

**ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY
 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
 9 JULY 2019**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR MRS W BOWKETT (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors C R Oxby (Vice-Chairman), Mrs A M Austin, G E Cullen, M A Griggs, A G Hagues, C Matthews, H Spratt, C L Strange and Dr M E Thompson

Executive Support Councillor for Economy and Place, Councillor B M Dobson, attended the meeting as an observer

Officers in attendance:-

Steve Blagg (Democratic Services Officer), Steve Brookes (Lincolnshire Broadband Programme Manager), Justin Brown (Assistant Director Growth), Simon Evans (Health Scrutiny Officer), Peter Fender (Economic Infrastructure Development Manager), David Hickman (Head of Environment), Adrian Winkley (Minerals and Waste Policy Team Leader) and Samantha L Harrison (Enterprise Commissioning Manager)

13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mrs E J Sneath.

The Head of Paid Service reported that under the Local Government (Committee and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, she had appointed Councillors A G Hagues and H Spratt to the Committee, in place of Councillors R P H Reid and B Adams, respectively, until further notice.

The Chairman thanked Councillors B Adams and R P H Reid for their service to the Committee.

14 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

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

15 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 21 MAY 2019

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 May 2019, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to "Councillor C R Oxby" being added to the list of attendees.

16 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND LEAD OFFICERS

The Chairman thanked members for passing on their best wishes to her following the recent floods which had occurred in Wainfleet, her electoral Division.

Executive Support Councillor B M Dobson made the following announcements:-

- Executive Councillor C J Davie was engaged in an Executive meeting and he would be speaking on his behalf, for his self and for the portfolio team.
- He thanked the Chairman for her efforts to support those residents in Wainfleet who had suffered the devastating floods in June. These events were a reminder of the impact that the environment could have on an area. He referred to the role of the Committee in considering both the impending risks and the mitigating efforts to prevent or reduce the impact of such natural adverse events.
- He referred to the Government's announcement on 5 July 2019 of the outcomes of the Future High Streets Fund bids and the disappointment that no Lincolnshire high street had received funding. Each district council felt that they had worked hard on the bidding process to little effect. The Government needed to work with strategic authorities, like the County Council, rather than creating wide bidding rounds that led to high levels of competition and a scatter-gun approach. This was something that Councillor C J Davie would be pursuing through his role on the Local Government Association's Economy Board.
- The Executive was pleased to accept the recommendations of the High Street Working Group. These encouraged the Council to develop stronger links with district councils over high streets and would lead towards better use of digital technology to make the high streets places to live, work and enjoy as much as they were places to shop adding that today's committee report on broadband might trigger some more detailed thinking on this subject.
- Executive Councillor C J Davie would be hosting a "Welcome to the Summer" event at the North Sea Observatory. He would be encouraging more than 70 attendees to work together to promote the area and to cross-sell the various attractions to visitors throughout our coastal districts. Tourism operators on the coast had told us that they had high expectations for a positive summer of visitor activity.
- Team Lincolnshire were collaborating with South Kesteven District Council on an event for investors in Stamford in the following week. The annual Lincolnshire Enterprise Partnership conference on 12 July would provide an excellent opportunity to engage in debate about the future of business in the County with 300 people due to attend.
- Executive Councillor C J Davie and Executive Support Councillor B M Dobson had been working with Executive Councillor Mrs P A Bradwell OBE, Debbie Barnes OBE, Head of Paid Service as well as the economic development team on new skills initiatives. The Council would shortly be investing additional funding in raising the amount and quality of information about local careers to schools for pupils, teachers and families as this initiative was vitally important for our workforce of the future.

- The Council was delighted to receive confirmation of Foreign Office funding to support a trade mission to Hunan, China in November 2019. This followed directly from the report to the Committee received at the last meeting that provided us with the opportunity to take businesses out to the market of Hunan. The Council was working with Hunan officials to establish direct business-to-business contacts so that the visit was valuable to all who attended.

An independent inquiry, undertaken by Norfolk County Council on behalf of the County Council, had been set up to examine the recent flooding in Wainfleet. The Government's Chief Scientific Adviser would be conducting a peer review to assure the quality of the inquiry. The Council was responsible for investigating all flooding events affecting residential properties and in addition to the flooding in Wainfleet there had been floods in other parts of the county and as a result there would be 38 investigations in all. This Committee would receive the results of the Wainfleet investigation in due course.

In response to a question whether other agencies had carried out their responsibilities in the recent flooding incident, it was stated that the inquiry would examine the causes of the incident at Wainfleet, including the response of other agencies. It was also stated that surface water flooding could not be predicted in every instance and many farms had been affected. It was noted that funding provided under the Bellwin formula would help district councils. It was agreed to respond to the Committee in connection with the technical definition of internal flooding.

17 PROPOSED STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The Committee considered a pre-decision scrutiny report in connection with the progress on the Council's statutory review of its existing Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) approved in 2014. The Committee had previously considered a Draft SCI on 27 November 2018 setting out how the Council proposed to engage and consult the public and stakeholders with regard to the preparation of minerals and waste planning policy documents and when determining planning and related applications. This had subsequently been subject to public consultation and, as a result, a number of modifications had been put forward and incorporated into a Proposed SCI annexed to the report. The Proposed SCI would be submitted to the Executive on 3 September 2019 seeking a recommendation that it would be adopted by the full County Council.

Members' views were sought on the proposed modifications particularly those in connection with press notice coverage, whether the proposed methods for consulting and engaging with the public and other stakeholders were appropriate and whether the Proposed SCI was easy to understand.

Members' supported the proposed arrangements for the placement of press notices, subject to consideration being given to other alternatives for those parts of the county where the Lincolnshire Echo was not available, for example in the Boston area, although it was noted that the newspapers used for printed press notices would be reviewed regularly. It was stressed that, as some people did not use the internet or social media, printed press notices remained important.

**ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
9 JULY 2019**

The Committee suggested the use of the Council's "County News" to advertise planning pages on the Council's website and requesting parish councils to use their noticeboards to publicise planning issues, or even circulate consultation information.

Members welcomed the fact that the consultation on the SCI extended beyond Lincolnshire's county boundary and noted that representations had been received from parish councils in adjacent counties.

It was also noted that the Council liaised with the Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the Committee supports the recommendations in connection with the Proposed Statement of Community Involvement, detailed in the report, to the Executive.
- (b) That the comments made by members be noted and sent to the Executive.

18 LINCOLNSHIRE BROADBAND PROGRAMME

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the current status of the Lincolnshire Broadband Programme.

Officers stated that since the report was published forty thousand premises remained to be completed in contract 3 with an allocation of £11m which would only cover between sixteen and seventeen thousand premises. Another £20m would be required to complete the remaining twenty three thousand premises. Communities were encouraged to take up the Building Digital UK (BDUK) Gigabit Voucher Scheme and the Rural Gigabit Connectivity Scheme. Officers were prepared to speak to communities about these schemes. The main issue in connection with the Rural Gigabit Connectivity Scheme was the shortage of rural publically owned buildings to store fibre hubs.

Officers, in response to members' comments, agreed that the use of mobile networks was more efficient and cost effective than providing a fibre to premises connection which was required by the Government. As an example of an alternative solution reference was made to the Blue Light contract with EE which used 4G across the county and had improved coverage. The four telecommunication companies had set up a fifth company to improve coverage in rural areas and officers had written to Ofcom to request them to consider 4G as an alternative to fibre to premises.

Only a small cabinet was required to house the equipment for a fibre hub under the Rural Gigabit Connectivity Scheme but BT needed 24/7 access to the equipment and the question of using private dwellings to store equipment would be raised during the trial period.

Officers stated that the installation of communication technology on street furniture was currently being trialled at Ingoldmells.

ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
9 JULY 2019

Officers confirmed that providing a fibre connection particularly in rural areas was expensive. However, the cost of installing a fixed wireless or 4G dish was more cost effective at approximately £450 a dish and helped many people to get connectivity. This procedure had been promoted for a long time on the Council's website and officers agreed to link this information to a questionnaire which was being prepared on communications.

Officers agreed to copy members into communications sent to Parish Councils about broadband issues and officers would examine the broadband programme which would need to be updated in 2020.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the report and members' comments be noted.
- (b) That the Committee receive a report on the digital communications elements of the Blue Light project at a future meeting.
- (c) That communication sent to Parish Councils about broadband issues be also sent to local members for information.
- (d) That an update of the Broadband Programme be submitted to the Committee in early 2020.

19 HUTTOFT BOAT SHED VISITOR CENTRE AND CAFE

Consideration was given to a report in connection with the provision of a boat shed visitor centre and café at Huttoft. The project would look at adding another new quality tourist facility in the heart of the Coastal Country Park, close to the beach at Huttoft, just south of Sutton on Sea. The project would have a café similar in design to that provided at the Gibraltar Point Visitor Centre at Skegness.

Officers, in response to members' comments, stated that benches would be provided for visitors and provision of extra shelter in the viewing area would be examined and that it might be necessary to undertake additional pruning to ensure that visitors could see the sea.

Members welcomed the installation of an electricity supply which might facilitate CCTV on the site.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That the project be supported and welcomed.
- (c) That the Committee endorse the Executive Councillor for Economy and Place approving the development of the project in line with the project delivery timetable.

20 UPDATE ON THE BUSINESS LINCOLNSHIRE UPDATE ON THE
BUSINESS LINCOLNSHIRE GROWTH HUB'S SCALEUP PROVISION

Consideration was given to a report which provided an update on the ScaleUp business support activity to date. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) had requested that Growth Hubs (the business support arm of the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership and the Council) provide targeted support to help businesses that displayed ScaleUp characteristics to achieve further rapid growth.

Members' views were sought on whether the Council should focus the support of the Growth Hubs on ScaleUp businesses or on all varieties of business. An example of the type of business currently supported was detailed in the report.

Officers, in response to members' comments, stated that the Council had the necessary funding in place to support the ScaleUp offer, and when the UK leaves the EU it would be possible to bid for funding from the EU up to 2023 and, thereafter, it would be necessary to apply for funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The Council worked closely with the district councils and joint visits to businesses were arranged. A report on the Shared Prosperity Fund would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee and the Council's officers had been consulted on the shaping of this new fund.

The Committee supported the priorities detailed in the "Next Steps for 2019" in the report which continued to focus resources on providing tailored support to specific groups of businesses.

There was also discussion on how "less ambitious" small businesses might be supported.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the comments made by members on the current ScaleUp provision offer and activity to date be noted.
- (b) That the Council continue to focus resources on providing tailored support to a specific group of businesses but not to the detriment of other types of business.
- (c) That the Council use the growth stories from the ScaleUp partners to actively promote that Lincolnshire has a robust ecosystem in place to support growth.

21 ENVIRONMENT QUARTER 4 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The Committee considered a report in connection with Environment Quarter 4 performance measures.

ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
9 JULY 2019

Officers agreed to respond to members in connection with the number of waste recycling centres owned by the Council and to provide clarification on the last paragraph on page 109 of the report in connection with the estimation of the Quarter 4 performance compared to last year's Quarter 4 performance.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the comments made by members be noted.
- (b) That officers respond to the questions raised by members.

22 ECONOMY QUARTER 4 PERFORMANCE MEASURES 2018/19

The Committee considered a report in connection with the Economy Quarter 4 performance measures 2018/19.

Officers stated that grants were available for agriculture, farming and food businesses and farmers were being helped to access funding from Defra.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

23 ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered and reviewed its Work Programme.

RESOLVED

That the Committee's Work Programme be noted subject to a progress report on the broadband programme in early 2020, a presentation from consultants (who were coming up to advise the Local Enterprise Partnership) on the creative industries for the meeting on 10 September 2019 and a report on advice to agriculture in view of Brexit to a future meeting.

The meeting closed at 12.00 pm