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**Prosperous Communities
Committee**

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Economic Growth – A Partnership Approach

Report by:

Chief Executive

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Purpose / Summary:

This report outlines the national and local agendas including devolution and proposes partnerships arrangements to support the delivery of the West Lindsey Economic Development Strategy and the growth of Gainsborough.

The report also proposes that the Council invests in the 'place marketing' of Gainsborough to help attract investment to the town and the wider district.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (1) Members agree to the establishment of partnerships outlined in Appendix 1 to deliver on priorities such as agri food, skills, Gainsborough Housing Zone, A15 Hemswell corridor.**
- (2) Members approve the principles for business led and partnership led approaches to successful delivery on growth outcomes.**
- (3) Members support the development of a West Lindsey marketing strategy starting with work on Gainsborough to accelerate housing growth and supplement the housing zone programme.**
- (4) Members approve exploration of how we can work more formally with the Humber LEP.**
- (5) Members approve a councillor workshop on Devolution on the opportunities.**
- (6) that Corporate Policy and Resources Committee be RECOMMENDED to approve £300,000 from the Economic Development – Investment for Growth Reserve for the investment projects outlined in Section 4.8.**
- (7) that Corporate Policy and Resources Committee also RECOMMENDED to give delegated powers to Prosperous Communities Committee to manage and monitor the £300k budget and delivery of the programme (subject to changes in Constitution at Council on 27th July 2015).**

IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

The Local Government Act 2000 and the subsequent Local Government and Involvement in Public Health Act (2007) gave local authorities the power to promote or improve the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of their area.

Financial: FIN/44/16

It is anticipated that the proposed '*West Lindsey Economic Growth Partnership*' will be supported through existing partnership resources and officer time. Any specific initiatives that require additional Council resources and are not already budgeted for will require the approval of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.

The Council has secured external funding for development of the Housing Zone and the Agri Food LDO along the A15 corridor.

It is recommended that Committee make a request to Corporate Policy and Resources Committee to allocate £300,000 for this investment to support delivery of the programme which will include match funding that of external funding and investment by partners. This budget will be financed from the Economic Development, Investment for Growth Reserve. In addition a further request that this this budget be delegated to the Prosperous Communities Committee. (Subject to the approval of changes to the Constitution by the Council on 27th July 2015)

Staffing :

There are no direct staffing implications arising from this report. It is proposed that the partnership arrangements be supported with existing staff resources and those of partners.

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :

This report has no direct equality and diversity implications.

Risk Assessment :

The aim of the proposed partnership arrangements is to provide a clear governance structure to oversee and drive both the economic and housing growth of the district and Gainsborough. In particular, the partnership arrangements are intended to help mitigate the following risks:

Failure to deliver the planned economic growth of the district – a partnership delivery plan is being developed to set out the responsibilities and actions of all partners to deliver the district's economic development strategy. Achieving the ambitions of the economic development strategy is not something that the council can do in isolation. It is imperative that it collaborates with the private sector, voluntary and community organisations, and other public sector bodies to achieve the goals. The proposed partnership arrangements will help the partnership approach and oversee the implementation of the delivery plan.

Failure to deliver the ambitions of the Greater Gainsborough Housing Zone and the wider housing growth within the district – Again, the proposed partnership arrangements are intended to help secure the commitment and involvement of all stakeholders who are critical to the successful delivery of the housing zone and housing development. A Housing Zone programme plan is being developed that the partnership will be responsible for overseeing. In addition, work of the Local Plan, and the 'Gainsborough chapter', complements the Housing Zone and the wider housing aspirations. It is also intended to develop a district-wide housing strategy that takes account of the market realities and opportunities as well as housing need across the district.

Private-sector led partnership develops an approach that is contrary to the aims and policies of the council – clear terms of reference will be developed for the partnership, including the principle of transparency and declaration of interests. All partners will be asked to commit to the aims and ethos of the proposed partnership, in summary, to work together constructively for the benefit of residents, businesses and to support the growth of West Lindsey. The proposed partnership arrangements complement the Council's own governance arrangements and have no decision-making responsibility for matters that are the responsibility of West Lindsey District Council.

Failure for the proposed partnership arrangements to be deemed adequate by Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) for overseeing the development and implementation of the 'Greater Gainsborough Housing Zone' - officers have worked closely with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), the administering body for Housing Zones, in the development of the proposed partnership arrangements. The HCA is supportive of the proposed Growth Partnership arrangements and, in particular, the involvement of the private sector.

Failure to secure the engagement and commitment of other partners – Given shrinking resources and competing priorities amongst all partners there is a real prospect that partners will prove unable to support the proposed partnership arrangements, or pay lip-service to them without taking responsibility for their part in delivering on the district's growth ambitions.

Risk Assessment Continued:

Considerable time has gone into meeting and discussing with partners both the principles and proposed arrangements for the Growth Partnership. All partners recognise the benefits of working together to achieve our shared objectives. The proposed partnership arrangements have been developed to take into account partner's resources and a streamlined structure is proposed with the aim of retaining partner commitment.

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities :

There are no direct climate related risks arising from this report.

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

West Lindsey Economic Development Strategy 2014
Gainsborough Regained
Gainsborough Growth Point Programme 2007

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

No

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

No

1 National and Local Context

- 1.1 Since 2010, the abolition of regional government has meant the responsibility for strategic growth and development has been redefined over the last five years. The establishment of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) has seen the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (GLLEP) established and receiving responsibility for over £100 million of Government and European funds for growth and development.
- 1.2 The GLLEP has been establishing its new responsibilities and over the last six months are working closely with Districts with new arrangements such as District Leaders meeting regularly with the Chair of GLLEP, and District Chief Executives responsible for sponsoring co-ordination of District/County work in thematic areas such as Tourism, Skills and Housing.

The Council locally has appointed a new Strategic Lead for Economic Development & Neighbourhoods to build relationships with partners outside the District and align delivery of the Council's economic priorities to GLLEP strategies and funding.

- 1.3 The other area that has particularly developed over the last three years is the devolution agenda, starting with the major cities, Government agreed 'City Deals' where funding was devolved for areas such as skills, giving local government and LEPs more control over what were previously decisions made at a national level.
- 1.4 This has evolved into devolution deals where the most ambitious and notable deal is the Greater Manchester authorities securing funding for local government, health, crime and transport. Other areas of the country have followed suit with Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Hampshire, Cambridgeshire, Gloucestershire some of the County, Districts and unitary councils providing collective leadership to prepare devolution deals in areas such as those secured by Greater Manchester.
- 1.5 The Leader of Lincolnshire, including the two unitary councils on the South Humber (who are members of the GLLEP) have met and tasked their Chief Executive to prepare options for consideration. The County Council have also funded work to analyse what could be devolved and have announced that they would not pursue a Unitary Council model, but a model that meets central government requests, which is a collective leadership and ambition.
- 1.6 The Leaders of Lincolnshire's County and Districts Councils, including the three Unitary Councils. At this stage it is advised that Council through its political leadership, members and officers focus on establishing what is needed to be evolved that would benefit Greater Lincolnshire's residents and businesses. Building a collective voice and relationship across all councils is deemed crucial and stressed so

by Government Ministers. The Ministers and Government will be testing that all Leaders at a local level are proactively working with each other and have a relationship of trust as they feel any devolution must be based on collective ambitions therefore until we have this ambition it will not be clear precisely what the Government mechanism will be, for example a combined authority for Greater Lincolnshire. What has been stressed by the County Council earlier this month is that “Unitary Councils are off the table” this is in recognition by the County, Districts and Unitaries that they need to work in collaboration and state what are the priorities for the area.

2 Proposals for Growth Delivery

2.1 The Council has long held ambitions to grow both the economy and population of the district, and Gainsborough as its principal town. The sustainability of the District, especially as its population ages needs a more diverse mix of employment and adults of employment age in the long term. The District especially Gainsborough and the market towns need to attract more families and young people who chose to live and work in the District.

2.2 It is recognised that due to the district’s sparse population it is difficult to attract certain investment and services, hence the desire to increase the number of households. Conversely, without a large pool of skilled workers it can be difficult to attract and support the growth of new and indigenous businesses. For this reason, the Council has led the development of a series of complementary strategic plans intended to drive both the economic and housing growth of the district. These included the Gainsborough Growth Point programme, Gainsborough Regained (a masterplan for the town centre) and its subsequent refresh (investingainsborough.co.uk).

2.3 More recently, in 2014 the Council adopted an economic growth strategy for the district that sets out a 20 year vision for West Lindsey as a resilient and diverse area which has embraced sustainable growth whilst retaining its quality, heritage and character for the benefit of all. As part of this strategy the Council is currently promoting a number of key regeneration and development initiatives including:-

- i) A15 Growth Corridor, Agri-Food Zone and LDO
- ii) South West Ward and Selective Licensing
- iii) Hemswell Strategic Development Area
- iv) West Lindsey Skills Board
- v) Gainsborough Town Centre Investment Framework
- vi) Gainsborough Housing Zone and Sustainable Urban Extensions

What is now critical is to put in place the appropriate arrangements to deliver on these strategic ambitions. Whilst the Council has the power to promote the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of its area

and is leading on the development of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan, it will be unable to achieve this in isolation.

2.4 It is important to harness the expertise, commitment and resources of partners from the public, private and voluntary sectors to really focus on the delivery of West Lindsey's economic development and housing plans. As a result, it is proposed to establish a West Lindsey Growth Partnership. This partnership would work closely with the Humber LEP and Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership and engage with the wider business community and wider interest group through a new district wide stakeholder forum. The proposed Growth Partnership will have two main responsibilities:

- i) To drive the delivery of the district's economic development strategy and support the growth of businesses within the area.
- ii) To drive and promote the growth and regeneration of Gainsborough, as a place, for the wider benefit of the district.

2.5 It is proposed that we explore more closer working with the Humber LEP. West Lindsey's relationship economically for its businesses and residents look as much to the Humber as it does to Lincoln, Sheffield/Doncaster region called the Sheffield City region we are already working closely with authorities who are members of the Sheffield City Regional Combined Authority, such as Bassetlaw and Doncaster more closer working with the Humber LEP would help to achieve an aim of the District benefiting from the Humber Growth and providing opportunities for the District.

3 The West Lindsey Growth Partnership – driving economic development within the district

3.1 The Council recognises that its economic growth strategy cannot be delivered by it alone. Therefore it is proposed to establish a strong partnership in order to achieve its economic vision, with the local authority adopting an enabling and facilitating role.

3.2 This approach has been further developed in the economic strategy's emerging delivery plan, which is founded on 5 basic mutually reinforcing principles. These are:-

- i) Partnership & Subsidiarity – where the partner best placed to lead and deliver given actions should be the one to do so.
- ii) Private Sector Focused and Commercial Driven – recognising that the private sector is where economic growth will actually take place.
- iii) Evidence based Smart Specialisation – with the District focusing on exploiting its demonstrable strengths and comparative advantages.
- iv) Sustainable, Adaptive & Responsive – to changing circumstances and emerging opportunities
- v) Deliverability – actions need to be deliverable in practice and closely monitored accordingly.

- 3.3 Following these principles economic delivery action plans will be based on themes such as agri-food, skills and housing.
- 3.5 Crucially, and in line with the stated principles of the Delivery Plan, there is an explicit understanding that, in order to achieve real sustainable economic growth for West Lindsey, each action plan requires a dedicated thematic Delivery Board, which needs to be ideally private sector led. This means a predominance of private sector representation, chaired by an independent strategic champion, and supported and facilitated by West Lindsey District Council.
- 3.6 The Thematic Delivery Board will, via the Chair, report progress with regard to the delivery of its respective Action Plan to the new West Lindsey Economic Growth Partnership which will be responsible for overseeing the effective integration, implementation and performance of the Delivery Plan as a whole.
- 3.7 In line with the principles and practice of both the thematic Delivery Groups and Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (GLLEP), it is envisaged that the West Lindsey Economic Growth Partnership will have a suitability skilled and experienced chair and be made up of individuals capable of driving forward the district's ambitious economic growth plans.
- 3.8 The Chair will convene the designated strategic lead for each theme. Together with the Elected Member Lead for Economic Development and Chief Executive of West Lindsey District Council, plus representatives from other strategic partners, (e.g. the Department of Business, Innovation & Skills, DEFRA, the Homes & Communities Agency, Greater Lincolnshire LEP, and Lincolnshire County Council). The Partnership will drive and steer the District's growth priorities.

4 The West Lindsey Growth Partnership – driving the growth and regeneration of Gainsborough

- 4.1 The growth of Gainsborough, and delivery of the Housing Zone and Sustainable Urban Extension, will be dependent on the economic opportunities within the wider district and surrounding areas (including neighbouring locations such as the 'South Humber Bank', Doncaster/Sheffield city-region, North Nottinghamshire and Central Lincolnshire. Likewise, Gainsborough's success should also benefit the wider district. As a result, it is proposed that the West Lindsey Growth Partnership takes responsibility for overseeing the development of Gainsborough as a place.
- 4.2 It is proposed that the strategic board of the West Lindsey Growth Partnership will oversee and drive the following four programmes of work relating to Gainsborough:
- i) 'Greater Gainsborough Housing Zone'
 - ii) Gainsborough town centre investment framework

- iii) South West Ward Regeneration programme
- iv) Infrastructure and connectivity

- 4.3. All the above programmes are likely to have operational project teams supporting their development and implementation. These are in place or being developed for the work areas i)-iii). The infrastructure and connectivity theme is yet to be scoped and is likely to flow from the town centre regeneration and housing zone work.
- 4.4 Appendix 1 illustrates how the work programmes relate to the strategic board of the West Lindsey Growth Partnership and the wider stakeholders within Gainsborough.
- 4.5 Linked to delivering the growth ambitions of the district is the need to clearly reposition Gainsborough, its opportunities and its growth potential.
- 4.6 Within 60 minutes' drive-time of Gainsborough is a population of 2.5 million together with a diverse and dynamic economy base. It is important that we are able to clearly tell the story of Gainsborough and the wider district to those who we wish to attract to live, work or invest (including the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership) in the district.
- 4.7 Good progress has been made with partners in developing their understanding about the opportunities within Gainsborough and West Lindsey and the Greater Gainsborough Housing Zone has helped put the place on the national radar. It is proposed that we build on this momentum and develop a clear marketing strategy for the area.
- 4.8 Over £160,000 funding has been secured nationally and partners have contributed resources, including officer time. Specific funding will be needed for the marketing and regeneration and match funding, particularly for the Town Centre and South West Ward. It is proposed that £300,000 is allocated from the Economic Development – Investment for Growth Reserve, for this purpose. Committee is recommended to request the budget provision of £300k be delegated by the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee to this Committee who will approve the funds more specifically to deliver the programme outcomes.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 If the proposal to establish the West Lindsey Growth Partnership is approved then the next steps will be to recruit an independent and suitably experienced Chair, as well as other board members. It is anticipated that an inaugural meeting could be held in late September/early October.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 It is recommended that the District puts in place partnership arrangements that will help deliver on its ambitious economic and housing growth ambitions. It is timely to do this now to enable the district to capitalise on the current upturn in the economy and the increasing market interest in the District in general and Gainsborough in particular.

Appendix 1

Economic Growth and Place Making Governance Structure

