

SUBJECT:	VISION 2025 – REMARKABLE PLACE PROGRESS REPORT FOR YEAR 5
DIRECTORATE:	COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT
REPORT AUTHOR:	SIMON WALTERS, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT

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 the key projects spanning both areas. It also looks forward to detail how the few remaining projects yet to be delivered 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 remaining within the programme as Vision 2025 draws to a close in March 2025.

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 remaining 6 months, there are a number of key projects that the City Council has progressed over the last year or are in the process of delivering. The timescales of some projects are such that they will continue beyond the current Vision 2025 period:

- **Consolidation of an entirely new events programme for the city:** A full year of the new events programme has now been delivered spreading visitor numbers over a full year. The budget for the full programme (including the annual Christmas lights installation) is circa £275k 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 in early 2023 and a second phase was progressed with more planting in early 2024 and introduction of information boards and artistic interpretations of local wildlife installed on site. This has utilised external funding of £85k from the Government's Levelling Up Fund which ended in April 2024, together with extensive volunteer hours. It is very pleasing to note that the site has achieved green flag status at such an early stage of its development.
- **Heritage Action Zone (now complete):** This four-year scheme (commenced April 2020) attracted almost £2m of external Government funding (via Historic England) and focussed on maintaining/protecting/restoring heritage assets within our city centre and lower High Street (which is within a conservation area). The scheme included 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)

The City Council delivered 10 shopfronts, and together with Town Deal Funding saw the completion of Central Market. Work on St Mary's Guildhall is now complete for phase one and potential uses in future explored. 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 (although the HAZ funded elements are now delivered).

- **Leisure Strategy Work:** This comprehensive piece of work continues, refreshing our key strategies in relation to sports field and built leisure facility provision in the city, but undertaken on a wider footprint across Central Lincolnshire to maximise the use of the facilities available. This work will continue throughout 2024 with specialist studies to be commissioned across the three districts.
- **Preparations for New Refuse Collection, Street Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance Service:** This continues to be an extensive project and has taken a significant amount of officer time over the last two years and will continue to do so over the years ahead leading up to the end of the current contract with BIFFA in September 2026. The City Council has completed the procurement phase for waste collection and street cleansing - balancing the cost of provision with the changes required by the Environment Act 2021 and customer expectations regarding service standards. The resulting contract has been awarded and work will now commence on planning delivery of the new contract, which includes the Government's requirement to offer a separate food waste service to all households in the city by April 2026.

Grounds maintenance procurement work has started and invitations for expressions of interest in the contract will be advertised to suppliers from mid-October 2024. The contract is scheduled to be awarded in late Spring 2025, for a commencement of service provision from September 2026.

Greyfriars: Following an announcement of additional funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), works have now started to begin to repair and re-develop the iconic Greyfriars Building. The £3.032m project is funded through the NLHF, Lincoln Town Deal Fund, the Council, Heritage Trust Lincolnshire (HTL), Lincolnshire Pilgrim Trust and Garfield Weston Foundation. To deliver these works, the contractors assigned to the project are Alan Staley Building Contractors (ASBC). ASBC are Heritage and Conservation Specialists, dedicated to restoring historic structures. Works are expected to take approximately 12 months to complete, ahead of opening in early Autumn 2025.

- **Harlequin:** The Harlequin project comprises neighbouring 20-22 Steep Hill (named 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. These have now been leased to HTL. Works started on site in January 2024 and is scheduled to complete by late Autumn 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):** This three-year project commenced in July 2023 and seeks to engage the public in the important history of some of our key parks and open spaces. An events/activities programme has sought to engage 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. It is on track to deliver its outputs within the three year term.

5. Recommendation

- 5.1 That Performance Scrutiny Committee consider the progress made under the Remarkable Place Vision strategic theme alongside the more detailed reports from both the Portfolio Holder for Remarkable Place and the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth when they attend committee to deliver their annual reports.

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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