of Lincoln University and the Co-op's regeneration of the Sincil Street/St Mary Street area. City of Lincoln Council continue to play a significant role in the local economy especially in our housing role building new houses as a social landlord and enabling other new build properties providing decent homes for hundreds of families in the Lincoln area. This reflects our view as a council that everyone deserves to live in a decent home.

But we can always do more. We have very high levels of employment but we still have many people in the city who are in poorly paid, part time and insecure employment.

Many workers are also in "self-employed" jobs but in reality they are employed by one business. We have a lot to do in the most disadvantaged areas of the city such as the Sincil Bank area where we need to step up our regeneration agenda.

The Economic Growth portfolio is broad and this is my brief political overview of the last twelve months.

WESTERN GROWTH CORRIDOR

Our long held aspiration to build decent houses and a leisure facilities on Swanpool/Western Growth Corridor is progressing through the necessarily complex process of design, consultation and negotiation. The Planning Application has been submitted with details of the access points into the site and we hope to have permission by early 2020.

We have been strongly supported by Central Government's housing arm Homes England and because of that support we will be able to commence the first phase of housing development. Officers have met with a number of local housing developers to discuss the high standards of design, quality, environmental, Place making and energy efficient principles for the project.

The project is being viewed by Homes England as an exemplar in terms of our desire to make the homes built on site of a high quality enjoying high speed, affordable broadband and energy availability. The development will be flood resilient and will provide greater protection for the broader area given the very large area to be left undeveloped. This undeveloped area will provide open space for people and a habitat for wildlife.

PARKING AND TRANSPORT

Our parking services team do an excellent job looking after our car parks and administering the Residents' Parking Scheme (RPS). The Central Car Park is becoming increasingly popular and we are working well with city centre businesses and increasingly using new technology for payment.

We are liaising with the County Council as the Highway Authority on extending the Resident Parking Scheme (RPS) in response to local residents' requests in the uphill area around the Bail and I am hoping that residents in part of the Sincil Bank area will express their support for an extension of the scheme in the area. Their streets are often choked up with commuter and shoppers traffic and parking. RPS will free up the streets and put local residents first.

The Transport Hub is functioning well and is now taken for granted by the travelling public. The integration of rail, bus and car transport very close to the city centre in well designed and pleasant surroundings is so much better than the sad old bus station and car park we used to have. The extra rail services to London are very welcome to business travellers and people travelling for pleasure. We await with great interest the County Council's Lincoln Transport Plan especially with reference to changing the way many of us travel to work and hopefully encouraging the use of public transport, cycling and less use of the private car.

HERITAGE AND TOURISM

Our city remains very popular with visitors and our main event, the Christmas Market remains hugely popular. We tend to take the Market for granted but there is a great amount of work undertaken throughout the year by council officers and a concentrated effort by many officers just before and during the event itself. I am looking forward to this year's event.

The area between St Mary Street and Monson Street is blighted by some very garish shop-fronts and some buildings are in a poor state. Officers have been successful in bidding for a "Historic Action Zone" under which we will be able to encourage and assist property owners to improve the look and fabric of frontages and buildings in the zone. In addition the council has been successful in bidding for funds from government aimed at revitalising High Streets. This will enable us to make a positive difference to our High Street area starting next year.

PLANNING POLICY

I reported last year on the council's consultation regarding the problem of "To Let" signs in the central area of the city. I am pleased to say that we were successful in obtaining a Regulation 7 order which prohibits the signs in the areas stipulated by the council. The regulation has made a big difference in areas like the West End, Sincil Bank and Monks Road. Streets in those areas are no longer blighted by the signs and look much better for it.

Officers and members are involved in the Local Plan Review and we are looking to devise special planning policy in relation to the problem we have with the chronic lack of on street parking in the central areas of the city. This issue is difficult for planning officers and Planning Committee members to deal with and we are looking at ways to deal with the issue.

PARK WARD REGENERATION

Good work by our Neighbourhood Management Team continues in the Sincil Bank area of Park Ward. The problems in the area are deep seated and officers are working on proposals which could deliver physical regeneration of part of the area in addition to the good community cohesion work being done by the community themselves and by city council officers.

CITY CENTRE

We are planning to revamp the Central Market and open up the Cornhill to complement the Sincil Street regeneration by the Co-op. We are seeking the support of the Greater Lincolnshire Enterprise Partnership.

PARTNERSHIPS

We have an excellent record in working in partnership with different organisations. Investors in Lincoln (IIL) is one of those organisations and we have been particularly successful working with them in providing well established and popular Managed Workspace premises. I am hoping to be able to talk about new initiatives by IIL at committee in October.

COUNCILLOR NEIL MURRAY
EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH