

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

LINCOLNSHIRE LAKES

1 OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

1.1 The council has taken delivery of the final report of the Lincolnshire Lakes Feasibility Study.

1.2 The key points in this report are:

- Cabinet endorses a commitment to continue development work on this medium- to long-term, multi-million pound project;
- Cabinet agrees to an 'Investors' Day' and other opportunities to raise awareness and interest in this large-scale development;
- Cabinet notes the opportunities Lincolnshire Lakes provides to create something special, not just for the Humber sub-region, but regionally, thereby raising the profile of Scunthorpe and North Lincolnshire; and.
- Cabinet endorses the key feasibility study findings, notably the technical and economic viability of the project – and recognises its importance in creating an environment that will attract and retain skilled residents and investment in North Lincolnshire.

2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 North Lincolnshire Council has been working for some considerable time with the Regional Development Agency, Yorkshire Forward, and the Scunthorpe Town Team on the Scunthorpe Urban Renaissance Programme.

2.2 The Urban Renaissance Scunthorpe Development Framework Document identifies the way forward to successfully re-position Scunthorpe over the next 10 to 20 years.

- 2.3 Without doubt, Lincolnshire Lakes is key to Scunthorpe and North Lincolnshire's ambitions. At its core, it offers the prospect of a lakeside setting, which would transform the present approach to Scunthorpe.
- 2.4 It would create a major opportunity for biodiversity, alongside an attractive place for living, employment and leisure. In short, it would create, over a number of years, a sustainable economy, bringing financial, social and environmental benefits.
- 2.5 Lincolnshire Lakes provides a major – arguably the major – opportunity to achieve a significant change in the perception of Scunthorpe as a location in high demand for property-led investment. It will create a major waterside setting to the west of Scunthorpe, and a high quality gateway to the town, with a strategic focus on sustainable development.
- 2.6 Yorkshire Forward, the Regional Development Agency for Yorkshire and Humber is fully committed to Lincolnshire Lakes. It does so because it understands the prestigious nature of what is proposed.
- 2.7 Its undoubted potential can be appreciated by the knowledge that, even at a time of economic downturn, there is considerable interest in the location from investors. This is because it offers something different – in terms of its proposed setting – giving a major vote of confidence in the future of Scunthorpe and North Lincolnshire.
- 2.8 The Halcrow Group Ltd was commissioned by North Lincolnshire Council to undertake a feasibility study for Lincolnshire Lakes, and to investigate its potential for delivery, both in terms of technical issues and economic viability.
- 2.9 The study was undertaken in two phases: Phase 1 provides 'baseline assessments'; Phase 2 develops detailed assessments and creates options for a Masterplan for the area.
- 2.10 Phase 1 would provide for up to 3,000 new dwellings and 25,000 square metres of new employment space. There would be a series of new water bodies and a new road access to the development – as well as incorporating sustainable design principles and energy systems. Together, these features would establish a unique environment, attractive to inward investment and land development.

- 2.11 The Halcrow study has confirmed proposals in Phase 1 would make a major contribution to helping Scunthorpe attract and retain the young and educated workers the town – and North Lincolnshire as a whole – will need if this part of the UK is to successfully meet the challenges of the future in an increasingly competitive environment. Lincolnshire Lakes would make a significant contribution to effecting a change for Scunthorpe in the direction of a modern, vibrant economy, generating major investor interest, and making possible high quality jobs growth.
- 2.12 The study, crucially, confirms the economic value and viability of the scheme. At the same time, it identifies processes around flood risk alleviation. Clearly, these need to be overcome before any physical development takes place.
- 2.13 The council has already entered into discussions with the Environment Agency. The aim is to seek a full understanding of flood risk issues at this location, and to find a way forward. Yorkshire Forward has shown its commitment to this challenge. It is providing funding to undertake what are called, ‘sequential’ and ‘exceptions tests’ for developments proposed in a flood risk zone.
- 2.14 The Lincolnshire Lakes Project Team includes representatives from the Environment Agency and the Internal Drainage Board.
- 2.15 The detailed delivery of Lincolnshire Lakes will be guided by what is called an ‘Area Action Plan’, once the sequential and exceptions tests are complete.
- 2.16 Alongside this work, talks will continue to take place with interested companies, and a Lincolnshire Lakes ‘Investors’ Day’ is proposed. The aim is to generate awareness of the overall project and assess the level of interest among developers and development options. Already, there are indications the project will attract major interest and considerable investment.

3 OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 **Option 1:** Cabinet has taken the view that there needs to be a long-term commitment to modernising Scunthorpe to create a vibrant and prosperous town that retains and attracts skilled employees, helping to attract inward investment in the face of intense competition from other parts of the UK and beyond. This development needs to be seen alongside other major strategic initiatives, such as the plans for the South Humber Gateway. If that is to be successful, there needs to be new quality residential development within North Lincolnshire. The two must be viewed as complementary.

- 3.2 **Option 2:** Cabinet takes the view that Lincolnshire Lakes is too ambitious and challenging and, therefore, decides not to make the commitment needed to make a reality of the proposals contained in the Halcrow Group feasibility study.

4 **ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

- 4.1 **Option 1** would build on the considerable amount of work undertaken by a range of partners over a number of years. There would be extensive consultation over proposals, as they are worked up and would allow an opportunity to test investor interest in the overall project. It would also ensure that the continued support from Yorkshire Forward is assured and recognised.
- 4.2 **Option 2** would end all further interest in the project, despite the positive findings in the feasibility study. It would place Scunthorpe – competitively – at a major disadvantage in the years ahead. It would have a major detrimental effect on the whole of North Lincolnshire as a location for investment.
- 4.3 **Option 3** is consistent with the Cabinet’s long-term ambitions for Scunthorpe as a thriving and modern town, able to compete and grow successfully as a UK location in high demand among residents and investors alike, as set out in the Urban Renaissance Scunthorpe Development Framework document. This identifies the way forward to successfully re-position Scunthorpe over the next 10 to 20 years

5 **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY AND IT)**

5.1 Financial

- 5.5.1 At this stage, there are no direct financial implications arising from the report.

5.2 Staffing

- 5.1.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

6 **OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 – CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)**

6.1 Statutory

- 6.1.1 If Cabinet agrees to proceed with the next stages of the Lincolnshire Lakes project, there will be a need to undertake a number of statutory processes.

6.2 Environmental & Other

6.2.1 There will be numerous safeguards built into the processes for ensuring environmental concerns are fully taken into consideration. Lincolnshire Lakes, at its core, is based on sustainable development principles. It would provide a sustainable development in harmony with its environment. It would give a major boost to Scunthorpe town centre, ensuring the town centre and Lincolnshire Lakes have the critical mass to attract residential, commercial and industrial investment, avoiding over reliance on car ownership, with improved public transport links.

6.3 Diversity

6.3.1 The Lincolnshire Lakes concept places diversity at its core. It is essential everyone in North Lincolnshire, regardless of their circumstances, is able to share in the benefits of a more prosperous and dynamic economy. This ambitious development is aimed at delivering this aspiration.

7 OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

7.1 There has already been a great deal of consultation, over a considerable period of time, with interested parties, including the Scunthorpe Town Team and a range of partners. The general consensus to date has been favourable, while recognising there are significant challenges ahead. If Cabinet gives its approval to proceeding with the project, consultation is integral to the future work that will need to take place.

7.2 Project implementation requires significant planning. As part of this, extensive consultation safeguards will figure prominently.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Cabinet welcomes the findings from the Lincolnshire Lakes Feasibility Study that the scheme, while clearly ambitious and to be phased over many years, is technically viable, economically sound and will make a major contribution to ensuring Scunthorpe and North Lincolnshire continues to grow and is able to compete successfully for inward investment in an increasingly competitive environment, by offering a quality location design to the highest standards of sustainable development.

- 8.2 Cabinet agrees to an 'Investors'. Day'. This to be held in August/September 2009 to widen awareness of the Lincolnshire Lakes project among developers and investors.
- 8.3 Cabinet agrees that the Lincolnshire Lakes project is an integral part of a range of large-scale investment and development initiatives in which the council is playing a significant community leadership role, including the South Humber Bank Gateway proposals. These were reported to Cabinet on 11 March 2009.
- 8.4 Cabinet approves the necessary work to move the project forward, including establishing the roles of both the public and private sectors in providing the necessary funding streams, including the funding role of the Homes and Community Agency/English Partnership, North Lincolnshire Council, Landfill Communities Fund contributions, and funding levered through the planning system.
- 8.5 Cabinet approves detailed further discussions with the Environment Agency and North Lincolnshire's Members of Parliament.

HEAD OF STRATEGIC REGENERATION,
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Background papers used in the preparation of this report

The Urban Renaissance Scunthorpe Development Framework Document
Lincolnshire Lakes Feasibility Study – Final Report, 2009