

Greater Grimsby Board

Minutes of Virtual Meeting 15th November, 2023 at 9.30 a.m.

Attendance:

- Chair - David Ross (The David Ross Foundation)
- Julian Free (University of Lincoln)
- Councillor Philip Jackson (North East Lincolnshire Council)
- Lia Nici (MP for Greater Grimsby)
- Jason Papprell (Engie)
- David Talbot (CATCH)
- Martin Vickers (MP for Cleethorpes)
- David Walsh (Historic England)
- Rob Walsh (North East Lincolnshire Council)
- Daf Williams (ABP)

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 Lord Lamont, Simon Bird, Professor Petley, Emma Toulson, Ruth Carver, Julie Walmsley and Neale Coleman.

2. Lord Kerslake

The Board took the opportunity to pay tribute to Lord Kerslake, who passed away in July. Lord Kerslake was a valued member of this Board and a huge advocate for this area. The Board asked for their condolences to be forwarded to Lord Kerslake's wife and family.

3. Declarations of Interest

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

4. Grimsby Town Centre Regeneration

The Board received a presentation providing an update on regeneration schemes within Grimsby Town Centre.

Mr Jaines-White provided an update on progress with a number of schemes within the Grimsby Masterplan – St James House, the Activation Fund, Riverhead Square, Projekt Renewable, Alexandra Dock, the Horizon Youth Zone, Central Library, the Public Realm and Connectivity project, and the Freshney Place Leisure Scheme. Key risks were noted around inflation and the rising costs of materials and labour. He further reported on a number of cultural events that had been held over the past year. In addition, there had been the emergence of the 2025 Group, formed by businesses to act as an advocate for the town centre. Next steps would be heavily focused on delivery but also further developing the relationship with Homes England and piloting a long term plan for the Towns Fund.

The Board welcomed the progress reported.

Lia Nici MP enquired about plans for Victoria Street. Mr Jaines-White responded that a number of works had been completed to renovate the exterior of buildings and there was currently scaffolding on the House of Fraser building for similar works. It was hoped that this would give credence to approach the owners of buildings on the other side of Victoria Street to improve the condition of their buildings.

Councillor Jackson requested clarification of the expected completion date on the Horizon Youth Zone. Mr Jaines-White agreed to provide a definitive date.

Lia Nici MP felt that there was a real problem with a shortage of supported and adapted housing in the town centre and asked if discussions were taking place with Homes England on this issue. Mr Jaines-White confirmed that there had been discussions.

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.

Mr Free reported that inter-university plans were still being progressed with a view to establishing educational sites within deprived areas. Work was also continuing with the sea food sector to increase the university presence to support research and a fish training facility.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

5. Greater Lincolnshire Devolution

The Board received an update on plans to progress a devolution deal for Greater Lincolnshire.

Mr Walsh noted that the Government's Autumn Statement was expected to include a devolution deal for Greater Lincolnshire. He set out the expected key features of the deal which would see the introduction of a mayoral combined authority over the next 18-24 months. He set out the funding that this was expected to bring and the governance arrangements that would need to be in place. The Humber was a red line for the government in negotiations and this would be reflected in the deal documentation. It was anticipated that the Humber Freeport would be at the heart of that. Should the deal progress then there would be a period of consultation and it was expected that mayoral elections would take place in 2025. Mr Walsh concluded by noting that an appropriate letter of support from this Board would be welcomed in taking this forward.

The Board welcomed the update and it was felt that there was a need for clarity over the level of business engagement in the Humber-wide collaboration as well as how business representatives would be involved in the combined authority.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

6. Future Governance Arrangements

The Board received a report on the future governance arrangements for this Board.

RESOLVED - That the Terms of Reference, membership and rotation/term of membership of the Greater Grimsby Board be reviewed to ensure it is able to align to the emerging requirements of the Long Term Plan for Towns fund whilst also continuing to discharge its role in relation to Towns Fund.

7. Future Meetings and Frequency

The Board considered the frequency of its future meetings.

The Chair commented that he was happy to resolve this matter with Mr Walsh. The Board supported a more regular cycle of meetings, which as a minimum should be quarterly.

There being no further business, the Chair declare the meeting closed at 10.30 a.m.