



**ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
16 JANUARY 2018**

**PRESENT: COUNCILLOR T BRIDGES (CHAIRMAN)**

Councillors B M Dobson (Vice-Chairman), B Adams, Mrs A M Austin, Mrs J E Killey, S R Kirk, R P H Reid, Mrs E J Sneath, C L Strange and Dr M E Thompson

Councillor M J Storer attended the meeting as an observer

Officers in attendance:-

Steve Blagg (Democratic Services Officer), Justin Brown (Commissioner for Economic Growth), Ruth Carver (Commissioning Manager (LEP)), Michelle Grady (Head of Finance (Communities)), Andy Gutherson (County Commissioner for Economy and Place), David Hickman (Growth & Environment Commissioner), Stephen Jack (Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Service Manager) and Daniel Steel (Scrutiny Officer)

**46 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT COUNCILLORS**

The Chief Executive reported that under the Local Government (Committee and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, he had appointed Councillor Mrs J E Killey to the Committee, place of Councillor G E Cullen, for this meeting only.

**47 DECLARATION OF COUNCILLORS' INTERESTS**

No declarations of interest were made at this stage of the meeting.

**48 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 28 NOVEMBER 2017**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 28 November 2017, be agreed as a correct record subject to "Long Leys Road" being replaced by "the Transfer Centre, North Hykeham", in bullet point 2. (Minute 41).

**49 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND LEAD OFFICERS**

The Executive Support Councillor for Economy and Place made the following announcements:-

- He had attended the Lincolnshire NFU AGM and had discussed farming and trade post Brexit. He had expressed the Council's support for farmers and working with central Government to ensure farmers got a good deal after Brexit.
- He stated that later this week was the Lincolnshire Business Expo. This was a major event and a new grant scheme would be launched (Midlands Engine Investment Finance). He stated that the Committee had spoken regularly about the importance of providing finance for growing businesses so it was good news that the Council was a partner in this fund.
- He stated that on 31 January 2018 he would be opening an event to tell local businesses about supply chain opportunities that would arise from the Tritton Knoll project. The opportunities ranged from high technology engineering through to things like onsite catering, there was something for everyone.

## 50 COUNCIL BUDGET 2018/19

The Committee received a report on the Council Budget 2018/19 and in particular its implications for the following commissioning strategies – Protecting and Sustaining the Environment and Sustaining and Growing Business and the Economy. The budget proposals were now open to consultation and any comments made by the Committee would be passed to the Executive for consideration at its meeting on 6 February 2018.

Officers stated that since the despatch of the report the Secretary of State in the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement had announced the referendum threshold for the general Council Tax element would increase for both 2018/19 and 2019/20 to 3% and that the threshold for Adult Care precept remained unchanged. The Council was consulting on various proposals as detailed in the consultation process which was available for viewing on the Council's website. Officers stated that the Council had also been successful in being selected to participate in the Government's Business Rate pilot which would have an impact on the budget.

Comments made by the Committee and the responses of officers included:-

- There was the possibility of disparity between local authority areas if the Business Rate pilot proved successful. Officers stated that the pilot project was only for one year and the Government was carrying out consultations on the project.
- The need to increase the budget for economic development, especially skills and growth. Officers stated that, in addition to funding by the Council, economic development attracted external grants but that the process was time consuming.
- Officers stated that the Brexit Working Group was examining the replacement of EU funding following Brexit.
- The waste budget was of concern in the long term especially as the Energy from Waste plant was reaching capacity, issues of dealing with food waste and the decision made by China to refuse to take any more of the UK's plastic waste. Officers stated that they were aware of the various issues affecting the

waste budget and added that the Joint Waste Management Strategy was due to be considered by this Committee in the near future.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted and that the comments made by the Committee in the consultation process be passed to the Executive for its meeting on 6 February 2018.

51 REVISED LINCOLNSHIRE WOLDS AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN 2018-2023

(Councillor C L Strange requested that a note should be made in the minutes that he was a member of the Wolds' Joint Advisory Committee (JAC)).

The Committee received a report on the revised Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan 2018/23 which had been prepared by the AONB Partnership (JAC) for public consultation. Officers stated that the Plan tried to strike a balance between economic development and environmental and heritage preservation in the area. The views of the Committee were sought on the Plan.

Comments made by the Committee and the responses of officers included:-

- The "light" touch approach to prepare the Plan was welcomed.
- The last five years of the previous Plan had brought benefits to the AONB.
- The Wolds was an excellent area to visit with an active working landscape. It was important to improve opportunities for tourism because there was a shortage of quality accommodation. Officers agreed to provide a list of Bed and Breakfast accommodation in the AONB to Members and a link to the website which had these details.
- There were some concerns regarding the levels of consistency on planning decisions across the AONB and there was a recommendation for increased collaboration between the relevant local authorities to help develop a joint approach.
- There was a need to attract more tourists to the AONB. In this respect officers stated that some concerns had been raised about the AONB's boundary with some supporting an expansion but others supporting the retention of the existing boundary. Officers clarified that the AONB Partnership currently recognised that there were known anomalies, with regular calls to review and extend the northern and southern boundaries, for example, Winceby Civil War Battlefield site and Snipe Dales Country Park were both within the Wolds but lied south of the AONB. Any future review would be a significant and lengthy undertaking and would require the full support of the relevant local authorities and AONB Partnership with Natural England coordinating the required legal procedures.
- The Committee noted there were 41 AONBs in the UK and that they were considered as important as the National Parks but the latter received more resources from the Government. There was an acknowledgement that the Plan sought to promote and enhance the nationally important special qualities of the

area whilst seeking to secure future sustainable development for a living and working landscape.

**RESOLVED**

(a) That the draft AONB Management Plan be endorsed with an acknowledgement that there was still some further changes to take account of additional observations and recommendations as part of the ongoing public consultation.

(b) That the comments made by the Committee and the responses of officers be noted.

(c) That it be noted that the final Plan would need to be validated by Natural England, prior to its formal adoption by all relevant local planning authorities – including Lincolnshire County Council, East Lindsey and West Lindsey District Councils and North East Lincolnshire Council.

**52 PRIORITIES FOR NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE - RESPONSE TO NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE ASSESSMENT**

The Committee received a report on the Council's response to the National Infrastructure Assessment which would underpin national policy towards economic infrastructure investment for the next thirty years. Officers stated that because the closing date for the Council's response it had been necessary to prepare a response before this meeting which was tabled. Officers stated that there would be further opportunities to respond to the Assessment.

Comments made by the Committee and the responses of officers included:-

- A balance needed to be sought between the cost of installing flood defences and economic development. Officers stated that there was a need for any final Assessment to recognise that Lincolnshire had the highest flood risk in the country and therefore there was a need for flood defences to be installed to encourage economic development. Officers stated that it would be interesting to see if this was reflected in the final document.
- Some waste disposal authorities had set up retail outlets on waste sites to sell recyclable waste.
- Food which in the past had been thrown away was now being donated by supermarkets to foodbanks.
- Were there any benefits of separating food waste? Officers stated that there was a pilot project operating in a South Kesteven District Council electoral Ward. The project would ascertain if separating food waste was cost effective because there was a lot of dry recycled waste contaminated by food waste. The project had been promoted by the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership and would run for 12 months with the results reported to the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership. Should the project proved successful then the scheme would be extended across the county.

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- Was any income generated from the pilot project? Officers stated that no income generated from the pilot project. However, in the long term how waste was collected and how waste was used to improve the income generated for all local authorities in the county would be explored.
- Broadband connectivity was a problem in many parts of Lincolnshire and Members considered that this matter should be brought to the Executive's attention. Officers agreed with the Members' comments and agreed to report on this matter to a future meeting of the Committee.
- Some residents had told Councillors that BT had reduced its broadband service in some areas and there was inequality of service provision between rural and urban areas.
- It was important that there was a detailed understanding of the opportunities associated with, and the potential problems with, Smart Grid technologies because Smart Grids would have a significant influence on economic growth in the future.

**RESOLVED**

(a) That the comments made by the Committee and the responses of officers, be noted.

(b) That the draft response tabled in connection with the National Infrastructure Assessment, be supported.

**53      STRATEGIES TO ATTRACT VISITORS**

The Committee received a report in connection with the detailed analysis of the intelligence that was held on visitors to Lincolnshire and on current strategies to attract visitors.

Comments made by the Committee and the responses of officers included:-

- There was a shortage of quality hotel accommodation especially in the Wolds. Officers stated that there was a shortage of hotel accommodation in the Wolds AONB. However, there was more self-catering accommodation.
- Officers stated that visiting friends and relatives in Lincolnshire was popular especially with those people who had relocated from Lincolnshire. Heritage days were also a good way of attracting people to the county.
- There were still problems of internet access in Lincolnshire.
- Attracting people to Lincolnshire was important for the local economy and more investment was required in this area. In this respect, there was a need for the Council to work with its partners.
- More publicity needed to be given to antique markets, RAF heritage sites and the quality of the food in Lincolnshire.
- Public transport services were provided from the Port of Hull to York but not Lincoln. Officers stated that they were talking to travel agents about this matter and that the opportunity to visit RAF heritage sites was a good idea. Officers agreed that Lincolnshire had good food to offer visitors and agreed to email to

Members details of the tourism event being arranged by P&O ferries in February 2018.

- The cost and availability of car parking in Lincoln especially for day visitors was an issue. Lincoln had a shortage of parking for coaches compared to York.
- Officers agreed to circulate the annual impact summary of the council's Travel Trade PR Consultant when it became available.

#### RESOLVED

- (a) That the comments by the Committee and the various actions identified be noted.
- (b) That the work of the Council in promoting the county to the travel media, be endorsed.
- (c) That the breadth of information that is available to assist in the development of tourism strategies, be noted.
- (d) That officers work with the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership and other partners to make this information available to tourism businesses to assist them with their planning.

#### 54 LINCOLNSHIRE'S GROWTH HUB

The Committee received a report in connection with an evaluation of the Lincolnshire Growth Hub's services because the current business support programmes were coming to an end and to identify any gaps before the Council made new bids for funding. The evaluation showed that the Hub operated effectively but identified several gaps in provision. Businesses' priorities were detailed in the report.

Comments made by the Committee and the responses of officers included:-

- It was noted that businesses had not mentioned broadband connectivity issues as a constraint to their growth. Officers stated that this was likely to be identified as a problem in current and future surveys.
- What action was the Council taking to help businesses to prosper? Officers stated that there were a number of ways the Council could facilitate businesses to prosper, all as part of the Growth Hub programme, and promoting the growth hub to businesses was achieved by emailing and posting information to businesses, placing adverts in the press and publications and using social media.
- The use of business cards had proved successful in East Lindsey.
- Officers stated that "word of mouth" was important in helping to disseminate information and leaflets were available for Members to distribute as Members carried out a lot of networking.

RESOLVED

(a) That the outcomes and customer satisfaction which the Business Hub is delivering be noted.

(b) That the gaps identified in current provisions be noted and that officers develop approaches for meeting these business needs including appropriate funding bids.

(c) That Members through their networking be asked to promote the Business Hub website [www.businesslincolnshire.com](http://www.businesslincolnshire.com) to businesses in Lincolnshire.

55 GREATER LINCOLNSHIRE LOCAL INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

The Committee received a report in connection with the Government's Industrial Strategy. Officers stated that the Government was concerned about how to encourage economic growth and improve communications between higher education and industry. The UK was good at research but poor in developing this research down to the manufacturing level and therefore the Strategy was intended to help industry and commerce in this respect and to grow "places". The Government's proposed Industrial Strategy was tabled.

Comments made by the Committee and the responses of officers included:-

- Communication with businesses and commerce about the Strategy might be difficult and a "bottom up" approach was preferable instead of something which was imposed. Officers agreed that the communication process about the Strategy was important and stated that Boards had been established for each area of the strategy. Officers stated that the process had reached a stage where it was possible to inform business what was available and the improvements which could be made.
- The effects of Brexit were unknown and therefore planning for different scenarios was important.
- The role of MPs in the Strategy was noted but could lead to them just pursuing the Government's agenda. Officers stated that MPs were only a small part of the consultation process.
- The provision of power resources needed to be a priority. Officers agreed adding that the provision of utilities was a priority.

RESOLVED

(a) That the comments made by the Committee and the responses of officers be noted.

(b) That the work of the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) in producing a Local Industrial Strategy, with a particular emphasis on the LEP's engagement process and on raising the profile of Lincolnshire's priorities at a regional and national level, be endorsed.

(c) That the Committee receive regular reports on the process of the Strategy and use those reports to offer advice/support to the LEP during the preparation of the Strategy.

56 ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received a report on its Work Programme.

The Committee agreed that following concern expressed by Members about broadband connectivity in the county, at today's meeting, it was agreed to receive a report on this matter at a future meeting.

RESOLVED

That the Work Programme be noted subject to the need to programme the following:-

- Lincolnshire Waste Management Strategy
- Lincolnshire's Local Industrial Strategy
- Broadband Connectivity

The meeting closed at 1.10 pm.