

Present: Councillor Gary Hewson (*in the Chair*),
Councillor Thomas Dyer, Councillor
Rebecca Longbottom, Councillor Bill Mara, Councillor
Lucinda Preston, Councillor Pat Vaughan and Councillor
Lorraine Woolley

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Helena Mair and Councillor Laura McWilliams

19. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

20. Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee Minutes: 20 July 2020

The minutes from the Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee meeting that took place on 20 July 2020 were noted.

21. Confirmation of Minutes - 20 August 2020

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 20 August 2020 be confirmed.

22. Portfolio Holder under Scrutiny - Economic Growth

Councillor Neil Murray, Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth:

a) presented a report to Performance Scrutiny Committee in the following areas:

- **Economic Recovery** – Officers were working with a range of partners on the Lincoln Towns Fund Project and the Heritage Action Zone Project which put together would make a substantial contribution to the recovery of the economy in Lincoln.
- **Planning Policy** – Planning Officers had an excellent record in processing planning applications. 95% were approved within the prescribed time limits.
- **Heritage** – a footbridge had been placed over the remains of the Roman Wall located between the two wings of City Hall to protect remaining historic fabric and would be safer to walk on.
- **Park Ward Regeneration** – due to COVID19, regeneration of the Sincil Bank Area had slowed.
- **The Visitor Economy** – due to COVID19 the Christmas Market and the Christmas lights switch on had been cancelled. On a positive note, the Visitor Information Centre had been transferred back to the City Council from Lincoln BIG.

b) invited members' comments and questions

Question: Members asked if the City of Lincoln Council were working with any organisations within the City to help support the economy?

Response: The Towns Fund issued by Government was crucial along with economic recovery work that was being carried out by Lincoln City Council. The City Council had given and were continuing to give a lot of support to businesses. The impact of Covid19 on unemployment in the city was 6% and classed as high, along with 13,000 people that had been affected by the furlough scheme. Issues in the economy had been flagged up to government.

Question: Members asked for more detail on digital connectivity and what different types of planning applications were received?

Response: Officers were to forward details of the types of planning applications received to the committee. Digital connectivity needed to be addressed in the city. There was a digital strategy that was being submitted alongside the Towns Fund deal. This made sure that people within the city had the appropriate skills to use technology.

Question: Members asked what work was taking place on Newport Arch?

Response: Overall there was very little money available for heritage sites. Officers were to forward details of the work that was taking place on Newport Arch to the committee.

Comment: Members commented that there wasn't a lot of detail in the report.

Response: An additional Performance Scrutiny Committee was to be set up early in the New Year for the Economic Growth report to be taken for more detail to be available.

Question: Members asked what the position was with the Usher Gallery and commented that the investment in the Cathedral was fantastic work and added to the city's heritage.

Response: Lincolnshire County Council had temporarily shut the Usher Gallery due to Covid19. We owned the building but couldn't do anything about the current closure. Wider discussions concerning its long term future were still ongoing. The Cathedral was a really good use of lottery money for the improvements made.

Question: Members asked why no-one else was appointed when Cllr Murray stepped down from the Drill Hall Board?

Response: No-one took over from Cllr Murray due to not knowing what was to happen in the future.

Question: Members asked whether students were included in the unemployment figures for young people?

Response: Students in education didn't count in the unemployment figure as they were not normally eligible for job seeker allowance/universal credit. Students were included in the employment rate percentage/figures.

Question: Members asked who dealt with applications such as the Towns Fund?

Response: Decisions were made by the Towns Fund Board that was made up of all different parties and chaired by Mary Stuart from the University of Lincoln.

RESOLVED that:

1. Details of the types of planning applications received be forwarded to Performance Scrutiny Committee.
2. Details of the works taking place at Newport Arch be forwarded to Performance Scrutiny Committee.
3. A further report be brought back to Performance Scrutiny Committee early in the New Year.

23. Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee/Local Plan Annual Report 2019/20

Toby Forbes Turner, Planning Policy Manager:

- a) presented members with an annual report detailing work undertaken by the Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee (CLJSPC) over the period 1 April 2019 through to 31 March 2020
- b) explained that for the coming year, it was anticipated that the impacts of Covid19 on society, the economy and plan-making would start to be understood
- c) reported that the plan would need to adapt to these impacts as they emerged, however, as officers working on the plan were working from home, progress continued on developing the evidence and the drafting of the plan
- d) highlighted that the work of the Local Plan Team included:
 - Progressing and finalising key evidence for the Local Plan;
 - Drafting the Local Plan;
 - Undertaking the Regulation 18 'Further Draft' consultation on the Local Plan;
 - Carrying out statutory plan-making functions such as fulfilling the Duty to Cooperate and undertaking a Sustainability Appraisal and a Habitats Regulations Assessment; and
 - Maintaining existing functions such as responding to neighbouring plan consultations, producing and publishing the five-year land supply report, providing planning application and appeals support where requested, and dealing with queries from the public
- e) highlighted evidence-based work on climate change with specialist consultants appointed in July to assess the extent to which the new Local Plan should address the issue, including the establishment of a position statement to set out the role the Local Plan could play in delivering climate change objectives; identifying what the plan could and could not influence in respect of carbon reductions. define what net zero carbon meant for the plan and what needed to be done to achieve it
- f) attached the budget for 2019/20 as set out in Appendix 1, representing the first year of a three-year budget which was approved by Members of the Joint Planning Committee on 13 January 2020
- g) reported that overall, the Local Plans budget was in a healthy position, with the following material variances to note;

- There was a saving on employee costs arising from a vacancy within the Local Plans Team. The Team was now fully resourced following a successful appointment of a Planning Policy Officer.
- There were additional consultancy costs associated with the commissioning of evidence base to support the plan making process, which reflected the scope of the issues that the revised Local Plan was seeking to address.

h) invited members' comments and questions.

Question: Members asked what collaboration took place with North Kesteven?

Response: The City of Lincoln Council was joined with North Kesteven District Council and West Lindsey District Council for the local plan. Growth for the whole area was considered when a planning application was submitted for consideration such as impact of traffic etc. There was a thorough process that was in place for applications going to Planning Committee where the developer had to prove that they met certain constraints.

Question: Members asked for anticipated consequences when the eastern bypass was completed and whether there would be any more room for development?

Response: The ring road would open areas of land. Developers would look at these pockets of land but would still have to go through the planning process. The green element of the plan was very important, especially in the current time as more people were using open spaces.

Question: Members asked what happened to the information gathered by consultants around climate change and how this was moved forward?

Response: There were two strands of work, climate change in respect of the local plan and the own authority's climate change work. This work would steer what was to be done over the next 30 years to reduce carbon footprints. The findings from the consultancy work would hopefully be endorsed by the joint committee. All officers across authorities were working together to make sure the work was embedded across authorities and not duplicated.

RESOLVED that the annual report of activity of the Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee for 2019/20 be noted.

24. Our Befriending Service

Paul Carrick, Neighbourhood Manager – Sincil Bank:

a) presented Performance Scrutiny Committee with a report on the befriending service that was set up during the Covid19 lockdown in Lincoln with the following aims to be achieved by this service:

- A trusted service to support those who were most isolated in our communities
- A service that would provide mutual benefits for our customers and our staff

- Effective working with our signposting service, created to aid and support organisations to deliver vital help to those most in need.

b) explained what had been achieved:

- There was a peak of over 500 people using the service during May
- 54 befrienders from across the council's workforce were deployed to make calls
- Over 18,000 people across the city were contacted to see if they wanted calls

c) highlighted that:

- The befriending service positively impacted almost every person who was involved.
- Residents and staff were more connected, had support when they wanted and needed it, and above all – were listened to when they felt they had no-one to talk to.
- Whilst our intention was for light-hearted conversation to ease the potential loneliness of lockdown, we could never have anticipated the friendships and meaningful conversations that were created as a result of the befriending service.

d) invited members' questions and comments.

Comment: Members wanted to say a huge thankyou to everyone involved in the befriending service and that it had been an amazing service and project. Members were very proud of the City Council and pleased that the work had been passed on to third parties to continue the service.

Comment: Members commented that it was lovely to read the comments that had been received. There were so many positive stories to come out of the Covid19 lockdown and this was one of them.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

25. Work Programme 2020/21

Clare Stait, Democratic Services Officer:

- a) presented the draft work programme for 2020/21 as detailed at Appendix A of her report
- b) advised that the work programme for the Performance Scrutiny Committee was put forward annually for approval by Council; the work programme was then regularly updated throughout the year in consultation with the Performance Scrutiny Committee and its Chair
- c) reported that items had been scheduled in accordance with the existing work programme and officers' guidance regarding the meetings at which the most up-to-date information could be reported to the committee; the work programme also included the list of portfolio holders under scrutiny
- d) requested any relevant comments or changes to the proposed work programme for 2020/21.

RESOLVED that the work programme 2020/21 be noted.