

Greater Grimsby Board

Minutes of Virtual Meeting 1st November, 2022 at 2.30 p.m.

Attendance:

- Chair - David Ross (The David Ross Foundation)
- Neale Coleman
- Katherine Cousins (BEIS)
- Richard Crossick (Orsted)
- Darren Cunningham (Phillips66)
- Julian Free (University of Lincoln)
- Councillor Philip Jackson (North East Lincolnshire Council)
- Lord Kerslake
- Lia Nici (MP for Greater Grimsby)
- Jason Papprell (Engie)
- Professor Dave Petley (Hull University)
- David Talbot (CATCH)
- Martin Vickers (MP for Cleethorpes)
- Rob Walsh (North East Lincolnshire Council and North East Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group)

Also in Attendance: –

- Damien Jaines-White (North East Lincolnshire Council)
- Sharon Wroot (North East Lincolnshire Council)
- Paul Windley (North East Lincolnshire Council)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence from this meeting were received from Ruth Carver, Emma Toulson, Simon Bird, Julie Walmsley and Daf Williams.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest from any Board member in respect of items on the agenda for this meeting.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the Greater Grimsby Project Board meeting held on 21st March 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

4. Strategic Update

The Board received an update on strategic matters.

Mr Walsh noted that it had been one year since publication of the Levelling Up White Paper and he reported on the various ministerial visits to Grimsby that had taken place in the meantime. This productive activity had paused somewhat as a result of the political turbulence at a national level but engagement had been resurrected as a result of Michael Gove returning to office as the Secretary of State for Levelling Up. It was hoped that a further visit would follow but it was important that this resulted in something. A key consideration was the relationship with Homes England as a catalyst for housing growth in the town centre.

Mr Walsh reported on progress with Greater Lincolnshire devolution with the three upper tier Council Leaders determined to secure a deal for the area. This was seen as vital in terms of securing investment.

The Humber Freeport continued to move forward and Mr Walsh touched on the issue of Investment Zones, noting that the issue was now under consideration by the Secretary of State.

It was noted that the Future High Streets flip funding had now been approved, avoiding the need for the council to borrow money to fund the purchase of Freshney Place shopping centre.

In conclusion, Mr Walsh hoped that the Board could see signs of positivity.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

5. Grimsby Town Centre Update

The Board received an update on progress with implementation of the Town's Fund projects within the Grimsby town centre.

Mr Jaines White outlined key milestones and progress with the six Towns Fund projects as well as the Freshney Place leisure scheme and the proposed transportation hub.

The Chair enquired when the St James House development was expected to open. Mr Jaines White expected the refurbishment to start in early 2023, leading it to be open by the end of 2023.

Councillor Jackson noted progress made with the Onside Youth Zone project and hoped to see spades in the ground in the near future. Mr Jaines White added that the council continued to work closely with Onside and they now had a preferred contractor with a view to work commencing in early 2023.

The Chair enquired how many young people were expected to use the facility. Mr Jaines White agreed to find out and circulate the figures.

Lord Kerlake was impressed by the progress being made. He enquired about key risks and whether there was anything the Board could assist with.

Mr Jaines White felt that inflation was a key risk in terms of construction costs. He added that securing Levelling Up funding for Freshney Place and the transportation hub would be particularly helpful.

Ms Wroot felt that scheme viability would need to be kept under close scrutiny. The Board's assistance through continued conversations with the Government, and Homes England in particular, would be very much appreciated.

The Chair noted he had recently met with the Chair of Homes England who seemed to be very committed to Grimsby. He agreed to follow that up.

Mr Coleman felt that it would be useful to understand who North East Lincolnshire Council should be engaging with at Homes England.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

6. Skills Update

The Board received an update setting out the steps taken so far towards the development of a Skills Strategy and Action Plan

Mr Jaines White noted the appointment of a Strategic Skills Lead to take this work forward. He outlined the emerging themes from initial consultation with partners, around communications, aspiration, careers support, collaboration and funding. The following initial priorities had been identified:

- Increasing the number of Adult Learners in Education
- Narrowing the gap, between North East Lincolnshire and the national average, of those with no qualifications
- Narrowing the gap, between North East Lincolnshire and the national average, of those without a Level 3 qualification
- Increasing progression rates to Higher Education

The Skills Strategy and Action Plan would be out for consultation imminently and Mr Jaines White highlighted that, while the council had provided resources, it was for everyone to come together to facilitate change.

Lord Kerlake enquired whether there had been any change to attainment levels locally, noting the previous pattern whereby levels seemed to be an issue at secondary level.

Mr Jaines White agreed to find out if there had been any recent analysis of the attainment levels.

Mr Free highlighted plans to open a centre in the East Marsh to assist with access and progression into higher education. He also noted the Our Future project which was offering support with start ups and skills.

Councillor Jackson commented that it was vital to get into school and get messages over to young people about opportunities available in North East Lincolnshire.

Ms Nici added that there was a need to engage with Franklin College and the Grimsby Institute to establish what they were doing.

RESOLVED – That the update and progress made be noted.

7. Next Meeting

Mr Walsh suggested that the Board review its future role to ensure that it was providing the required strategic overview of key priorities. This was agreed by the Board and it was advised that the next meeting should take place in December 2022.

There being no further business, the Chair declare the meeting closed at 2.56 p.m.