



**ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
21 MAY 2019**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR MRS W BOWKETT (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors B Adams, Mrs A M Austin, G E Cullen, C Matthews, Mrs E J Sneath, C L Strange and Dr M E Thompson

Executive Councillors C J Davy and E J Poll attended the meeting and spoke

Officers in attendance:-

Steve Blagg (Democratic Services Officer), Amanda Bond (Special Projects Officer), Paul Brookes (County Flood Risk Manager), Justin Brown (Enterprise Commissioner), Thea Croxall (Principal Commissioning Officer (Learning)), Angela Driver (Senior Enterprise Growth Officer), David Hickman (Head of Environment), Andrew Houseman (Senior Procurement Officer), Charlotte Hughes (Senior Project Leader), Jill McCarthy (Principal Officer Growth), Simon Murphy (Senior Enterprise Growth Officer), Daniel Steel (Scrutiny Officer) and Nathan Whitfield (Principal Engineer)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M A Griggs, R P H Reid and Executive Support Councillor B M Dobson.

2 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were made at this stage of the meeting.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 9 APRIL 2019

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 April 2019, be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND LEAD OFFICERS

The Chairman paid tribute to Councillor Barry Dobson's chairmanship of the Committee adding that it had been a pleasure to work with him.

Executive Councillor C J Davie made the following announcements:-

- The lovely weather over Easter had attracted numerous tourists to the county and hoped that it was the start of successful season for the tourism sector.
- The "Made in Lincolnshire Awards" had been recently launched and gave businesses the chance to win a prestigious prize. One business had used the award in their publicity. Members were asked to encourage businesses in their Division to apply for the awards.
- The Midlands Engine was now starting to describe the importance of investment along the whole of the A46 corridor and officials had visited the Port of Immingham. He had told Midlands Engine to keep on promoting Lincolnshire and had also taken the opportunity to do the same at the Local Government Association's Economy Board.
- The District Council Elections had taken place and he looked forward to working with the District Councils to promote growth in the county.
- Members from Hunan's main governing body would be coming to the county this week to assess potential investments in the county.
- He was pleased to welcome Councillor Barry Dobson as his Support Councillor. He stated that Barry had knowledge of the food business and previous chairmanship of this Committee he looked forward to working with him.
- He was aware of the on-going discussions taking place between the Government and British Steel on the future of the company. The effects of any closure on Scunthorpe and the surrounding area were discussed.
- He stated that Brexit needed to be resolved as soon as possible to give businesses clarity.

5 COMMISSIONING OF ADULT SKILLS AND FAMILY LEARNING

The Committee considered a pre-decision scrutiny report in connection with the Adult Skills and Family Learning programme commissioning and contract management arrangements from 2019/20.

In response to comments made by members officers stated that the duration of the courses were 45 hours maximum; the "Guided Learning Hours" were detailed in Appendix A, with 42% of courses 6-9 hours in duration; all of the courses had been completed by the learners (6,000 in total); additional courses could be provided for those learners that had completed 3 in an academic year but an assessment was required and many courses ran already in Lincoln with no wish from the Council to duplicate them.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the members' comments be noted.
- (b) That the recommendations in respect to the commissioning of an Adults Skills and Family Learning Programme be supported.
- (c) That the Committee receive a progress report in twelve months.

6 **DIGBY FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEME**

(Note: Councillor C R Oxby requested that a note should be made in the minutes that he was a member of the Witham 1st Internal Drainage Board).

The Committee considered a pre-decision scrutiny report in connection with the Digby Flood Alleviation Scheme.

Members stressed the importance of traffic management in the scheme. Officers agreed and explained the traffic management being put in place.

Members welcomed the scheme as flooding in Digby had been a problem for many years and agreed that similar arrangements to those used to manage the Middle Rasen Surface Water Flood Alleviation Scheme should be used for this scheme.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the members' comments be noted.
- (b) That the recommendations in respect to the Digby Flood Alleviation Scheme be supported and requested that similar arrangements to those used to manage the Middle Rasen Surface Water Flood Alleviation Scheme should be used for this scheme.

7 **WATER RESOURCES EAST**

The Committee considered a pre-decision scrutiny report in connection with the Council's membership of Water Resources East, an independent not for profit company which provided an opportunity for the Council to influence outcomes, including decisions on Nationally Significant Water Infrastructure.

Officers stated that the Internal Drainage Boards were members of a large advisory group to Water Resources East.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the members' comments be noted.
- (b) That the recommendations in respect to the Council's membership of Water Resources East, be supported.

8 **TEAM LINCOLNSHIRE AMBASSADOR PROGRAMME 2019/2020**

The Committee considered an update report on the Team Lincolnshire programme.

Dale Lui, who ran an architectural/ developer business, based in Nettleham, attended the meeting and outlined the purpose of his and his role in Team Lincolnshire. He supported the Team's importance to encourage economic growth and investment in Lincolnshire.

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Members supported and welcomed public and private involvement in Team Lincolnshire. Their comments included:-

- The positive effects of Team Lincolnshire on business development. The development of small engineering firms in Gainsborough and the increase in academic courses attended increasingly by students from the Far East at the University of Lincoln were given as examples.
- Members had a role to play in disseminating and sharing information with their local communities about the Ambassador Programme.

Officers agreed to put members on the mailing list to receive communications in connection with the Ambassador Programme. Officers stated that consideration would be given to Team Lincolnshire having a presence at the Lincolnshire Show next year.

Dale Lui agreed to speak to those members about sports provision in their communities outside of the meeting.

RESOLVED

- (a) That members' comments be noted.
- (b) That the roll out of the Team Lincolnshire Ambassador Programme 2019/20, as detailed in the report, be agreed and that the Committee receive a further update in six months.
- (c) That members be invited to local events organised in the Programme.

9 PROJECT OUTLINE FOR MARKET DEEPING GROW-ON BUSINESS SPACE

(Note: Councillor B Adams requested that a note should be made in the minutes that he was a member of South Kesteven District Council).

The Committee received a report in connection with the potential need for a grow-on facility to complement the Eventus Centre for Business and Innovation, Market Deeping. Officers stated that the recent findings of a place-specific feasibility study indicated a market need in the catchment area and provided an initial development appraisal as a basis to inform the project.

Members' views were sought on the Options detailed in the report.

Comments by members included:-

- An enquiry about the size of the Eventus Centre and whether there were any similar facilities in the vicinity which could meet demand. Officers outlined the other facilities in the area but there was only one of which was within the grow-on space range.
- Owing to the success of the Eventus Centre businesses were reluctant to move from the Centre until they could find more suitable premises.

- A twin approach should be pursued – this meant, firstly, making use of the current budget allocation and potential funding from the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (GL LEP) and then, secondly, examining a long term business strategy for this area.
- Obtaining land for commercial/industrial development in South Kesteven was an issue due to a shortage of such land.
- The compulsory purchase of land should be considered by the Council.

RESOLVED

- (a) That members' comments be noted.
- (b) That officers examine working up a design for a grow-on facility to complement the Eventus Centre with the cost being met from the current budget allocation and potential funding from the GL LEP and, secondly, examine a longer term business strategy to meet the commercial/industrial demand for grow-on facilities in the area.

10 LINCOLNSHIRE'S RELATIONSHIP WITH HUNAN, CHINA - EMERGING PRIORITIES

The Committee considered an update report in connection with the developing civic and strategic relationship with Hunan Province, China.

Officers explained the geography of Hunan, Chinese culture and how Hunan was similar to Lincolnshire in supporting agriculture and advanced manufacturing production.

Officers stated that China was prepared to invest in companies in Lincolnshire in return for increased technical and operational knowledge with Chinese investment in Dynex, Lincoln given as an example.

Officers agreed to submit a regular report to the Committee on the Council's relationship with Hunan.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted and that the Committee receive regular reports on the relationship between the Council and Hunan.

11 ENERGY PROCUREMENT

(Note: Councillor C L Strange requested that a note should be made in the minutes that he was related to the person identified in paragraph 18 of the report).

The Committee considered a report which sought the views of members in connection to the Council's procurement of green or brown electricity to power its corporate portfolio. The views of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and this Committee would be reported to the Leader of the Council. The former Committee had already recommended to the Leader that the ESPO (a public sector

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body representing local authorities for procurement purposes) agreement should be continued for a further four years from October 2020.

Officers stated that the ESPO framework had the flexibility to buy green or brown energy for individual large customers like the County Council.

Members were informed that the additional cost of buying green energy was relatively cheap compared to buying brown energy and the extra cost would be recovered by the rebated received from ESPO.

RESOLVED

That the comments made by members be noted and that the Leader of the Council be informed that this Committee supports the purchase of green electricity to power its portfolio.

12 ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered and reviewed its Work Programme.

Officers agreed to examine how the Committee operated including going paperless.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the Committee's Work Programme be noted.
- (b) That the officers examine what improvements could be made to how the Committee operated including going paperless for future meetings.

The meeting closed at 12.30 pm