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Lincoln Town Deal Board

5 June 2020

Present: Mary Stuart (University of Lincoln) (*in the Chair*), Jacqui Bunce (National Health Service), Tim Chambers (CoolDC), Lord Cormack (House of Lords), Councillor Richard Davies (Lincolnshire County Council), Charlotte Goy (Visit Lincoln), Gary Headland (Lincoln College), Caroline Killeavy (YMCA), James Kirby (Stirlin), Ursula Lidbetter (Lincolnshire Co-operative), Councillor Ric Metcalfe (City of Lincoln Council), Leo-Scott Smith (Tended), Liam Scully (Lincoln City Football Club), Mark Speed (Siemens) and Edward Strange (Brewin Dolphin).

Also in Attendance: Ivan Annibal (University of Lincoln), James Baty (Lincolnshire County Council), Joanne Davidson (representing the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lincolnshire), Kate Ellis (City of Lincoln Council), Nicole Hilton (Lincolnshire County Council), Pete Holmes (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Standards), Mick Lazarus (Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government), Jo Walker (City of Lincoln Council), Liz Price (University of Lincoln) and Tanya Suarez (BluSpecs).

13. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies for Absence

All those present at the meeting were welcomed and introduced by the Chair.

Apologies for absence had been received from Angela Andrews (City of Lincoln Council), Ruth Carver (Lincolnshire County Council), Lisa Donini (Marks and Spencer and Chair of Healthy High Street), Marc Jones (Police and Crime Commissioner), Peter Neil (Bishop Grosseteste University) and representatives of RAF Waddington.

It was noted that Karl McCartney, Member of Parliament for Lincoln, had intended to join the remote meeting but was unable to do so due to complications associated with accessibility and the technology used to facilitate the meeting.

14. Minutes of the Previous Meeting - 27 February 2020

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2020 be confirmed as a correct record, subject to the amendment of a typographical error.

15. Town Deal Guidance (Verbal Report)

Mick Lazarus, Regional Towns Lead, Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, provided the Board with an update on the guidance associated with Town Fund application submissions.

It was reported that a detailed framework was in the process of being developed which would assist in the submission of Town Fund applications. There were three main cohorts for the submission of applications, noted as 1 July 2020, October 2020 and the end of March 2021. It was emphasised that there would be no advantage in submitting an application early compared to waiting for the final cohort in March

2021, as it was acknowledged that different areas were at different stages of their Town Deal considerations and proposals.

Kate Ellis asked whether the submission should consist of the investment plan and details of the potential projects that would effectively make up the Town Deal. Confirmation was provided that the submission should include the list of projects but that it was not expected that these should be accompanied by detailed business cases at this stage.

Lord Cormack sought clarity as to whether there would be any detriment to Lincoln's cause in submitting its proposals in the first or final cohort and whether there would be an opportunity to change or add to the proposal once it had been submitted. It was noted that one submission could be made and there would be no further opportunity to make a resubmission.

Ursula Lidbetter asked further whether there would be any opportunities to submit a draft of the proposals or if there was just one single submission of the final proposal for Lincoln's Town Deal. It was reiterated that there would be one submission. The Board was recommended to use its time before the submission to liaise and consult with its contacts at the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy as there would be no further opportunity to resubmit a proposed Town Deal.

Jo Walker asked whether any further information was available on the level of funding and requirement for co-funding or match funding and any due diligence processes that would be required for releasing those funds. It was reported that no ratios had yet been set in respect of co-funding but that co-funding would be an important aspect of Town Fund applications.

Pete Holmes, Assistant Director for Cities and Local Growth Unit for the East Midlands at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, confirmed that the evidence base and details of the projects included as part of the submission would be considered as part of negotiations which, inevitably, would translate into heads of terms. These would set out expectations as to how investments in the respective projects would address specific issues or contribute to improving economic growth as part of the Town Deal and which projects should be treated as priorities.

Caroline Killeavy asked how the Board would evaluate its projects and whether external consultants would be used for this part of the process. It would be necessary to wait for publication of the guidance, together with the framework previously referred to, but an external evaluation of the projects, deliverability and outcomes would be necessary. It was essential that the projects could achieve what they had been set up to achieve as part of the Town Deal, that they were strong and had maximum support of all partners on the Board.

Leo-Scott Smith acknowledged that there was no advantage in submitting early but asked, in terms of processing and decision making, whether the Government would wait until the end of the final cohort before making decisions on Town Fund applications or whether there would be a rolling decision making process. It was reported that, once submitted, the process of assessing the application, inclusive of negotiation, should take two to three months before a decision was made and heads of terms agreed. It would therefore consist of a rolling decision making process, rather than assessing all Town Fund applications at the same time at end of the final cohort for submissions.

Mary Stuart made the point that a later submission would provide the Board with more evidence to draw upon as part of its Town Deal evidence base and submission. An optional submission in October was therefore generally favoured.

It was RESOLVED that the update be noted.

16. Evidence Base and Consultation

The Board considered an update report and presentation on the evidence base and consultation process developed to support the Lincoln Town Fund application.

Since the last meeting of the Lincoln Town Deal Board a number of key areas of work in respect of the evidence base had been undertaken, which included:

- some initial analysis on the impact of the coronavirus on the Lincoln economy;
- the completion of the draft Central Lincolnshire Economic Needs Assessment;
- testing the priorities identified through the evidence base and work of the delivery group through the Citizens' Panel via an online survey;
- the development of priorities and the incorporation of the evidence gathered to date into a draft Transformation Plan format.

It was reported that the country was still in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic and the full extent of its economic impact was yet to unfold. However, work had been undertaken to conduct an analysis of unemployment and furlough rates in Lincoln and other Lincolnshire districts to identify initial trends. This was illustrated in a graph and table within the report and indicated a significant increase in claims across the county, with 9,000 new unemployment claimants. Lincoln had the second highest number of claimants after East Lindsey, although the rate of change was lower than other districts as Lincoln started from a relatively high base of claimants. Further analysis by age suggested that the claimant rate increase had been highest amongst those aged 25-29 than for those aged 16-24 and over 50.

The Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce had conducted a study to identify local authority districts that were most at risk of job losses based on rates of jobs furloughed. This was based on findings from the Office of National Statistics Business Impact of Coronavirus Survey which identified the proportion of workforce that had been furloughed amongst a sample of different sectors. Analysis of this data suggested that Lincoln, along with Boston, had the lowest proportion of jobs at risk in Lincolnshire. Further details of the analysis relating to unemployment and furloughing was included within the report.

It was reported that the Council had intended to consult with stakeholders on the evidence and emerging proposals for the Town Deal at its Growth Conference on 11 March 2020. Following the decision to postpone this event, the Council sought the views of delegates and the wider community via a digital survey and follow-up interviews where requested. 212 responses were received from a demographically representative panel of 811 residents of the city of Lincoln. The first section of the survey had focused on the relative importance of the Town Fund themes, which provided the following results:

- connectivity, including digital – 43%
- urban regeneration – 29%
- skills and enterprise – 28%

A review of connectivity themes identified the following concepts as being of highest interest:

- invest in a sustainable transport infrastructure;
- develop the Living Lab idea;
- grow investment in digital technology to improve service delivery.

It was also noted that 16% of all comments received as part of the survey related to the environment which introduced a new dynamic that would need to be reflected as part of the Town Deal.

A more detailed analysis of the responses received to the survey was set out in the report, together with an update on the Draft Central Lincolnshire Economic Needs Assessment and the Draft Transformation Plan for the Lincoln Town Deal.

In terms of next steps, the evidence base would be key to developing and underpinning the Town Investment Plan which would form an essential part of the Town Fund application. The evidence demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of the city and further work would be undertaken to reflect upon the latest guidance when it became available.

At this stage, due to the impact of the coronavirus and lockdown on businesses, it had not been possible to fully engage with the business community. However, interviews with key stakeholders had taken place which formed a really strong base to work from.

Lord Cormack highlighted the devastating impact the coronavirus was having on the heritage sector in Lincoln, with no tourism and, consequently, no income being generated at the city's key heritage assets. He added that Lincoln had to continue to be a city built on its history and that it was imperative that this was safeguarded. It was agreed that a range of sectors had been significantly affected by the outbreak and that as businesses and organisations started to re-open in response to the easing of lockdown restrictions, an essential aspect would be to ensure that people were confident that they would be safe when re-engaging.

It was RESOLVED that the report and presentation be noted.

17. Draft Digital Strategy (Verbal Report)

A presentation was provided which set out a high level technological strategy to support the drive of Lincoln's future inclusive growth, building on its tech-enriched assets. Initial guiding principles of the strategy were that it:

- was based on Lincoln's core identity;
- gained a true understanding of the asset base and the gaps that needed to be addressed;
- included diversity, inclusivity, net zero and ethical use of data by design;
- found ways in which it could feed into improving and/or reducing delivery cost to citizens;
- consisted of a balanced portfolio of tech-driven actions to pilot and evaluate considering data-drive local policies;
- was future-proofed by considering technological trends and challenges, mapping them to 'analogue' actions.

Key stakeholder engagement included in-depth reviews, a two-part digital workshop to validate, booster and map and explore proposed pilot actions and a survey to prioritise and adjust the pilot actions with members of the Town Deal Board and Delivery Board. The strategy would also be aligned with other city strategies, including:

- the Lincoln Economic Evidence Base 2020;
- the Lincoln Transport Strategy 2020 – 2026;
- the Town Deal Survey 2020;
- The Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Local Industrial Strategy (Draft) 2019 and Evidence Base.

The principal aim of the strategy was noted as being ‘to drive Lincoln’s transition to a city that embraces the opportunities presented by the digital economy through a balanced portfolio of pilot actions that can be deployed, evaluated for impact and scaled to underpin renewal and sustainable growth, built around the framework of a Living Lab.

The strategy consisted of four objectives, as follows:

- to design and deploy a tech-friendly environment that built on Lincoln’s infrastructure, technological and data assets to attract key technology players and start-ups and increase Lincoln’s tech profile;
- to explore the value of technology and innovative approaches and source innovative solutions to policy and social challenges underpinning the growth of the Lincoln tech ecosystem;
- to raise the digital skills levels of SMEs and citizens, building in resilience in the transition to the new digital economy and enabling them to benefit from the opportunities it could bring;
- to invest in intelligent, connected infrastructure and technology to support productivity growth and the continued development of critical mass of skilled labour.

Three boosters had also been identified, as follows:

- tech and data – actions and pilots that strengthened Lincoln’s ability to become a tech hub and open its own data to the technological community to derive value for Lincoln;
- net zero and city – tech-enabled actions and pilots that supported effective delivery of public sector services and/or supported Lincoln’s journey towards a net zero and intelligent city;
- people and skills – actions and pilots that increased the digital skills base across Lincoln’s different communities, ensuring inclusiveness and diversity.

Pilot actions within each of the three booster groups had been mapped out in conjunction with the strategy’s four objectives.

It was noted that the strategy represented a tech-driven approach and built on Towns Fund proposals, turning physical capital proposals into tech-enabled assets and infrastructure whilst also being holistic and building or capitalising on the interests and outcomes that each action would generate. It was a high-level document with the overall timeline being relatively broad and subject to further discussions with lead organisations, with the respective budget also being indicative.

An essential element of the strategy was the Programme Management Office as this would ensure alignment with what may already exist and facilitate redirection where necessary. It would also ensure alignment between pilot actions and that they were able to build on each other's achievements to create a strong, credible and inclusive technological narrative for Lincoln, as well as undertake a key scouting role for funding and resourcing opportunities.

Further details were included as part of the presentation in relation to the Pilot Action Roadmap, setting out a summary of proposed projects and indicative costs within each of the four objectives of the strategy.

The budget associated with the strategy was indicative at this stage and would require further refinement to understand costs, co-funding, match funding and leverage as projects further developed. It was noted that some pilot actions should generate either revenue or offer efficiency gains.

Leo-Scott Smith said that this strategy was about how to attract talent into Lincoln as a city and that the last two months had seen organisations perform huge levels of digital transformation in response to the coronavirus outbreak. People had demonstrated very successfully that they could work from home or work remotely. It would therefore be critical for Lincoln to offer co-working space, similar to that of the mosaic hub. He also believed that there would now be little demand for contained office space.

Ursula Lidbetter noted that there had been a high level of recruitment in the digital economy throughout the pandemic. Areas in this sector had continued to be successful and grow significantly, with Mary Stuart citing Zoom as an example of an organisation whose share price had rapidly increased over the last two months.

Mary Stuart added that the original concept around the digital work stream and associated projects was based on Lincoln being known as a place where new digital ideas could be tried, tested and developed. The strategy effectively sought to create an environment to make this happen and was estimated to cost approximately £62 million.

Leo-Scott Smith commended the work undertaken and felt that it was a really strong proposal which needed established companies to drive opportunities for digital growth in the city, itself ultimately helping to create new start-up businesses in Lincoln.

Caroline Killeavy was of the opinion that the strategy consisted of a good collection of projects which should deliver very positive outcomes and impacts.

It was RESOLVED that the presentation be noted.

18. Greater Lincolnshire Economic Recovery Plan (Verbal Report)

Kate Ellis reported that work was underway to properly understand the impact of covid19 in order to identify how intervention and rebuilding of the wider economy and the economy of Lincoln could take place.

A draft Recovery Plan had been developed and was going through its approval cycle over the next week. This Plan focussed on short term actions and practical decisions that would need to be made over a three month period, and a subsequent three month to six month period by which point it would capture and link into other relevant

strategies. The Plan not only considered the impact on Lincoln's economy, but how this would feed into the wider Greater Lincolnshire dynamic.

It was reported that as soon as this document had been approved it would be circulated to all members of the Town Deal Board.

It was RESOLVED that the update be noted.

19. Next Meeting (Verbal Report)

It was RESOLVED that the next meeting of the Town Deal Board be held on a Friday towards the end of July 2020.

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