

**LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL
NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**

**GREATER LINCOLNSHIRE JOINT STRATEGIC
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

3 September 2021

PRESENT: -

Members –

Councillor M Hill (Lincolnshire County Council) in the Chair.

Councillor P Bradwell (Lincolnshire County Council),
Councillors R Waltham (North Lincolnshire Council),
Councillors P Jackson and S Shreeve (North East Lincolnshire Council), and
Pat Doody (Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership).

Officers –

Debbie Barnes, Andy Gutherson, Lee Sirdifield and Chris O'Rourke (Lincolnshire County Council),
Denise Hyde, Simon Green and Adam Lovell (North Lincolnshire Council),
Clive Tritton (North East Lincolnshire Council) and
Ruth Carver (Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership).

Richard Mell (Secretariat – North Lincolnshire Council).

The meeting was held at Church Square House, Scunthorpe.

17. **SUBSTITUTIONS** – There were no substitutions.
18. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – No declarations of interest were declared by members.
19. **MINUTES – Resolved** – That the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 25 June 2021 be approved as a correct record and authorise the chair to sign.
20. **LINCOLNSHIRE DAY** – Further to minute 15, the Executive Director of Place, Lincolnshire County Council submitted a report updating the Joint Committee of progress to date on the agreed programme of activities to promote and celebrate Lincolnshire Day on 1 October 2021. These would be delivered jointly by the three member authorities of the Joint Committee.

The Executive Director in his report set out details of the content of the agreed programme of events contained within each of the three key elements of celebration activities – 'Civic Celebration', 'Greater Lincolnshire Menu' and 'Schools'. The programme would deliver the following outcomes –

- Increased pride in the county
- An event that goes from strength to strength
- Strong local activity that inspires and celebrates, and
- Promotional effort that supports year-round campaigns.

Resolved – (a) That the progress of the agreed plans for Lincolnshire Day on 1 October 2021 be noted, and (b) that the plans’ continued delivery through engagement with key stakeholders as outlined in the report be supported.

21. **TOURISM – OPPORTUNITIES TO DEVELOP THE BUSINESS TOURISM MARKET ACROSS GREATER LINCOLNSHIRE** – The Executive Director of Place, Lincolnshire County Council submitted a report setting out work being carried out to develop on a joint Lincolnshire basis a ‘Greater Lincolnshire Business Tourism’ product. It also tasked officers with delivering a programme which created an uplift in tourism income to the area through increasing the amount of expenditure by business tourists and considered whether a collaborative approach to tourism could provide the blueprint for collaboration on wider place marketing.

The report summarised ongoing collaborative Visitor Economy work being carried out by officers of Lincolnshire County Council, North Lincolnshire Council and North East Lincolnshire Council together with local district councils, Visit Lincoln and Lincolnshire Coastal Business Improvement District. It also explained associated work linked to the government’s former ‘Tourism Sector Deal’ which had now been superseded in June 2021 by its ‘Visitor Economy Recovery Plan’ supported by significant levels of funding through the ‘Help to Grow- Digital Scheme’, ‘Community Renewal Fund’ and the ‘Levelling Up Fund’.

The Executive Director in his report explained that a popular and successful two phased development of the www.visitlincolnshire.com website had been carried out, and emphasised the importance of tourism product development through a strong and coordinated approach to attract additional expenditure especially from business tourists. There was an opportunity to design what businesses needed for the future and to increase levels of spend by business tourists through two distinct approaches - increasing the amount of business events taking place in the area, and providing opportunities for the high numbers of visiting business representatives to spend money in the evening economy. Officers had commissioned a feasibility study, due to report in September 2021 that would provide –

- An improved understanding of the future needs and trends within business tourism
- An overview of where Greater Lincolnshire can capitalise on these needs and trends; district by district and business tourism category by category
- An appreciation of the attitudes and aspirations towards business tourism amongst the different categories of visitor economy providers in Greater Lincolnshire, and
- Understand potential barriers to success for business tourism within Greater Lincolnshire

The study would be in two parts, with the first part completed by the end of August 2021-

- (i) **Base Line Analysis, mapping, interviewing stakeholders** – a baseline review to map out the existing offer, clarify the challenges and opportunities in developing business events in Greater Lincolnshire and the evidence to support a strategy for growing business including buyer input and views.
- (ii) **Vision, Strategy & Development Plan** – a visioning and engagement stage that sets out the ambition for growing business events in Greater Lincolnshire, gets the buy-in of key stakeholders and sets out the actions needed to deliver growth.

The report highlighted enormous benefits of the Greater Lincolnshire partnership working together on developing business tourism and providing strategic leadership on a fast-developing sector.

The Joint Committee discussed the development of a Tourism Plan which should contain a statement of ambition to include clear suggestions for the tourism industry as to how they would be supported with measurable targets and outcomes stating what could be offered and achieved collectively and by when. Similarly, this should address 'innovative tourism' across Greater Lincolnshire and how to utilise funding sources.

Ruth Carver (GLLEP) referred to the inclusion of refreshing jointly a previous 'hotel study' across Greater Lincolnshire to ascertain what the product offering was and also asking what customers would like as part of an 'active leisure market' to encourage greater numbers of potential tourists to stay longer.

The Joint Committee emphasised the need to identify changes to tourists' behaviour 'post pandemic', with target hardening and providing opportunities for the 'staycation' and 'business tourism' market, and also identify further business opportunities available around events. It was important to really understand what Greater Lincolnshire offered and to develop that narrative and for example providing bespoke packages on offer through the visitlincolnshire.com website.

Resolved – (a) That development work on developing a Greater Lincolnshire Business Tourism product be addressed on a Joint Lincolnshire basis; (b) that officers deliver a programme which creates an uplift in tourism income to the area through increasing the amount of expenditure by business tourists; (c) that a collaborative approach to tourism be the blueprint for collaboration on wider place marketing, and (d) that the development of 'Tourism Plan' be submitted to the next meeting with a statement of ambition to include clear suggestions for the tourism industry across Greater Lincolnshire and how (i) they will be supported innovatively across various markets (ii) utilising funding sources, with measurable targets and outcomes stating what can be offered and achieved collectively and by when.

22. **COLLABORATION ON SKILLS INITIATIVES** – The Strategic Regeneration Advisor North East Lincolnshire Council submitted a report seeking agreement to the principle of collaboration to address specific skills priorities common to the three member local authority areas and to add value to the work of the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (GLLEP) Skills Advisory Panel, together with consideration of joint strategic skills needing to be addressed on a joint Lincolnshire basis and to develop themes for collaboration for consideration at a future meeting.

The report stated that with the skills landscape changing faster than ever, there was a significant opportunity for member councils to collaborate across authorities in the years ahead to consider common challenges and to work collectively to consider new approaches to ensure all of residents benefitted from the enormous opportunity for economic growth in Greater Lincolnshire. This was particularly timely as the focus moved towards the opportunities afforded by the Shared Prosperity Fund from 2022 and the importance of ensuring that Greater Lincolnshire's skills requirements were reflected in that programme. A number of reasons for developing a new skills eco-system for Greater Lincolnshire were identified and the important role of the GLLEP in developing skills thinking in the region through its Skills Advisory Panel highlighted.

The Strategic Regeneration Advisor in his report explained that the skills ecosystem was complex and multi-layered and through a Greater Lincolnshire Skills Eco-System, the following roles and responsibilities would be developed jointly:

- **Businesses** forecasting and communicating skills needs that impact sectors; influencing, disrupting, and shaping the provider markets; galvanising sector voices,
- **Providers** ensuring responsive skills offer; marketing the offer; convening around specialisms; cooperating on specific skills challenges –by sector and by skills set,
- **Conveners** facilitating and enabling challenging conversations; engendering system level accountability; providing high level economic assessment; influencing policy and
- **Individuals** accessing information, advice and guidance; engaging in lifelong learning as a route to prosperity.

It was proposed that officers would jointly progress stakeholder engagement across Greater Lincolnshire, with individuals, providers, universities and businesses, and local authorities, in the next 6-12 months to identify potential areas of focus. This would be reported back to the Joint Committee to consider findings and recommendations for next steps. Once priorities were finalised, a future report would identify specific outcomes and those initiatives which could be put in place to meet those outcomes. Examples of areas where a joined-up approach may be appropriate across Greater Lincolnshire were summarised in the report.

The Joint Committee through debate considered key elements of what would be a significant piece of work which would be enhanced further through the opportunity of devolution. These included –

- Improving collaboration not competition especially in the post 16 (further education) sector, with improved focus on re-aligning skills required by business and career opportunities (expanding the current work of the Lincolnshire CC 'Employment and Skills Commissioning Group' across Greater Lincolnshire).
- Develop a clear understanding of what skills are required by businesses, across established and new sectors to raise ambition, and to encourage schools and colleges to give focus to providing education for work and improve careers advice.
- Raising aspirations, ambition and skills of more deprived communities providing opportunities across various business sectors, and

- Providing focussed key messages to business, education and individuals promoting skills needed with tangible outcomes.

Resolved - (a) That the principle of collaboration to address local skills issues which are common to the three local authorities be approved; (b) that officers be requested to develop further the priorities set out in paragraph 2.13 of the report and consider approaches to collaboration for those specific themes and others as they emerge; (c) that the Joint Committee work in conjunction with the GLLEP Skills Advisory Panel on a joined up approach to the emerging Shared Prosperity Fund to ensure that these specific issues be prioritised, particularly with a view to developing new ways of working and challenging existing approaches, and (d) that Chief Executives consider and move forward proposals to improve collaboration not competition especially in the post 16 (further education) with improved focus on re-aligning skills required by business and career opportunities (considering the example of the current work of the Lincolnshire CC 'Employment and Skills Commissioning Group' realigning skills across Greater Lincolnshire).

23. **LEVELLING UP WHITE PAPER AND COUNTY DEALS** – The Deputy Chief Executive, North Lincolnshire Council submitted a report updating the Joint Committee on the forthcoming 'Levelling Up' White Paper expected to be published in October 2021 and considered what this meant for Greater Lincolnshire in the context of a recent letter from the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government in respect of 'County Deals'. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government was also inviting local areas to commence conversations about devolution options which would be set out in the white paper (including County Deals).

The report explained that the 'Levelling Up' White Paper presented an opportunity to put councils at the heart of delivering the Government's programme to improve opportunities in all parts of the country focusing on improving living standards, growing the private sector, improving health, education, and policing, strengthening communities and local leadership and restoring pride in place. In advance of its publication, the Secretary of State wrote to local authorities setting out a commitment to devolving power to local places and closer to citizens through strong local accountability. Engagement with local authorities would take place and opportunities for devolution would be achieved beyond the combined mayoral authority, which remained an option for those areas that were interested.

In addition, 'County Deals' would be introduced to areas where this could provide a better fit beyond city regions. County Deals would be guided by the following principles:

- Strong local leadership will be fundamental, providing a single point of accountability.
- County devolution should operate across a sensible economic geography of a suitable scale, and one based on local identity, bringing local partners together and with powers exercised at the right level to make a difference for local communities.
- Proposals expected to demonstrate improvements in governance, efficiency, and local service join-up that support the delivery of levelling up.
- To include significant reform proposals, including ways to achieve greater financial efficiency.

The report stated that it was anticipated that there would be early pilots agreed in the short term for readily deliverable proposals on County Deals. It was therefore proposed that the Joint Committee support further work to be undertaken via the Joint Intelligence and Strategy Unit to develop a range of options setting out what types of flexibilities and specific powers the Joint Committee would like to see from a County Deal for Greater Lincolnshire. Options that would need to be considered and demonstrated were also summarised in the report.

The Chief Executive, Lincolnshire County Council informed the Joint Committee that recently Chief Executives had met with government officials on key requirements of devolution for Greater Lincolnshire. Strategic level 'asks' were likely to focus on five themes of (i) Defence and associated businesses, (ii) Agri-Food, (iii) Tourism, (iv) Carbon-neutral/Clean Energy and (v) Freeport/ports, and a further specific devolution focus on infrastructure, skills, flood-management, research and development and transport. She explained that a vision on these key elements and focus would have to be worked up quickly to stay ahead and be reported back to government stating what Greater Lincolnshire would look in five years' time following devolution.

The Joint Committee through debate considered –

- Integration of governance and leadership to fulfil government ambitions for devolution and the challenge, opportunity and realism of reform to support and enhance a strong narrative to drive the devolution agenda, and
- Early engagement and connecting with business as key stakeholders on devolution

Resolved – (a) That the report be noted and further proposed work to develop options on a County Deal proposal be supported; (b) that the Joint Intelligence and Strategy Unit develop a range of options setting out what types of flexibilities and specific powers the Joint Committee would like to see from a County Deal for Greater Lincolnshire which would be submitted for consideration to a future meeting; (c) that the GLLEP with the support of member councils, commence conversations and engagement with all sectors of business on the opportunities devolution presents, and (d) that Chief Executives develop a Work Plan and Timeline as soon as possible on the content and proposals for devolution (what it would look like for Greater Lincolnshire), together with engagement with key stakeholders to drive forward the agenda for devolution at pace.

24. **DENISE HYDE – CHIEF EXECUTIVE, NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL** – Cllr Rob Waltham informed the Joint Committee that Denise would be retiring as Chief Executive of North Lincolnshire Council shortly and therefore this would be her last meeting of the Joint Committee.

The chair and members thanked Denise for her professional support and hard work over the years and wished her a long, healthy and happy retirement.

Denise thanked the chair and members for their comments and wished the Joint Committee all the very best for the future.

Resolved – That the comments of the chair and members of the Joint Committee above and the response of the Chief Executive, North Lincolnshire Council be noted.