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Lincoln MP Calls for Public Input on £20m Birchwood Investment Plan

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A £20 million investment earmarked for one of Lincoln's most deprived areas will be shaped by the very people who live there, according to local Member of Parliament (MP) Hamish Falconer. Residents in Birchwood are being asked to contribute ideas on how the funding should be used over the next decade to address long-standing issues.

The funding forms part of the Government's Trailblazer Neighbourhoods initiative, a nationwide scheme designed to revitalise 25 struggling communities across the United

Kingdom. Birchwood, situated southwest of Lincoln, has been selected due to its high ranking on national indices of multiple deprivation.

During a visit to the area, Falconer said he hoped to better understand local needs and ensure the community has a meaningful say. Birchwood continues to face serious challenges. People are concerned about antisocial behaviour, ageing housing stock, and the lack of activities for young people,” he said in comments from the Local Democracy Reporting Service. We’re not turning up with a fixed agenda. The goal is to talk to the community and respond to what they actually want.”

Longstanding Challenges

Falconer led a walkabout with local councillors, police leaders, and community figures to gain first-hand insight into Birchwood’s condition. The tour included both areas of success, such as a local park restored by volunteers, and more problematic locations where outdated estates have created secluded areas that are difficult to police.

Councillor Dylan Stothard, representing Birchwood ward on the City of Lincoln Council, described the funding as a much-needed lifeline. “This is one of the city’s most deprived wards, and it hasn’t always received the investment it deserves. We’re seeing high levels of anti-social behaviour and long-standing neglect,” he said. “But there are incredible, grassroots projects here, ready to go. They just need the right support.”

While local leaders were broadly optimistic, Baroness Hilary Armstrong, Chair of the Independent Commission on Neighbourhoods, cautioned against expecting rapid solutions. “Real change takes time. You can’t just throw money at these issues. It’s about building up the confidence and capacity of local people so they feel empowered to improve their own communities,” she said.

The £20 million is expected to be distributed over the next 10 years, providing scope for both immediate interventions and long-term regeneration. Though specific projects have yet to be finalised, early discussions point towards investment in youth services, improved housing conditions, and safer public spaces.

The Trailblazer Neighbourhoods scheme is backed by central government but heavily relies on local engagement to prioritize spending. While the Lincoln MP is a Labour representative,

the approach emphasises community consultation rather than top-down planning, which is often criticised in centrally controlled regeneration attempts.

Residents will have several upcoming opportunities to share their views, including through public meetings and local forums. Falconer stressed that the funding could only succeed if it were driven by Birchwood residents. “This is about people shaping the place they call home. We want to hear what matters most to them,” he said.

The project’s next phase will focus on compiling residents’ feedback into a working plan for how the funds will be spent.