

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

REPORT BY COUNCILLOR NAOMI TWEDDLE –PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH

This is my first report to Performance Scrutiny and the Portfolio Holder for Inclusive Economic Growth. Some of the report will cover work achieved under Councillor Neil Murray's tenure as the Portfolio Holder for Inclusive Economic Growth. I would like to thank Councillor Murray for his many years of excellent work in this role.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Renewable/Sustainable Energy

Senior Officers from all the Local Authorities across Greater Lincolnshire work together on strategic infrastructure policy, issues and solutions. The Greater Lincolnshire Infrastructure Group (GLIG) commissioned an "Energy Options Analysis" for the area to provide an evidence base for the infrastructure investment required to enable sustainable growth and our ability to input local renewable energy to local sub stations. This is an opportunity for collaborative working that can influence both the established national infrastructure organisations such as National Grid and larger private sector organisations to invest in our energy infrastructure to enable sustainable growth.

District Heat network.

As part of that renewable/sustainable energy approach, we currently have interest from a couple of large private sector organisations who are interested in establishing a District Heat Network on Western Growth Corridor and then growing this across the city. We are providing data and information to facilitate potential investment and working with local stakeholders/organisations to consider how we could best utilise this investment should it come to fruition. This is a really important step towards our net zero carbon ambition in terms of both new and existing developments, demonstrating the benefits of the approach the Council is taking.

Central Lincolnshire Local Plan

We are currently scoping out a Central Lincolnshire carbon offset scheme. This would apply to development sites where on-site renewables are not feasible, for example where solar PVs are not possible due to over shading, enabling developers to pay into a fund for renewable energy measures in energy inefficient homes. This could not only help support development but would potentially enable us to further support households become energy efficient as similar schemes in Norfolk and Suffolk are beginning to demonstrate.

Lincolnshire Waste and Minerals Local Plan

This is currently under review, we are working with Central Lincolnshire colleagues in relation to formulating a response in relation to fossil fuel extraction as it contradicts our Climate Change commitments. This is one of the opportunities we have to positively influence policy on climate change.

Sustainable Construction

We continue to ensure that our new developments as a City Council maximise what is financially achievable in terms of sustainable construction. In particular, we are exploring a range of sustainable construction methods and materials for the new eastern access at Tritton Road on Western Growth Corridor. In addition, Lincoln chairs the Greater Lincolnshire Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) group which commissioned a study into the opportunities, barriers, challenges and solutions for improving the use of MMC across the area and are seeking to launch this later in the year.

INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Western Growth Corridor

Over 100 years since the first Swanpool Garden Village development in 1919, and only 19 months after planning consent was obtained, working with our adjacent landowner/developer Lindum Western Growth Community Limited, we started on site on 07 August 2023. The average time for developments of this scale to get from planning permission to site is 4 years and as such it is a great achievement. This is not only a sizeable investment by the Council in enabling much needed new homes for Lincoln, it is also a significant commitment to securing the future prosperity of the city. The opening-up of the southern access with a new signalised junction at Birchwood Avenue/Skellingthorpe Road and new a street into the development over the Boultham Catchwater will enable 300 new market homes to be built. This represents not only the exciting start of building a new community for Lincoln and connecting Birchwood and Hartsholme areas more effectively to the city centre, but also a unique opportunity for us to lead by example in delivering place driven sustainable new homes for now and the future. The new highway works will last around a year; we are very grateful for the patience and understanding of the residents and businesses in the area who are being significantly inconvenienced as we put this infrastructure in ahead of the housing.

Council development officers have been working with Lindum Homes to provide the first 52 homes for sale as the first new homes development to set the standard for future phases. A reserved matters application is being submitted shortly which will be determined by Full Council sitting as Planning Committee. The design of the area and the new homes is seeking to maximise opportunities to create a great quality

environment, reduced carbon emissions and footprint, high quality build standards and a place we would all want to live.

In the past year, we have also succeeded in obtaining £20 million of grant through the government's Levelling Up Fund Round 2 (LUF2) with the support of the local MP Karl McCartney. The grant will accelerate delivery of the eastern access into the site from Tritton Road with a full vehicular road bridge over the railway between Jewson and Barclays Bank and a further pedestrian/cycle footbridge next to the Boutham Catchwater. This infrastructure will also enable the Council to accelerate the development of 300 new homes from the Tritton Road access of our land. Our officers, with support from colleagues at Lincolnshire County Council and Network Rail, are working with an experienced national infrastructure contractor Graham to develop a detailed technical design for these new structures to ensure that we can gain assurance on cost and deliverability before proceeding on site. A report to our Executive on this is expected by February 2024.

Officers are also undertaking a range of work as part of continuing discussions with colleagues at Homes England seeking further financial support to build the Spine Road that connects the southern access with the eastern access to provide a continuous all vehicular route through the new development into the city centre avoiding the rail crossing on Skellingthorpe Road.

Towns Fund

Following the successful award of £19 million of government Town Fund grant, the Council as the accountable body for the programme in Lincoln, has been working to support the Town Deal Board and the 13 projects benefitting from the grant funding. The programme needs to be fully spent by March 2025 with delivery completed by March 2026 and we are currently on track to achieve this. The programme will have a significant positive impact on the city.

The following three Projects were completed in the past year and successfully up and running using £2.35 million of Towns Fund grant towards a total cost of £3.7m.

Hospitality, Events, Arts and Tourism (HEAT) Institute – The creation of a new 'working restaurant' facility at the Old Bakery, Burton Road and refurbished facilities at Sessions House at the Lincoln College campus are now complete and being used for student training.

The Drill – the refurbishment and rebranding of the Drill Hall as a cultural event venue, bar and café was the first project to be completed and has been open for over two years. The Drill has performed well in terms of increasing ticket sales. The first cohort of Performing Arts students based at the Drill started this month, although students have been benefitting from the Drill through end of year performances and work experience since opening.

The Store of Stories – the refurbishment of Beaumont Manor a grade 2 listed building, was completed at the beginning of last year and opened as a membership Community Grocery Store which provides low cost locally supplied waste and surplus food and other essential items, alongside a programme of advice, support and training, volunteering, and work placements opportunities to its members. The Store already has over 2,500 people signed up with an average of 90 people using it every day, with 50 volunteers staffing both the store and the social café which provides food, drinks and supportive chats.

The following projects are now in delivery and expected to complete in the next year. They are receiving £8.439m of Towns Fund grant towards a total cost of £16.13m.

Lincoln Cornhill Market – the refurbishment of the market is almost complete and due to be opened for Christmas trading period alongside a completely refurbished City Square. A new restaurant has been built as part of the refurbished scheme and Turtle Bay opened on 22 September.

Lincoln City Football Club Community Hub – The creation of a new Community facility that will be managed by Lincoln City Foundation, a registered charity dedicated to creating healthier, happier and inspired communities. The work has now started on site and due to be completed by next summer.

Barbican – the refurbishment of a grade 2 Listed Building for use as a creative Hub, which will provide floorspace and a platform for the establishment of start-up and fledgling businesses within the creative sector, in an environment where occupiers can access knowledge, skills and markets within a cluster of like-minded businesses. Refurbishment is due to start this Autumn and be completed next summer.

Two further projects are also now in delivery and will continue throughout the programme. They have £2.77m of Towns Fund grant towards a total cost of £4.23M.

Lincoln Be Smarter – A Business grant scheme aimed at supporting Businesses to invest in digitalisation that enables growth. This project will run until the end of the Programme (March 2026).

Lincoln Connected – A Project aimed at improving digital access for visitors to the City. Proposals include the provision of a new website, management and wayfinding system along with an annual programme of art and cultural events that provide unique visitor experiences and make Lincoln a more attractive place to visit. The cultural events will start this year as an addition to the existing Frequency Festival in October and be run each year until the end of the Programme. The new Visit Lincoln website is due to be launched next year.

Five further projects are in the pre delivery stage and will benefit from the remaining grant;

Greyfriars – This is the refurbishment and reuse of an internationally important, listed building and scheduled monument dating from the 13th century for use as a heritage attraction. This will include a mix of a digital and tactile, immersive interpretation scheme, temporary exhibitions, events, conferencing and educational activities. The works went out to tender this month, with tendered costs expected by the end of October 2023 and a start on site planned for February 2024. Construction works are due to be completed by February 2025 with the building open to the public by the end of April 2025.

LSIP – The Creation of a Business café Hub within the Lincoln Science and Innovation Park to facilitate Business networking, clustering and collaboration. It is envisaged that the project will be on site in early 2024/25 with a six month build period expected.

Tentercroft Street – A feasibility study into the development of a Brownfield site to identify investment opportunities and delivery options. Work on the study is currently being scoped.

Wigford Way – An initial options report has been prepared for this area of the city which will now be taken forward as part of a new city centre masterplan for Lincoln.

Sincil Bank – A very important £3million project for the Sincil Bank area that will build upon the Residents Parking Scheme introduced earlier this year. This project will deliver a range of improvements to the look and feel of the area, including a revised one-way system, landscaping and planting improvements, some resurfaced carriageway and cycle land provision.

Health & Wellbeing Wider Determinants of Health

Following a range of work with district council colleagues across Lincolnshire looking at the impact and role of the wider determinants of health, we have now adopted a Health & Wellbeing Strategy. The action plan within that contains 10 key tasks for us to address from an economic inclusion perspective:

- Embed strong strategic narrative/understanding to promote economic inclusion and health inequality linkages that deliver better outcomes.
- People in Employment: Work with Lincolnshire employers to improve employee working conditions / environment particularly within low paid and insecure employment to improve their health and wellbeing and prevent health issues developing - whilst improving business productivity.
- People in Employment: Improve skills for those currently in work, enabling career progression, greater wage levels, better job security, greater productivity development - good for people and business - part of tackling in-work poverty.
- People in Employment: Increase volunteering to support the community and increase well-being for the volunteers themselves.
- Supporting those most susceptible to economic change and transition: Increase core sector resilience in Lincolnshire by supporting employers to

adapt and respond to economic transitions caused by the pandemic, through addressing skills gaps with employees.

- Digital skills programme: Residents have the digital skills to access health services, everyday services and employment opportunities.
- Eliminate poor health from being a barrier to employment: Create an intervention programme that supports residents with ill-health into employment.
- Creating an environment to support development of the health and care sector to improve health related service provision.

Over the next year we will be producing an Inclusive Economic Growth Strategy that pulls together a wide range of work from across the area into a single document. In the meantime, I am delighted that through the Town Fund, UKSPF programme, working with a range of colleagues and organisations across the city and wider area alongside our day-to-day service delivery on economic inclusion, we are already putting into action initiatives that start to tackle the significant health inequalities we face in our city.

INNOVATION AND INWARD INVESTMENT

Lincoln Science & Innovation Park

Since Lincolnshire Co-op and the University of Lincoln created LSIP as a joint venture in 2013, the Council, following on from the building of the Think Tank in 2008/9, has continued to provide support for this new innovation cluster as a key part of the economic growth of both the city and Greater Lincolnshire. This year our business rate relief scheme has benefitted a range of these new high-growth and highly innovative businesses. LSIP's total investment to date has now topped over £36m into the Lincoln economy from a range of funding sources alongside its own investment and created over 180 new jobs. In addition, this year the NHS has made a considerable research investment alongside a number of inward investment businesses and start-ups from the defence technology sector resulting in both high-value jobs, skills and investment in the city.

Mosaic

Lincolnshire Co-op's further investment in the recently opened phase 2 of the Digital Hub at Mosaic is also very welcomed. A number of businesses from both our workspace at the Terrace and the Think Tank innovation centre operated for us by the University of Lincoln have expanded into Mosaic to further support the growth of the digital sector and free up space for new start-up and small businesses.

Engineering Sector

The Council once again sponsored a very successful Spark event in July this year to promote the engineering sector in the area as a fantastic career opportunity for young people and to showcase the range of world-class businesses and skills that we have to offer. On-going support for this key sector of our economy remains a priority.

Construction Sector

We remain committed to working with our local contractors and supply chain partners as we bring forward developments across Lincoln. Whilst Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) initiatives have had a very challenging year, we are continuing to work with local authority colleagues in Greater Lincolnshire to establish opportunities to achieve sustainable construction and to address the growing skills gap within the sector.

CORNHILL MARKET AND CITY SQUARE

Since starting on site in May last year we have been busy with the much-needed refurbishment of the new Cornhill Market. Opening-up the arches with new glazing, along with the new roof and mezzanine has created an amazing market hall space. New heating and lighting with improved glazing performance has created a more energy efficient building. Local architects John Roberts have worked with our own heritage team to create a sympathetic refurbishment that utilises existing heritage features and the restoration of others to secure just under £1m of Heritage Action Zone grant.

In addition to the new building that has been let to Turtle Bay as a newcomer to the City, there are over 30 new market stalls for food & drink and retail independent stallholders. Policy Scrutiny Committee approved the lettings policy in August that enables us to focus on letting to stallholders who are small or start-up independents creating, using or promoting Lincoln, Lincolnshire and local products. We have now received over 120 expressions of interest and over 27 detailed business plans, including from former traders. We have started to assess the submissions and will begin the lettings process in the next few weeks with some really exciting announcements to come.

Internal works at the Market are nearly finished to then allow us to start the fit-out and despite the very rainy summer weather City Square renewal is progressing well. Recruitment for staff at the new market is also underway so we are expecting to open in time for the main Christmas trading period.

The Market will be open for a minimum of 5 days a week from Wednesday-Sunday to support the local visitor economy but enable sole traders and small businesses to have some time off. From the start of 2024 we are hoping to use the Market on a Monday & Tuesday for a range of community events including practical skills training courses (some hopefully provided by some of the stallholders) and other activities that would benefit from a city centre location like this whilst enabling stallholders who wish to be open to be able to trade. City Square will also be used for outdoor market activity from 2024 onwards which will include markets that support the city's events programme.

Market Rights

As Cornhill Market comes back into operation, we will resume exercising our historic market rights. A review of the related policies on this will begin in 2024.

Farmer's Market

We continue to support the delivery of a monthly accredited Farmers Market on the third Saturday of the month in Castle Square as part of our wider market strategy and support to businesses.

PUBLIC REALM

The outdoor market space, the renewal of City Square incorporating additional seating and greenery with increased accessibility for all through removing the former kerbs and raised areas, has been our key public realm scheme in the city this year building on the new event space created on Cornhill Square.

Delivering with Lincolnshire County Council colleagues the important public realm improvements to Sincil Bank as a result of the Towns Fund grant will be the focus for the next year.

We will continue to seek funding opportunities to bring forward other public realm improvements across the City.

REGENERATION

Sincil Bank Regeneration

Our corporate neighbourhood focus on the regeneration of the Sincil Bank area continues to make a difference in this community and in the next year the larger initiatives that we have been working hard on will now start on site as a result of the Council's own investment and grant funding from other organisations. These include:

Community Chest

This scheme provides small grants to support community initiatives with funding from the Council and Investors In Lincoln.

Hermit Street New Homes & Environmental Improvements

Following planning consent in August, we will be starting on site in October 2023 with the clearance of the garage area and then the build of 11 new high-quality homes with an improved amenity space around them.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund

The Council was awarded £2,810,773 of UKSPF grant in 2022 as part of the government's wider commitment to level up all parts of the UK by building pride in place and increase life chances for communities through investment in the three pillars of: community and place; supporting local business; and people and skills. Our delivery plan was approved in January 2023 and in March the Executive approved the first projects for delivery by March 2025. The first projects are a mixture of proposals from local organisations including previously successful initiatives who's funding no longer exists and those commissioned by the Council to directly address specific needs identified from analysis of the extensive evidence base. These early projects are focused on supporting those most affected by the cost-of-living crisis and advice for businesses.

Cost of Living Support Programme

This scheme provides support for residents in most need arising from the cost-of-living crisis. The programme is being led by City of Lincoln Council's Revenues and Benefits team, working with the Welfare Teams and local partners including Bridge Church and Acts Trust. Projects currently include: a cost of living community support grant scheme; a research commission into cost of living support need and access in local non-English speaking communities; and a voucher scheme for the Lincoln Community Grocery.

Community Grant Scheme Project

Based on the Sincil Bank Community Chest this scheme has been developed with support from Investors in Lincoln. Up to £25,000 is available in each of the 11 wards across the city to provide small grants that support and deliver the community priorities in those areas. Ward councillors and community partners, supported by two newly appointed Community Connectors as part of the Council's Neighbourhood Team, will establish ward panels to identify the priorities and prioritise spend. Ward panels are in the process of being established and grants will be open for applications in the next few months through the City Council's website.

North Lincoln Community Hub(s) Programme

In response to the evidence and building on the success of Ermine Community Library and Hub, the Council's neighbourhood team are working with Bishop Grosseteste University and community partners to identify opportunities for further support within the area. Funding has already been provided to enable the Hub to extend its opening times in July and August, providing an important community resource for children during the summer holidays. A scoping report to identify wider deliverable proposals is nearly complete which will identify wider community need within the Ermine/St Giles area and how local assets can be best used to meet those needs.

No Wrong Door Project

This funding to support the Acts Trust's to develop their existing bespoke triage software, 'The Restore System' making it accessible to all organisations in the Lincoln area. Organisations can use the triage tools through any web browser on any device to guide beneficiaries through a questionnaire, to develop bespoke personalised support plans, listing all local services relevant to the individuals need. The Acts Trust will provide systems training as well as coaching/befriending training and continue to administrate the system to ensure up to date information is maintained. It is expected that many beneficiaries will be economically inactive, socially excluded, low-skilled (including life skills) and many will also be vulnerable to poverty/have been accessing food aid. This project will start in the next few weeks.

Business Lincolnshire Growth Hub

This funds support towards continuing the Lincolnshire Growth Hub to provide the continuity in business support developed previously through European funding. This

ensures Lincoln businesses have access to a dedicated Lincoln advisor within the Growth Hub.

Business Advisor for Lincoln

The appointment of a Business Support Adviser to build capacity in supporting Lincoln Businesses in key growth sectors is underway. A key aim of the new post is to support those who may struggle to start up and/or manage a business, as well as to look at connecting developing and established businesses from the priority sectors to build networks / clusters for economic advantage. This advisor will work closely with the Growth Hub and local business organisations to maximise opportunities/minimise duplication and inform the Business Support Strategy that we will be developing during 2024 to inform the position post March 2025.

The Restore Programme

This funding is to support the Acts Trust 'Restore Programme', a programme of training support designed to empower those aged 18+ to understand and overcome issues of poverty. The Restore Programme consists of course modules designed to support those experiencing poverty, in particular those people who are economically inactive and those with mental health challenges. These modules will be run at various venues across the city such as Energize Youth Centre, Alive Church, Ermine Library, Beaumont Manor (Lincoln Community Grocery) and within the foodbank and Night Light Cafe locations. The programme will target the unemployed, particularly those who have been out of work for longer than 6 months, as well as those not fit for work (with the aim of empowering them to feel 'work ready'). It will also target people who have had to use foodbanks within the last 6 months, as this is an indicator of poverty and engage with referrals from multiple organisations across the city using the Restore Triage tool of the 'No Wrong Door'.

Linking Local Business to Local People programme

This programme aims to unlock the barriers to local businesses training and upskilling locally, to address recruitment gaps for new and growing business sectors. It will also seek to address the low skill and high economic inactivity levels within the city. As such the programme will span both the supporting Business and People and Skills UKSPF strands. The programme is in development, but some exciting emerging projects aimed at addressing skill gaps in electric vehicle and green energy maintenance/servicing sectors have been identified to date and are currently being developed.

The remaining £1million of funding will be considered for allocation in the next few months for delivery starting in 2024/5.

SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT

This support is a central part of the Council's Inclusive Economic Growth Strategy is support for small businesses and since we opened the first managed office workspace in 1994, we continue to go from strength to strength.

Managed Workspace

The Council operates and manages both Greetwell Place (a range of 90 small offices) and the creative industries workspace at the Terrace on Grantham Street (mix of 50 offices and workshops).

- Greetwell Place is currently 100% let having been let between 99% and 100% in the past 12 months. There are currently 41 businesses/start-ups on the waiting list.
- Terrace is currently 96% let having been let between 93% to 100% in the past 12 months, with one of the vacant rooms under offer and the other has just gone out to the waiting list which currently stands at 52.
- Think Tank is our innovation centre which is currently managed by the University of Lincoln and is 100% occupied.

Business Enquiry Service

The Council continues to provide a business enquiry service with our qualified advice staff. We signpost to a range of business advice and support with a wide range of other advice including help finding suitable business premises (not just City Council owned or operated properties). We are currently dealing with 115 live ongoing enquiries ranging across sectors from start-ups to relocations and inward investment. The teamwork with a wide range of local partners and organisations to ensure the right support is received. In the past 12 months we have directly supported over 30 businesses with premises, over 100 businesses with advice and over 1,000 business contacts made.

TOURISM AND MARKETING

Visit Lincoln

The Council continues to financially support and work with Visit Lincoln in the promotion of the City's tourism offer and the development of the Visitor Economy as one of our key sectors. Visit Lincoln has been critical in supporting the revitalisation of the visitor economy post Covid, as it was one of the hardest hit of all sectors. Work done to identify and target the visitor profile has enabled the Town Fund investment into the digital infrastructure to support the sector moving forward.

Destination Lincolnshire

The 2021 De Bois Review commissioned by Visit England identified that coming out of COVID the destination management structure was fragile, fragmented and patchy in its effectiveness and required a new approach. This new approach is a tiered structure that creates a national portfolio of Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) at different levels. For Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland this means a new LVEP (Local Visitor Economy Partnership). Destination Lincolnshire has emerged from a range of discussions facilitated by the Visit Lincoln Board and the Greater Lincolnshire LEP Visitor Economy Board as the LVEP. All partners, including ourselves, across Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland have therefore agreed to support an application with a

robust business plan to DCMS for Destination Lincolnshire to become the accredited LVEP for the area.

Be Lincoln

Following the Council's investment in the creation of the Be Lincoln brand to support the wider promotion of the City, we have over the past year continued to use and promote it in print, digital and social media formats as part of Town Fund and now UKSPF. We are developing plans to continue this across other opportunities nationally.

Key Cities

Lincoln continues to be a member of the Key Cities network that raises our national profile and enables us to contribute and benefit from a range of policy development and best practice for urban areas that supports delivery of our inclusive economic growth ambitions.

INFRASTRUCTURE

All inclusive economic growth requires high quality, accessible and effective infrastructure. Along with access to affordable funding, poor infrastructure is frequently cited as the biggest barrier to business growth. Whilst the Council does not control any of this infrastructure, we still have an important role to play in influencing and facilitating investment.

Strategic Infrastructure

The Council works with local authority partners and we have actively contributed to updating the Greater Lincolnshire Strategic Infrastructure Delivery Plan, setting out the key priorities and opportunities for the area.

Transport

The Council works with local partners to actively support investment in the transport network including through the provision of the bus station and car parks; directing appropriate external funding into improvements as evidenced with Town Fund; and development infrastructure as seen with WGC.

Digital

As part of our Digital City ambition, we have been working with partners to attract investment into upgrading digital connection speeds, coverage, accessibility and affordability.

Utilities

The Council actively participates in developing plans with a range of agencies including in the past 12 months Anglian Water and National Grid (formerly Western Power).

General Points on the economy:

Unemployment has remained steady over the year at 4.1% (2,900 people) which is higher than the East Midlands average of 3.4% and the national average of 3.7%

Lincoln has 73.8% of the workforce aged 16-64 in employment or seeking employment(46,100) which is less than a year ago and below regional/national averages

The Job Centre has currently got 576 vacancies registered.

HERITAGE

Lincoln is renowned for its rich heritage and the City Council has worked hard to preserve, restore and enhance our heritage assets. These are some of the projects which are being undertaken by the City Council as a part of the High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ).

Conservation – High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ)

The Barbican

A landmark building at one of the main entrance points to the city, the Barbican was originally constructed as a Gentleman's Club and became the Albion Hotel in 1876. It has been vacant for many years, suffering from decay and becoming unsightly and detrimental to the overall appearance of the area. The building is in the process of being transformed, having been listed Grade II as part of the HSHAZ project. The deterioration has been stopped, work is underway to restore previous damage, and it will soon be given a new lease of life as the Lincoln Creative Hub in partnership with the University of Lincoln and Lincolnshire Coop. Works to the building have so far included cleaning the modern blue paint of the portico entrance, removing the black paint from the stone cornice and soffit, refurbishing the sash windows, cleaning brick and stone details, and repairing and reinstating the Corinthian capitals on the entrance.

St Mary Le Wigford

The grade I listed church of St Mary Le Wigford is located at a busy intersection on the High Street and forms an important gateway. The loss of the majority of the historic boundary wall meant that the curtilage bled out into the public highway. It was also blighted by an outdated hard landscaped public realm which was a trip hazard. This project saw the rebuilding of the lost historic boundary wall to reinstate the churchyard enclosure and enhance the setting of the church. By replacing the landscaping with grass, we have created a small green lung, providing respite for the general public distinct from the urban context.

St Mary's Guildhall

St Mary's Guildhall and its attendant buildings date from around 1157 and are a remarkable collection of high-status medieval buildings in Lincoln's lower High Street. They have variously been used as the guildhall for the powerful St Marys Guild, a Bluecoat school, maltings and a builder's yard. These buildings have been unused and vacant for decades and were at significant risk due to their dilapidated state. They are also a scheduled monument, a grade I listed building, and therefore a priority project for urgent repairs. The HSHAZ has financed a number of works to the buildings, including new buttresses to the North Range which have enabled the removal of the iron ties which impeded the full use of its ground floor, replacement of the rotten wall plates, a new roof to the Norman House using handmade replicas of the 18th century tiles. We have also commissioned a robust feasibility and options appraisal to consider how to achieve a sustainable future for the building.

Central Market

Lincoln's Central Market, now named Cornhill Market, is a grade II listed building and like many markets nationally has been in decline for a number of years. A review in 2014 by the National Association of British Market Authorities identified that change was necessary to achieve sustainability over the long term.

The HSHAZ programme has provided grants for the refurbishment and repair of the market which has included glazing the blind arcade – which of course means people will be able to see into and out – better connecting the market with the townscape. Other works included relaying the terrazzo floor, repairing the perimeter historic stalls and designing a more coherent and cohesive stall design and layout.

Shopfronts

The HSHAZ programme has continued to fund an extensive programme of repair and restoration of historic shopfronts primarily this year to 38-44 Sincil Street and 8-10 St Mary's Street.

The Sincil Street works have identified and preserved Lincoln's only surviving 19th century "back-to-back" housing, and provided for new sash windows, repairs to roof fabric, chimneys and dormers, and revealed lost elements including a glazed brick stallriser.

The row of cottages between 8-10 St Mary's Street were representative of historically poor townscape in this location and in fact were at serious risk of demolition and redevelopment. Through the HSHAZ funding these buildings have been transformed, including removal of the modern dormers, the installation of new windows and of course new shopfronts.

Archaeology

Torsion Care, Spencer Street

Archaeological investigations were required as a condition of planning permission for a new residential care home development at the junction of High Street and South Park. Several phases of medieval and post medieval buildings were discovered along the High Street frontage. There were also important pieces of medieval stonework that may have come from the nearby St Katherine's Priory. The most significant find, and the reason why archaeological mitigation was required by the planning team, was the south boundary wall of the medieval Wigford Suburb. This was a stone wall running between two medieval gates, Great and Little Bargate, and was built to ensure that goods entering the city could be properly assessed and taxed at one of the two entrance points.

Bailgate Court, Warden's House

In uphill Lincoln, monitoring of excavation to provide the footings of a new extension to the Warden's Residence at the former Chad Varah House revealed the remains of a massive east-west aligned terrace wall of Roman date, around 3 metres wide. A similar structure was identified during 19th century sewerage works on Christ's Hospital Terrace, and taken together these finds indicate that the Roman hillside was heavily engineered and probably supported houses and other structures. The wall has been preserved in situ beneath the new development.

Haw Hill Training Excavation

Bishop Grosseteste University have undertaken a student training excavation on land owned by the council on the supposed medieval manor site of Haw Hill, adjacent to the Western Growth Corridor development area. The team found a broad range of features, including rubbish dumps and large external boundary ditches. They also recovered several thousand fragments of brick and roof tile, indicating that the remains of medieval buildings are still to be uncovered elsewhere on the site. This is the first season of a possible multi-year dig which will enable this important site to be excavated site under controlled conditions without the time or budgetary pressures that accompany developer funded digs, and allow the development to proceed. The excavation was supported by council officers from the heritage team and the Major Development Directorate, who hope to continue to provide support to the project over the coming years.

Heritage Action Zone Cultural Programme

This consisted of a range of additional activity throughout the last two years in the city, which had a cultural dimension. The aims of this programme were:

- A programme of public events, creative commissioning and capacity building to celebrate the High Street and demonstrate what a cultural consortium could achieve.
- Support major festivals and extend their reach in the High Street.
- Create new events with renewed focus on the High Street and the local community.
- To develop a creative commission working with young people to invigorate the High Street with a contemporary interpretation of its history and its future.

These aims were delivered through various means which I will discuss below and were supported by a Historic England grant of £102,000.

The first event in the HAZ cultural programme was the Frequency Festival of Digital Arts. The City Council supported additional installations at the festival which was held in the city between 28th – 31st October 2021. This delivered 15,000 visitors, 34,000 online interactions, 21 artists and 125 volunteers. The festival was so successful that it returns to the city centre again this October between 26th -29th Oct 2023.

The Council has also supported additional content for 1940's weekend over last two years (2022 and 2023). The 1940s weekend occurs annually and is held in the beautiful Cathedral Quarter of the city. This event brought 12,000 visitors, had a reach of 30,000 online, included 12 artists and was supported by 18 volunteers. Although the weather for the event this year was very rainy, there was still a real buzz in and around the cathedral and castle so the weather didn't dampen the success of the event.

The 'South of the Tracks' event took place on 11th June 2022, this was an open-air music festival on which was situated south of the railway crossing and on Tentercroft Street. This tested the concept of live music in Lincoln city centre and the difference it can make to the vibrancy of the area. It included live performances from five up and coming musicians. It delivered approximately 15,000 interactions from people as they passed by.

The cultural scheme also supported 'Pride' which took place on 20th Aug 2022. This led to further funding being allocated to the event by the City Council in 2023. Both events celebrated equality and diversity and is a reminder of the importance of ensuring we are an inclusive city. 6,500 people attended Lincoln Pride in 2022, the Facebook account reached in excess of 72,300 accounts and Instagram reached in excess of 5,500 accounts. We are currently awaiting feedback on the 2023 event, however city council officers were instrumental in delivering a fantastic event. The event was very well attended with a huge variety of stalls and some fantastic speakers and performers. It was a real celebration of equality and diversity in our city.

The HAZ cultural programme also entirely funded a festival of street theatre between 29th and 30th April 2023 which was a great cultural asset to the city and took place in the newly renovated Cornhill Quarter. Each day, approximately 500 people per day got involved in street theatre which was a great opportunity to experience performing arts in the city. This programme also funded street theatre on Lincoln High Street between May and December 2022.

It also funded 'The Forum' which took place between 1st -2nd October 2022. For a weekend, local arts organisation, Zest Theatre, created space in St Benedict's Square for Lincoln's young people to mix with other young people and shape the cultural future of the city. It created a space in which young people could share ideas and be inspired. There is a final event due in early 2024 which will be delivered by Zest Theatre. They are currently seeking match funding from another source to put on an event for young people in the city centre.

The fund also supported the 'The Mash Up', this is a grass roots organisation established to support new artists emerging in the city. During 2022 and 2023, 152 local artists engaged with the networking events, 389 people attended the 'pop up' events and it had a reach of 15,000 on social media. It also included an artist performance event in early 2023, this brought 16 creative performing artists to the Cornhill who engaged with around 8,000 people. The City Council is now leading the group to apply for funding from the Arts Council.

The programme has also funded additional Christmas lights in the Cornhill and outside bus station area in 2022, which added to the successful lights trail in 2022 and it funded two digital cultural trails in and around the city centre which are available for download. Since the launch of the cultural trails earlier in 2023, new downloads have reached 3643.

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

Development Management continues to provide an excellent service that both safeguards the built environment from inappropriate development whilst allowing important growth and investment in the City. The team have unfortunately lost three officers from key posts in the last year and as a consequence the overall speed for determining planning applications has inevitably slowed in the short-term. Despite this, the service is still performing in excess of the nationally prescribed minimum standards and the recruitment process is currently underway to fill the vacant posts. Appeal performance remains incredibly strong and the percentage of applications approved also remains high at 95%. This highlights both the quality of decisions taken by the service, as well as the level of negotiation undertaken by officers to ensure the best outcome is achieved.

This service has a very strong reputation for being positive and proactive, both locally and beyond, with an emphasis on negotiation both at pre-application stage and during the formal application process. Outside of the consultation process for each application, complaints about the service itself are minimal especially when considering the team deal with around 1000 applications per year. Together with a raft of successful applications approved such as a new care home on the High Street, re-development of the Big Wok on Beaumont Fee and outline consent for a new hotel on Broadgate, officers also successfully defended a Judicial Review for the approved student housing scheme on Firth Road.

Work volumes remain consistent with previous years but a change in the nature of some of this work (for smaller scale projects) together with increased permitted development rights set nationally has meant that this wasn't reflected in the income received. It is noted however that Central Government are currently consulting on an increase in planning fees of 25% for non-major applications and 35% for major applications which should close the gap between the income target and income received for next year.

BUILDING CONTROL

Building Control is a highly challenging sector at present on a national scale, partly due to the aging profile of the workforce, but more significantly due to an upcoming and mandatory accreditation process for all officers in both public and private sectors. This is expediting the retirement of a huge number of senior experienced personnel across the board.

Building Control is a small team that operates in a commercial environment with competition from the private sector but despite this our market share remains consistently high (around 70%) and above that of the national average, and the reputation of the service locally is well regarded. An officer is due to leave at the start of October and another is due to retire early next year meaning that a period of recruitment and re-building of the team will be undertaken over the coming months.

PLANNING POLICY

The Local Plan

After 5 years of hard work, the new Central Lincolnshire Local Plan was adopted on 13th April 2023. The Local Plan provides a positive planning framework by which decisions on growth and regeneration of the City are made and is therefore of great significance. The new Local Plan is one of the first in the country to set ambitious carbon reduction targets for new buildings to meet that will help tackle climate change as well as protecting the environment through introducing new policies on Biodiversity Net Gain. It provides a clear blueprint for building environmentally efficient buildings,

as well as enhancing our green spaces. It marks a significant step in the battle against climate change and is vital for securing Lincoln's future.

Parking Strategy Review

A review of the Council's Parking Strategy is currently underway with a focus on the next 5 years and the best way to maintain and utilise car parks moving forward. Stakeholder consultation has been undertaken with workshops including representatives from local businesses, public transport and further and higher education which has provided helpful feedback that will be used to inform the review work going forward. Advice has also been sought from experts working on future mobility trends to understand how the Council should be looking to the future with regard to the relationship between parking in the City and supporting and encouraging sustainable modes of transport.

City Centre Greening

An internal officer working group has been established to explore, where possible, improvements to both existing green spaces and the creation of new city centre greening. This work could have multiple benefits including climate mitigation, public realm improvement, city centre vibrancy and economic regeneration enhancements. Stakeholder workshops have been held with organisations representing businesses within the city centre and agencies involved in the management of waterways within the City. Officers are currently exploring work focusing on greening improvements to the High Street, St Mary's Street as well as existing spaces such as St. Swithins, St. Benedicts and St. Martins. This work includes exploring opportunities for potential funding and delivery models which will be dependent on key stakeholder involvement.

CAR PARKS AND PARKING

Our car parking services are a crucial element of supporting the role of the city centre as a place to work, live and visit. The council also manages the permits for on street parking in the Resident Parking Scheme areas.

The Councils' car parks are also vitally important in terms of revenue income to the Council. Over the years we have invested heavily in these car parks, and results from the recent Citizens Panel questionnaire show that 65% of residents driving into the City Centre prefer to use City Council car parks.

Parking income, including pay and display, season tickets and Parking Contravention Notices (PCN's) for 2022/23 was £ 6.1 million against an income target of £5.7 million. This is a major achievement with all the associated pressures of the cost of living crisis and the impacts on the city centre. Utilisation of each car park is monitored closely, as well as the utilisation and pricing strategies of our city centre competitors to ensure the service remains agile and in step with changes in the economy as well as any significant events in the City.

Residents Parking Scheme (RPS)

After long delays with the decision making and implementation process with the County Council, the new zones within Boultham and Park Wards were implemented on 1 September 2023. This covers approximately 2,500 properties, and it will improve parking opportunities for residents, improve air quality and the general living experience of these areas. As well as contributing towards modal shift for commuters and shoppers. It represents a significant amount of work for the Parking Services team that administers the scheme, they deal with large volumes of queries and troubleshooting where necessary and this process is going remarkably smoothly given the significant scale of this extension

The City Council is responsible for identifying, funding, and surveying any new extensions to the Resident Parking Scheme. The County Council, as the Highways Authority, is responsible for the legal approval, with the Traffic Regulation Order and the signs and lines. I have agreed a new formalised process for requests for extensions to existing RPS zones to ensure clarity and consistency and this will be circulated to all members shortly.

EVENTS IN LINCOLN

A new programme of events has been delivered in 2023 following the decision to no longer hold the Christmas Market. The money used to fund the Christmas Market has been used to fund a series of different events in the city and the brand 'Events in Lincoln' has been developed to organise and promote the events.

A report was taken to Policy Scrutiny Committee in March 2023 presenting the aims and objectives for the new events programme. The overarching aim being "To support the vibrancy of the city centre and uphill area by providing an all-year-round cultural experience for visitors and residents that cements Lincoln as a key destination locally, regionally and nationally".

Since then, we have undertaken an extensive public consultation on the events programme to gain a better understanding of what events local people want to see in the city. The 2023 events programme was developed with some speed and officers have worked really hard to make the events programme a success for the city. This included developing the 'Events In Lincoln' branding, developing the programme of events and starting to scope 2024's programme with key partners.

The 2023 Events Programme

The City Council's 'Events in Lincoln' programme for 2023 will consist of 3 key events along with the Christmas Lights content.

- Lincoln Live: 2-3 September 2023
- Lincoln Monster Invasion: 23 - 29 October 2023
- Lincoln Christmas Lights: 23 November – 6 January 2024

- Lincoln Ice Trail: 9-10 December 2023

Lincoln Live.

The new 'Events in Lincoln' started with Lincoln Live. This was a two-day live music event in Cornhill Square with music which was curated by BBC Music Introducing Lincolnshire. The weekend was a great success with high quality music and fantastic local talent on show, with thousands coming to watch the artists. We received really positive feedback through our survey and so far we have had 129 responses, of the 129 responses: 94 were very satisfied, 25 were satisfied, 7 were neutral, 1 was dissatisfied and 2 were very dissatisfied. Therefore, 92% of the people who gave feedback were either very satisfied or satisfied which is a brilliant starting point.

The event also had a very prominent social media presence, on our social media profiles alone we had a reach/impression of around 299k across the 5 weeks of the campaign, this doesn't take into account the reach the events had on social media through our partners such as Lincoln BIG or Visit Lincoln. The social media presence created through the marketing of the event and the event itself will have raised the profile of city significantly. The event also created a real buzz to the city and added atmosphere, vibrancy and music to the city centre as well as providing an economic boost to Lincoln and Lincoln's businesses.

Monster Invasion

Over October half-term, Lincoln will witness the city's first Monster Invasion! The event will see 7 or 8 large inflatable monsters on roof tops around the city centre. The monsters themselves are several meters tall, several meters wide and illuminated at night. This event has been really successfully in other cities and the trail is popular across all age brackets and there has already been lots of interest event on social media.

The Council will produce a trail map and put on some accompanying street theatre, bringing the city and its skyline to life. The Frequency Festival of Digital Arts will also be back at the end of October half-term, along with some Halloween events from Lincoln BIG will mean a fantastic week of activity for the city.

Christmas Lights

The annual Christmas Lights switch on is taking place on 23 November, this is always a great event for the city, but this year will be even better with the launch of Lincoln's new Christmas lights. We have procured the lights contract for the city and over 95% of the Christmas lights will be replaced with new versions. The lights will start at Newport Arch and the Bailgate businesses have helped select the lights they think will provide the best feature in the Bailgate. The lights will also now extend down to Tentercroft Street to ensure St. Marks is included in the high street journey.

In addition to this, the City Council has procured some 'WOW factor!' lighting installations to compliment the lights trail that has grown over the city in recent years, for example the 6ft high 'LINCOLN' letters in the Bail and the walk-through star in the Cornhill. We will have a 16m long 6m high shooting comet with a full LED light display on City Square, lights which will illuminate the central arch of Exchequergate Arch, install string lighting on the bus station and Central car park and a couple of other smaller pieces elsewhere in the city.

Overall, the number and quality of large lighting installations in the city this year from all of those involved, Lincoln BIG, Coop, St Marks and the City Council, will be an attraction in themselves and will be widely marketed to raise Lincoln's profile.

The Ice Trail.

The final instalment of the event programme for 2023 is the Ice Sculpture Trail, which will take place between 9th and 10th December 2023. This will see approximately 20 ice sculptures around the city centre across the weekend. The sculptures will be a combination of traditional Christmas themes and some with a more local context, such as the Lincoln Imp. There will also be a demonstration of live ice carving on both days, one of which will be in the uphill Bailgate area, and one will be downhill in the city centre. We will also be providing some traditional Christmas music and singing to deliver a real Christmas atmosphere to the trail.

We are not proposing to put any stalls on for any of these events as we want to encourage residents and visitors to use our brilliant local businesses. The marketing for all of the events will include encouraging visitors to use our existing city centre shops and food and drink businesses and we will work collaboratively with businesses to ensure they benefit from the events too.

Overall, the events programme will provide a vibrancy and atmosphere to Lincoln, raise Lincoln's profile and provide an economic stimulus which will support local businesses.

Looking Forward to 2024

We are currently working on ideas for the 2024 programme and will be doing another round of a public consultation later this year to help develop the ideas.

In addition to the events mentioned above, which the City Council will deliver directly, we have financially sponsored or supported many other events to ensure that the city has a varied events programme

These events include: the Farmers Market, Lincoln 10k road race, the Cycle Grand Prix, Steampunk, the UK Rescue Organisation event and the Santa Fun Run.

Visitor Information Centre

The Visitor Information Centre has had another successful year and has again received the Trip Advisor Travellers' Choice award which demonstrates their daily commitment to customer service and promoting the city to visitors.