

**ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY
 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
 18 SEPTEMBER 2018**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR B M DOBSON (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors Mrs W Bowkett (Vice-Chairman), M A Griggs, C Matthews, Mrs A M Newton, Mrs E J Sneath, C L Strange and R H Trollope-Bellew

Councillors: C J Davie, D McNally and E J Poll attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Justin Brown (Commissioner for Economic Growth), Andy Gutherson (County Commissioner for Economy and Place), Clare Hughes (Principal Commissioning Officer (LEP)), Matthew Michell (Environmental Services Senior Officer (Technical)), Daniel Steel (Scrutiny Officer) and Rachel Wilson (Democratic Services Officer)

22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B Adams, Mrs A M Austin, R P H Reid and Dr M E Thompson.

The Chief Executive reported that having received a notice under Regulation 13 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, he had appointed Councillors Mrs A M Newton and R H Trollope-Bellew as replacement members of the Committee in place of Councillor Mrs A M Austin and B Adams respectively for this meeting only.

23 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest at this point in the meeting.

24 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 JULY 2018

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2018 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

25 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND CHIEF OFFICERS

The Chairman advised that the High Street Vitality Working Group membership had been confirmed by group leaders and the members of the working group had been invited to attend the Lead Economic Development Councillors Meeting on the 24 September 2018. Members were advised that the Working Group would report back to the Committee after its three meetings.

The Executive Councillor for Economy and Place reported that he had started to send out information which set out the district by district spending by the Greater Lincolnshire LEP. It was noted that a lot of money had gone into all parts of Lincolnshire to help support the economy.

26 GOVERNMENT CONSULTATIONS ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR
SHALE GAS DEVELOPMENTS

Consideration was given to a report which set out responses to two government consultations in respect to the planning process for shale gas developments. The first consultation by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, sought views on the relaxation of planning controls for the exploration of shale gas. The second consultation by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy invited comments on a proposal to include shale gas production projects within the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) regime pursuant to the 2008 Planning Act.

Members were advised that both consultations would expire in the coming weeks, and so the draft responses had been brought through scrutiny so that members could have an input in the responses that the Authority would be making.

In the professional view of officers, in both instances, it was considered that the proposals were inappropriate. There were concerns around NSIP aspect as there was so little definition about what shale gas development included, and the proposal was to bring the exploration for shale gas within the limits of permitted development. It was also noted that most shale gas development applications had created significant public interest and to bring this within permitted development right would create uncertainty within the community.

Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- It was highlighted that the Executive Councillor for Economy and Place had met with industry representatives many times, and it was commented that it was absolutely right that decision making on these developments should remain local.
- There was a need to ensure that companies that wanted to carry out this type of development took account of facts such as geographical information.
- Concerns were raised regarding the proposal to be able to use permitted development for non-hydraulic shale exploration as this was legislation which had been introduced to make it easier for householders to build small extensions. It was commented that it was the planning system which protected communities from inappropriate development.

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- It was highlighted that the long term impacts of 'fracking' were still unknown, and there was agreement that local people should be able to have a say in these types of developments.

RESOLVED

That the Committee endorse the views and responses set out in the Council's response to the two consultations.

27 JOINT MUNICIPAL WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Committee received a report which provided an opportunity to consider and comment on the revised draft of the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS) for Lincolnshire. Members were advised that a previous consultation draft had come before the Committee in April 2018, and this new version had been revised in line with consultation feedback. It was reported that the revised draft had been endorsed by the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership subject to some minor modification, with the recommendation that each partner district would formally adopt this JMWMS.

Members were advised that the Council had a statutory duty to have a waste management strategy in place, and this had been jointly created with the district councils through the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership.

The Committee agreed that they would like to have a summary of changes which had been put forward by the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership, and these were reported as follows:

- Objective 3 – re-introduction of the word 'consider' so it reads "To consider the introduction of separate food waste collections where technically, environmentally and economically practicable".
- The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership were still to add the Foreword to the Strategy.
- The photos on the front cover would be updated with more up to date images e.g. the energy from waste facility.
- Some cross referencing would be added in relation to section 7 – "getting our message across"
- The reference to South Holland District Council's green waste service pilot to be removed as this is now an on-going service
- South Kesteven District Council to be added to the list of collectors of commercial waste
- Table 5.13 to be updated with tonnages for non-LCC Waste Transfer Stations for 2017/18 figures
- Page 39 – replace references to Mid-UK with "current contractor" it was felt more appropriate to use this wording rather than including a named operator.
- Page 46 – Service costs figures table – the updated costs for 2017/18 had now been received from almost all of the districts therefore this would be updated from the 2015/16 information.
- Page 53 – it was thought it would be beneficial to explain in more detail why communicating with the public was important.

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- Appendix D – this document would be tidied up to remove all names/initials and non-public references.

Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- One councillor commented that she was horrified by how much food she wasted personally, and suggested that when people actually saw how much food they threw away it would prompt them to change their habits.
- It was confirmed that costs would go up as the amount of contamination went up. It was important for people to realise that it was not just their bin of recycling that was contaminated, but it could contaminate the whole lorry load.
- It was noted that plastics could be burnt for energy and it was queried whether this was anything that the LWP was looking into. It was noted that this was already occurring through the EfW facility, but it was something that the Partnership was looking into. There were different types of plastics and they provided a good source of energy for the EfW.
- It was noted that whilst recycling most materials was good, the waste which went in the bin was still providing a function through the EfW.
- It was noted that there were a number of anaerobic digesters located in the county, however, most of these were dealing with agricultural waste and were not suitable for household waste. There was only one site in the county handling food waste. It was thought that if separate food waste collections were introduced more sites would be required to handle this.

RESOLVED

That the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee endorse the revised Draft Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy subject to the minor modifications described and recommend that that it be adopted by the County Council on 14 December 2018.

28 EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS

Consideration was given to a report which explained that Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) and the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (GLLEP) had commissioned a substantial amount of employment and skills provision. It was noted of this was coming to a natural end and so it was useful to explore the benefits of what had been achieved and then identify next steps, whilst recognising the importance of employment and skills as part of economic development.

It was noted that a lot of the provision was funded centrally by government. The aim of the GLLEP was to be able to fill some of the gaps or more persistent challenges. The government was very keen to ensure that employers and individuals were aware of their responsibilities in terms of skills.

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The County Council provided over £1.7m of funding to support adult education and skills. It was noted that the adult education budget had helped 7,500 people in Lincolnshire to further their careers or get into employment.

Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- It was queried what provision was made for disabled applicants for apprenticeships or upskilling and members were advised that one of the European Social Fund (ESF) programmes was focused on unemployed people and getting them into work. It was not believed that there was anything separate as it supported all people, particularly those that miss out through the mainstream routes.
- It was commented that technology would be greatest disruption to social and economic planning, and there would be a need to be very focused on ensuring that Lincolnshire young people were equipped for the world they were going to be working in in the future. Work patterns would change and businesses that would be making those shifts would need to prepare.
- It was queried how the projects that had been commissioned assisted those that did not visit the job centre but were employed, for example working occasional bar shifts. It was noted that there had been a focus on NEETS, and work had been done with the Care Partnership and the Prince's Trust and some very interesting statistics were coming out of that work showing that detailed personal assistance could help young people to fulfil their potential.
- It was noted that there was a programme called Careers Net which was aimed at unemployed young people who lacked in confidence as well as graduates who had the qualifications but not the skills experience necessary to apply for jobs. Members were also informed of another programme running called Talent Match which was coming to an end, and was very different to any other programme as it would support a person for up to five years. It was noted that a successor for this programme was currently being sought. It was noted that the Talent Match programme had 'young ambassadors' and would go to those places where those young people may be found.
- Members were advised that the City of Lincoln Council had carried out research into aspirations of young people who were predominantly paid cash in hand. It was found that young people generally did not want to take the low paid jobs as they thought they would then be stuck and therefore work was needed to help them to realise that once they got a job they would be on a ladder, and they could be helped so they could progress to get a better job.
- It was noted that the County Council was just a small part of the picture in relation to skills. However, officers advised that they would contact the divisional manager of the Job Centre to find out what was being done to engage with those young people who were out of work, but who may not visit the Job Centre.
- One member commented that they were very impressed with the work which was going on. But thought it was essential that schools valued vocational training, as it was felt that in the past it had always been about getting people to university. It was suggested whether schools could organise for employers to go into schools to talk with those young people about to leave about

different employment opportunities available. It was also commented that there was a need to teach young people interview techniques.

- There was a need to encourage young people to think about options other than university, and make them feel important for choosing options other than university. It was highlighted that one issue was usually that when someone finished university, they would have a degree but no experience. There was a need to encourage people to undertake work experience whilst at university, possibly during the holidays.
- It was noted that other countries, such as Germany, placed a strong emphasis on apprenticeships, and people would go to university to study to become a member of a specific profession such as doctor or architect.

RESOLVED

1. That the significant amount of employment and skills provision commissioned by LCC and the LEP be noted.
2. That the comments made during discussion be noted.
3. That the Committee support the provision of substantial support to the LEP by LCC in preparing the Local Industrial Strategy and implementing the Skills Advisory Panel so that local skills needs were fully understood, and better resourced by central government.

29 ECONOMY QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE MEASURES 2018/19

Consideration was given to a report which described performance against the four economic development performance indicators. It showed that outcomes had been achieved, and indeed exceeded, for three of the indicators. The report also provided some economic context for the activity that was undertaken, using the LEP/Chamber of Commerce/University of Lincoln quarterly economic survey.

It was reported that in terms of the funding target, officers were not expecting to receive any funding, and did not receive any. It was noted that bids took around nine months to go through, and it had not been expected that the government would allocate any funding to the Council this quarter.

Members were advised that businesses were increasingly saying that they were expecting to put their prices up and that this would be a challenge generally in the coming months. However, customers liked to see prices going down and so this created a squeeze for businesses.

It was reported that the government had released an agricultural bill, and agriculture was a very important sector for Lincolnshire's economy and this would give some clarity on what could happen in the future. Officers would carry some work to determine how this would affect the confidence of businesses within the sector.

Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

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- People wanted the prices in the supermarkets to go down, but this could not happen, there needs to be a way to get the prices to the right level for all.
- It was suggested that in order to support agriculture and food more needed to be done to promote foods on the basis of the provenance of products such as through farmers markets.
- Producers should be encouraged to promote Lincolnshire as the origin of the food, as there was increasing demand for local produce.

RESOLVED

That the comments made be noted.

30 ENVIRONMENT QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE MEASURES (1 APRIL TO 30 JUNE 2018)

Consideration was given to a report which described the progress against the indicators in the council business plan. Members were advised that one indicator was reported in quarter four, one would be reported from quarter two, and two indicators had not been met. It was noted that two of the measured indicators would have data available in the following quarter, and a further three showed measured progress.

It was noted that the two indicators which had not been met related to the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy, which was now out of date and was being fully revised. The new strategy had been considered by the Committee earlier in the meeting.

It was highlighted that a compliment in relation to the work of one of the staff had been received this quarter.

RESOLVED

That the performance information presented be noted.

31 ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report which enabled the Committee to consider and comment on the content of its work programme for the coming year to ensure that scrutiny activity was focused where it could be of greatest benefit.

The possibility of holding meetings around the county was discussed, and the North Sea Observatory was suggested as an option. It was noted that there were a number of exhibitions taking place so officers would need to be mindful of this, it was also suggested that a meeting of the Committee could be held in one of the board rooms of one of Lincolnshire's manufacturing businesses, subject to it being accessible to the press and public if necessary.

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One councillor highlighted that there were 4/5 parishes which were suffering with poor broadband coverage in his division and queried whether the report relating to the Lincolnshire Broadband Programme Progress could be moved up the work programme. Another councillor also added that there was poor broadband in some of their villages. Members were advised that as it was not the Council that was rolling out the Broadband it was not appropriate to bring the report forward, however, officers would arrange for those councillors with issues in their divisions to meet with the Broadband Programme Manager instead to discuss these specific issues. It was also commented that broadband was an important factor for people looking at buying houses in rural areas.

RESOLVED

That the work programme as presented be noted.

The meeting closed at 11.20 am