

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

REPORT BY COUNCILLOR N MURRAY–PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

ECONOMIC REGENERATION

I made a report to Full Council in November last year and a lot has changed since then. Inflation has increased dramatically and the insecurities of Covid have been replaced by the insecurities of a Cost Of Living Crisis.

Public Services are in crisis after 12 years of Austerity and the new Prime Minister insists that too much emphasis has placed on the redistribution of wealth. Levelling Up seems to have been abandoned.

We will do whatever we can to help our local economy and my report is a political overview of our activities in recent months. Officers will provide statistics and performance data for committee to scrutinise.

SWANPOOL. THE BIGGEST LEVELLING UP PROJECT IN LINCOLN'S HISTORY?

At long last the development of the Swanpool/Western Growth Corridor is in sight. This development was held up for years by our colleagues at the County Council when they could, as the Highway Authority, have assisted us with access into the site. Our Conservative colleagues on the City Council opposed the development to a man, and, to reinforce their clear opposition to the single biggest Levelling Up project in Lincoln's history. They even recorded their opposition for posterity.

Now it appears that the project has the wholehearted support of our Conservative colleagues and even the city MP. I am told he is supporting a bid to the Government's Levelling Up fund which will, if successful, make access to the site much quicker and easier. I am sure colleagues will welcome the new position of the opposition and the MP. Converts to genuine Levelling Up are always welcome.

It is encouraging that the MP has changed his view about Levelling Up after choosing not to support a project which would have substantially improved connectivity in the city centre area as I reported to the Council in November 2021.

Whilst we await the results of the Levelling Up Funding Process officers have been working jointly with the other Swanpool landowner Lindum Western Growth Community Limited focussing on the technical details of the opening up of infrastructure from Skellingthorpe Road. Approval for these plans is expected by the close of 2022.

Once the approval is in place the works can be tendered and commenced in mid 2023. We will be consulting with residents in the next few months to fully explain the detail of the works in order to mitigate problems and keep disruption to a minimum.

As I said earlier the Council is working with Karl McCartney as the local Member of Parliament on a bid for £20 million which will accelerate the delivery of a vehicle/cycle/pedestrian bridge from Tritton Road into the Swanpool area and a pedestrian/cycle bridge which will replace the existing pedestrian rail crossing at Oak Farm.

This is vitally important as it could enable the bridge to be constructed in 2025, significantly ahead of the original date and would further minimise disruption in the area. Officers will present a full report to the Executive when we know the outcome of the Levelling Up funding process.

TOWNS FUND PROJECTS IN LINCOLN CENTRAL MARKET TRANSFORMATION

The transformation of the Central Market and the adjacent area is well underway. The old Butcher's corridor has been demolished to make room for a new food/beverage venue. Some of the blind arches have been removed and glazing will be installed and the roof will be glazed. The next phases will see further refurbishment of the market building and the upgrading of the public realm across City Square.

Delivery Timescales

- New A3 food and drink unit, handover to tenant for fit-out in summer 2023.
- Market Hall – Summer 2023.
- City Square repaving works – Autumn 2023.

OTHER TOWNS FUND SCHEMES IN LINCOLN

- Lincoln City Football Club Community Skills and Education Hub.
- Development of the Drill Hall Arts Centre Project.
- The Barbican Production and Maker Hub for Creative Industries.
- Lincoln Made Smarter.
- Store of Stories.
- Re-Imagining Greyfriars.
- HEAT Institute.
- Lincoln Connected.
- Sincil Bank Regeneration.
- Wigford Way.
- Tentercroft Street.
- Lincoln Science and Innovation Park.

UNITED KINGDOM SHARED PROSPERITY FUND - UKSPF

This fund partially replaces the former ESF/ERDF European Social Fund which Britain was a part of before Brexit. As part of the Levelling Up agenda, it is designed to be spent on improving skills, community cohesion and economic activity.

The City Council has been allocated £ 2,810,773 and we are awaiting confirmation from Government that our plans for local delivery are in line with their aspirations and we will be working with our communities to deliver the activities which contribute to the Levelling Up process.

LINCOLN'S HERITAGE

It has been announced very recently that the National Lottery Heritage Fund will be putting £1.95 million towards the refurbishment and regeneration of the Greyfriars building. The Council will also utilise Towns Fund money to finally make the Re-imagining project a reality.

This is very good news but has taken an age and highlights how the Government ignores our heritage despite its obvious cultural value. I hope we do not have to wait till other ancient monuments start to fall over for Central Government to wake up to the problem and opportunities in regard to historic monument preservation.

Some of the highlights of the Heritage Team's recent work –

- Archaeological Borehole sampling at the former large Co-op shop on Waterside South confirms the former course of the River Witham in the area and shows where archaeological remains could be found. This includes Narrowing down the area in which nationally significant Middle Saxon remains are likely to be found. This will be used to inform new development in the area.
- The Council facilitated a student training excavation at the Lawn in the summer by the Archaeology department of Bishop Grosseteste University in the grounds. This revealed some interesting finds from the Medieval period including a Viking gaming piece in the style of the Lewis chess men and a coin from the reign of King Stephen (1135-1153).
- For their next training dig BGU would like to investigate in the Swanpool area looking at the Monastic settlement of Haw Hill. This could be a multi-year excavation and has the potential to create new educational and tourist opportunities in the area.

HIGH STREET HISTORIC ACTION ZONE PROJECT (HSHAZ).

This project has successfully utilised Heritage England funds to improve historic buildings in and around the High Street. Among these are –

- St Mary's Guildhall. Long awaited refurbishment of the fabric of this historic building is now ongoing. New roofing materials have been used to match the original tiles. The stonework has been repaired and new buttresses added to keep the building safe.
- Central Market. Some of the historic features have been repaired using HAHAZ funding.

- St Mary Le Wigford Church. We are hoping to build a new wall around the historic church.
- North End of Sincil Street. HAZARD funds have been used to repair historic features of rare back to back houses.
- The Albion Hotel/Barbican. Work is being carried out to repair and clean the stonework and repair the windows. Discussions continue regarding internal works.

PLANNING POLICY

SWANPOOL

The Council's Planning Officers did great work in conducting the planning process for the Swanpool project. The project is massively important for the future of Lincoln and there will be great boost to the local economy. I was very pleased at the response of members of the public who attended the Planning meeting or watched it unfold on the internet. They were all impressed by the professionalism of the officers and the event itself which reflects very positively on the Council as a whole. Well done.

That was an exceptional event and application. The day to day performance of Development Control is also impressive with the targets set by Central Government being met comfortably. Tellingly no planning applications have been overturned at appeal by Inspectors up to now which highlights the robustness of the decisions made by the Planning Committee.

LOCAL LISTING

I would like to thank the volunteers from the Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology for their help in the Local Listing project. This is valuable work in helping the Council identify significant buildings in the City which merit Listing.

LOCAL PLAN

The Local Plan rolls on and the draft document has been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate. Public Hearing sessions are due to begin in November.

Milestones in the last year or so.

- Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee (CLJSPC) Annual General Meeting took place in June 2021 where the committee agreed the consultation draft of the plan and the eight week consultation period which took place during July and August 2021.
- Analysis of the public responses to the draft plan and preparation for the next stage of the process.
- In February, this year agreement by the CLJSPC of amended draft plan for submission.

- Late July Plan submitted for Examination and Hearing sessions to come in November and adoption of the Plan expected in April 2023.

FUTURE POLICY.

It is important to think how we can improve our planning policies where we are not so strong. I think we need to look closely at the way in which community assets can be easily changed into development opportunities. We need a more robust policy on the retention of buildings which have a social value to neighbourhoods. For example, I am thinking of pubs which are valued by residents.

SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT.

The Council operates two managed workspaces in the City, the Terrace for the creative industries and Greetwell Place which is open to all businesses. At Greetwell Place we provide excellent reception services for the tenants and administrative services including typing, photocopying and telephone answering services. Our occupancy rates are consistently high and we have a waiting list. Officers will provide details.

CAR PARKS/PARKING

As we are all aware our car parking services are important for people to get to work, into town or for leisure. We also manage on street parking in the Resident Parking Scheme areas.

Our car parks are also important in terms of revenue income to the Council. Over the years we have invested heavily in the car parks and we provide a good service to the public.

Usage of the car parks recovered well after covid but it could reduce again as the Cost of Living Crisis gets worse. Parking income for September 2021 and August 2022 was £ 5.4 million as against a target of £ 4.6 million. Usage dipped in August and it could well be a new, downward, trend.

After a very long, frustrating delay, the County Council have approved new RPS zones in Boutham and Park wards. Zone 5B should be implemented in February 2023. They will be advertising the proposed Zone 5C in the next few weeks and hopefully 5D will follow next year.

I was very surprised the County Council chose to ignore residents of the Bailgate who requested an extension of the RPS scheme into their area. The City Council put forward a compromise solution which would have shared parking in the area between shoppers and residents. The compromise was supported by the local County Councillors but ignored by their County Council colleagues. It is a good example of why we need local people deciding on our services rather than people who do not represent Lincoln wards.

RESIDENT'S PARKING SCHEME.

The RPS scheme is not a magic system to cure parking issues but it is a useful way of bringing some order to parking chaos. It can transform an area from a free car park for shoppers and commuters into a quieter, less busy area with room for residents to park near their homes.

PARKING STRATEGY REVIEW

An Internal Review group met recently and it will discuss vision and the timeline for the review.

WELL DONE

I would like to thank the Parking Services team for their efforts since my last report. They get on with their jobs in sometimes very difficult circumstances.

PARK WARD REGENERATION.

Planning for the transformation of Hermit Street continues. We look forward to reconfigured and refurbished flats and new houses to regenerate the area. In the wider Sincil Bank area the introduction of RPS will have a beneficial effect on the quality of life of residents.

TOURISM

Tourism in Lincoln bounced back from Covid. The Staycation phenomenon was evident in the City when restrictions were lifted. We await figures from this Summer and it will be interesting to see if the Cost of Living Crisis affects visitor numbers as we go forward. On a positive note, well done to the staff at the Visitor Information Centre who were awarded the Travellers Choice 2022 status by Tripadvisor.

CHRISTMAS MARKET 40th ANNIVERSARY

Our Christmas Market came back last year and it was excellent. Council officers' preparatory work and the public's appetite for enjoying the Christmas period made it a great success.

This year is the 40th anniversary and something we should be very proud of. The market is a world class event organised by a small District Council. We are in a difficult financial moment again but hopefully the market will attract lots of people to the City again this year and we can enjoy the special anniversary. We have some new ideas to mark our 40th and make it really special.

**COUNCILLOR NEIL MURRAY
EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ECONOMIC REGENERATION.**