

SUBJECT:	VISION 2025 – REMARKABLE PLACE PROGRESS REPORT
DIRECTORATE:	COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT
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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide Performance Scrutiny Committee with an update on the *Let's enhance our remarkable place* strategic priority in Vision 2025. As this is the first report since Covid 19, the report covers progress over the last two years to provide a brief overview of what's been achieved together with an updated status on projects currently within the programme.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report focuses on progress made on the *Let's enhance our remarkable place* strategic priority, and covers those projects delivered/ being progressed as part of the delivery plan. It is a high-level summary, designed to give Members a quick overview of the entire programme.

3. Background

- 3.1 Vision 2025 was originally published in March 2020 but was almost immediately impacted by the effects of the Covid 19 pandemic. It contains five strategic priorities:

- *Let's reduce inequality;*
- *Let's drive economic growth;*
- *Let's deliver quality housing;*
- *Let's enhance our remarkable place: and*
- *Let's address the challenge of climate change*

The delivery of Vision 2025 was refocussed in February 2022 with the publication of an addendum to the original plan, re-emphasising the commitment to the above priorities and defining a set of projects to be delivered.

- 3.2 As part of the arrangements for managing and monitoring progress of the previous Vision 2020, the council established a Vision Group for each theme. These Groups have continued into Vision 2025, and each has a Corporate Management Team lead. The Remarkable Place Vision Group leads on delivering the council's aspirations under the *Let's enhance our remarkable place* strategic priority. These aspirations are;

- Let's show the world what Lincoln has to offer

- Let's cherish and enhance our natural environment
- Let's preserve the unique character of our city
- Let's deliver a rich and varied cultural experience
- Let's provide interesting, exciting and vibrant places to enjoy

3.3 As part of the overall governance framework, Performance Scrutiny Committee should receive an annual report from each of these Vision Groups to enable Members to look in more detail at the progress. This was suspended during covid 19 due to all available resources being diverted onto other pressing projects related to tackling the effects of the pandemic. This latest annual report for Remarkable Place therefore covers the range of projects delivered during the last two years and also looks forward, reporting on anticipated delivery over the year ahead.

4. Remarkable Place - a look back over the last two years

4.1 Assessing the achievements over the last two years within this strategic priority, there are a number of key projects that were completed during the pandemic years:

- **Crematorium:** Work was completed over the summer 2022 and marked the end of a large-scale renovation (circa £2.3m) of the site on Washingborough Road. Works included:
 - Creation of a second chapel on site to double capacity and meet the needs of our growing city over the next few years
 - Development of a new, much larger parking area for visitors to the site
 - Two new energy efficient cremators, an investment which will see the site operate in a more energy efficient way for the next 20-25 years
 - Re roofing works to the majority of the buildings as part of an essential repairs and maintenance project

Whilst the scale of this renovation was reduced from the original plans, this represents a far more effective and efficient investment and provides a flexible site enabling longer one hour time slots for services, and more appropriate accommodation for a range of funeral congregation sizes.

- **Biodiversity – wildlife sites:** These are important in the city and a survey was undertaken in 2019/20 to record the vital characteristics of the 47 wildlife sites in the city. All 47 sites (45 Local Wildlife Sites and 2 Local Geological Sites) were surveyed by Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership and the results were reviewed by a panel of experts on Panel on 21st January 2020. These results were ratified by the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership late March 2020. An additional £10,000 per annum has now been allocated to undertake essential maintenance works to those sites in City Council ownership.
- **Biodiversity-Floating Biohaven's on the Brayford:** In partnership with the Lincolnshire Rivers Trust, University and the Brayford Trust, the Council

contributed funding towards the creation of a floating wildlife planting scheme that delivered increased biodiversity as well as visual improvements to the Brayford Pool

- **Heritage Action Zone:** This four-year scheme (commenced April 2020) is bringing £1.6m of external government funding (via Historic England) and focusses on maintaining/protecting/restoring heritage assets within our city centre and lower High Street (which is within a conservation area). The scheme includes a number of elements including restoration of shop frontages, public realm improvements, work on Central Market and the renovation of the old Barbican hotel to develop a creative industry hub, plus a cultural programme (series of cultural events and a public art commission)

To date the City council has delivered 10 shopfronts, and ongoing is further shopfronts, Central Market, Barbican, St Mary's Guildhall and St Mary le Wigford are all receiving investment for renovation works.

- **Allotments:** In order to ensure our allotments are used well into the future, the council commenced a major capital investment programme in 2017/18 totalling approximately £1m. The project has seen nine sites benefit from:
 - New fencing
 - New drainage
 - Tree/brush clearance
 - New access paths
 - Gates
 - New standpipes for water
 - Toilet facility improvements

The focus over winter 2019/20 was the introduction of a new site in Birchwood at Melbourne Road. This was completed in Spring 2020 and provides 38 new plots for residents in that area. All have been let to local allotment holders, and we are managing a waiting list.

- **Boultham Park Phase Two:** The focus has been intensive work on a second National Lottery Heritage Funded scheme to renovate the lake and surrounding banks/ footpaths. The full project included:
 - Improvements to water quality of the lake
 - Reinstatement works to lake banks
 - Creation of recreational activities on the lake
 - Some path remediation works
 - Creation of wildlife habitats
 - Extensive community engagement project over a three-year period to involve local people and build the on going sustainability of the park

In total the investment in Phase Two was circa £1.2m (of which £658k was from NLHF). The capital works were completed in March 2022, and the engagement works will come to an end in July 2023. Together with the Phase One works these projects have transformed the park.

- **Visitor information Service:** This project saw the transfer of the function back to the City Council from 1st April 2020. It included staff transfer arrangements, new IT, and a new till/ stock control system. The service has performed well, exceeding its income targets each year since.
- **Residents parking scheme** covering all of the Sincil Bank area of the city (plus some streets on the other side of High Street): In order to tackle some of the traffic issues in the area, the streets need to be cleared of commuter parking to effectively give them back to the local community and allow the streets to “breathe again”. The RPS is an extensive new scheme. Work on this project has been undertaken over the last five years to reach this point. The scheme has been designed and consulted on for a second time by the county council and is due to be re-presented to their Planning and Regulation Committee shortly. If approved, the scheme will be rolled out over Spring/Summer 2023 in a number of phases.

The residents’ parking scheme is a precursor to a much wider scheme to tackle traffic flows in Sincil Bank and improve the street scape environment. Work on potentially redesigning these traffic flows is complex. The County Council were commissioned by the City Council to run various traffic models for the area to assess how the one-way systems etc could be re-designed to give priority back to cyclists and pedestrians and remove “rat runs” through the area. A preferred solution has been drafted and tested with the local community. This has since been funded through the Town Deal allocated to the city and so work is now progressing to further build up the design ready for a further period of resident consultation in early 2023.

- **Whitton’s park play area:** Section 106 developer contributions were allocated for this site to enhance and grow the play provision on site. Work was completed over the spring 2022 and this is now a destination play area site attracting young people from the area and beyond to enjoy the play facilities on offer
- **St Giles Youth Centre/Play Area:** This project emerged from the embers of the fire on the site of the youth centre on Swift Gardens. Implementation was completed in August 2020 and has delivered a new play area plus the refurbishment of the adjacent Multi Use Games Area.
- **Contaminated Land Strategy:** The updated strategy details how the city council will respond to contaminated land sites across the city. This was completed and Executive Committee endorsed the strategy at its meeting on 20th June 2022

5. Remarkable Place: Current schemes

5.1 **Appendix A** provides an overview of the ongoing projects being delivered under this strategic priority. There are 15 live projects covered in Appendix A, which represent the remaining programme for 2022/23 and beyond. Key updates are:

- **Major tree planting scheme:** a site has been identified to the rear of Boultham Park on grazing land adjacent to the river leading to the junction of Newark

Road/ Brant Road. This is a 3.5 hectare site. The working title for the scheme is "Hope Wood". Funding has been applied for under the Government's Levelling Up agenda, with £85k on offer. This must be spent by end of March 2023 and would enable the land to be prepared and the first phase of tree planting undertaken. Officers are currently awaiting the grant award from government, as it does meet all the criteria set for the funding. Executive approval for the project has been given.

- **Greening the city centre:** A multi-agency working group has been established to assess how we can build on existing green spaces and waterways within the city centre and uphill area, whilst also assessing the feasibility of creating further biodiversity across the area. The outputs of this group will be a new vision and principles for creating biodiversity in an urban area and the schemes arising will provide the basis for seeking external grant funding as it becomes available.
- **Hartsholme Country Park Flood Alleviation Scheme:** A large infrastructure project to increase the outflow of water from the lake and thereby meet the requirements of the Reservoirs inspector. Despite a short delay at the very end of the project in November 2022– this project has now been delivered to specification and to budget. The short delay was due to thefts on site. The works have not caused any significant disruption to the operation of the park beyond diverting a popular footpath for a period, and all stakeholders have been kept informed throughout.
- **Preparations for new Refuse Collection, Street Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance service:** This is an extensive project and will take a significant amount of officer time over the months and years ahead leading up to the end of the current contracts with BIFFA in September 2026. Member workshops are on-going to inform a specification for services -balancing the cost of provision with emerging pressures for change as required by the Environment Act 2021 and customer expectations regarding service standards.
- **Development of a cultural compact for the city:** This work is being monitored by Community Leadership Scrutiny committee, with regular updates provided to that committee. This project has been commissioned and funded by the Arts Council England, through the University of Lincoln to galvanise the cultural sector and hence lead to a step change in cultural provision in the city. The Arts Council are also (as announced in November 2022) supporting a range of cultural organisations in the city through the three-year National Portfolio Organisation mechanisms - locally Zest Theatre, Usher Gallery/The Collection (LCC), University (LPAC and Barbican cultural venue) and Frequency Festival (Threshold Studios) have all received funding.

The Cultural Compact work is taking a new and innovative approach, hearing the voices of young people in terms of what they want from culture as they will be the consumers of the future. Over 1,000 local voices have been heard and work is now on-going to develop demonstration projects to create indoor and outdoor spaces in the city centre for young people. Once delivered, these will act as a springboard to bring the cultural sector and other sectors together to encourage others to "bend" mainstream funding to deliver against the cultural agenda.

- **Greyfriars:** Working in partnership with Heritage Lincolnshire, the project is to refurbish the grade 1 listed Greyfriars building and bring the Scheduled Ancient Monument back into use. Funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), Towns Fund, Changing Places (DLUHC) and others, NLHF have recently confirmed their award for the delivery stage of the project to go-ahead, meaning all funding, totalling just over £3m, is now in place. Construction works are scheduled to commence summer 2023 with practical completion late 2024. Heritage Lincolnshire will lease the building for the purposes of flexible mixed-use education and event space on the first floor, alongside a ground floor café.
- **Harlequin:** The Harlequin project comprises neighbouring 20-22 Steep Hill (name after the former Harlequin bookshop) and 40-42 Michaelgate. Again, working in partnership with Heritage Lincolnshire, phase one is funded by the Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF) and comprises the refurbishment and conversion of 40-42 Michaelgate into two holiday lets. This is scheduled to complete by the end of 2023. Income from the holiday lets will be ring-fenced to contribute towards phase two which will be the more substantial refurbishment of 20-22 Steep Hill. Funding sources are currently being explored for phase two with the National Lottery Heritage Fund likely to be the primary source.

6. Recommendation

- 6.1 That Performance Scrutiny Committee consider the progress made under the Remarkable Place Vision strategic theme.

Is this a key decision?	No
Do the exempt information categories apply?	No
Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply?	No
How many appendices does the report contain?	One
List of Background Papers:	None

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