

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>VISION 2025 – REMARKABLE PLACE PROGRESS REPORT</b>
<b>DIRECTORATE:</b>	<b>COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT</b>
<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	<b>SIMON WALTERS, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT</b>

## 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. This strategic priority comes within the remit of two portfolios – Economic Development (Heritage and Culture) and Remarkable Place, so the report covers progress over the last year on projects spanning both areas. It also looks forward to detail how many of these projects will further develop over the year ahead. The report itself provides 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. Further, more detailed information is reported through the annual report of each respective portfolio holder to both this committee and Full Council.

## 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 through to March 2025.

- 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

#### 4. Remarkable Place – key schemes of the programme

4.1 Assessing the achievements over the last year within this strategic priority, and looking forward over the year ahead, there are a number of key projects that the city council is progressing:

- **Emergence of an events programme for the city across the year:** over the last 9 months a new events programme has been developed to spread visitor numbers over a full year. Cost of the full programme is £250k pa. This programme is on- going as detailed in **Appendix A** and has achieved some very positive feedback and attendance figures.
- **Hope Wood:** successful establishment of a new woodland and grassed area adjacent to Boultham Park. First phase completed last winter and a second phase is due to be progressed further with more planting in early 2024. This is utilising external funding of £85k from the government's Levelling Up Fund which ends 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.
- **Greening the city centre:** a multi-agency project still in its relative infancy, looking at four aspirational future projects to introduce more greenery into the city centre and hence making it more adaptable to climate change. This work will continue and merge into the much wider city centre master planning exercise scheduled to commence in 2024. No budget allocated to date for the greening work, and it is anticipated it will need to rely extensively on external funding.
- **Heritage Action Zone:** This four-year scheme (commenced April 2020) is bringing almost £2m 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, with one further shop front on-going. Central market still on track with internal fit out to follow after Christmas and work on St Mary's Guildhall is now complete for phase one. The wall around St Mary Le Wigford church has been completed, with just the renovation into a cultural hub of The Barbican on St Mary's Street remaining to be delivered over the year ahead.

In addition, a series of supporting HAZ cultural events have been delivered since 2021, as listed in **Appendix A**, and are monitored by Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee.

Historic England are now using the success of the programme in Lincoln as an exemplar for the HAZ programme, and we have hosted organisations such as the National Trust for them.

- **Leisure strategy work:** this comprehensive piece of strategic work is underway to explore refreshing all our key strategies in relation to leisure provision in the city, but on a wider footprint across Central Lincolnshire to maximise the use of the facilities available. This work will continue into 2024 with specialist studies to be commissioned.
- **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 came to an end in July 2023. Together with the Phase One works these projects have transformed the park. This project may have ended 'on the ground', but still requires final closure with the National Lottery in terms of evaluation and accounts. This will be completed very shortly.

- **Branding green spaces:** The Council has an ambition of better promoting its green space assets. One element of the approach to doing this is the creation of a brand, so our parks and green spaces are easily identifiable through both overarching and individual branding. They will fall under the 'Lincoln Green Spaces' brand – with Boultham Park, Arboretum and Hartsholme Country Park having their own individual sub-brands that link, as they are some of our key products in terms of green spaces.

Everything should then be streamlined, and it means that if, for example, someone is scrolling through social media and they see something of interest to them, straight away they will know it is a city council green space.

Once this is established we will assess its success, and consider if it could be expanded to include for such as allotments and other green spaces in the city.

- **Preparations for new Refuse Collection, Street Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance service:** This is an extensive project and has taken a significant amount of officer time over the last year and will continue to do

so over the years ahead leading up to the end of the current contracts with BIFFA in September 2026. The city council is now in the procurement phase for waste collection and street cleansing - balancing the cost of provision with the changes required by the Environment Act 2021 (Food Waste collections from end of March 2026) and customer expectations regarding service standards. Grounds maintenance procurement work has started and will be progressed in Spring 2024.

- **Paper and card collections:** as per the detail in the portfolio holder's report on this agenda, officers continue to work on possible options and costs for the introduction of separate collections in the city, particularly the challenges posed by tight residential areas where space for storage receptacles is limited. Reports to Policy Scrutiny and Executive will follow in 2024 as this work unfolds and negotiation with the county council comes to a conclusion.
- **Biodiversity net gain:** officers continue to work with partners to promote city council sites, such as Hope Wood, for use as off-setting opportunities under the planning regulations being introduced in January 2024. There are strict criteria for sites to be considered and it work is progressing to promote Hope Wood, along with other sites in the city, to meet those criteria. Site listings will be confirmed in 2024, once all the guidance has been published and assessed.
- **St Giles Youth Centre:** A community asset transfer has now been completed for this centre, effectively creating a long-term lease to the YMCA. Through external grant funding of £1.5m from the Youth Investment Fund, the YMCA will now begin a programme of capital works to the building to enhance and improve it prior to once again making it available to the community, with a focus on engaging young people in the area.
- **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 spring 2024 with practical completion in 2025. 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, with interpretation of the history of the building throughout.
- **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 summer 2024. 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.

- **Local Landscapes, Hidden Histories (formerly called Lincoln's Green Museum):** A three-year project that has recently commenced and seeks to engage the public in the important history of some of our key parks and open spaces. An innovative events/activities programme for next year will be published shortly which will seek to engage some groups not traditionally interested in history, or perhaps open spaces. Overall, the project enables the Council to establish an accessible archive of all we know about our key parks and open spaces for posterity.

## 5. Recommendation

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

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

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