

**ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY
 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
 25 FEBRUARY 2020**

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, E J Sneath, H Spratt, C L Strange and Dr M E Thompson

Councillors C J Davie and E J Poll attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

John Coates (Head of Waste), David Hickman (Head of Environment), Mary Powell (Commissioning Manager (Tourism)), Daniel Steel (Scrutiny Officer), Vanessa Strange (Head of Infrastructure Investment) and Emily Wilcox (Democratic Services Officer)

63 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

There were no apologies for absence.

64 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

65 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 14 JANUARY 2020

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting on the 14 January 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

66 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND LEAD OFFICERS

The Chairman announced that she had attended the Flood and Water Management Committee in Skegness on the 24 February 2020, where the Committee had received the Section 19 report on the Wainfleet flooding incident. The meeting had been well attended and the report was well received by Members of the public. A public meeting was scheduled for the 4 April 2020 which would announce the future plans for the River Steeping.

The Executive Councillor for Economy and Place announced that representatives from Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) would be attending the MIPIM delegation in Cannes where it was hoped that they could obtain investments for Lincolnshire.

There had been discussions around major investments for Lincolnshire, with key people attending from various government departments. The Executive Councillor for Economy and Place would report back on this issue at the next meeting.

The coronavirus was already starting to have an impact on the global economy and if the virus became a pandemic it would have a serious impact on the national and global economy.

There was an opportunity to make a case for the Lincolnshire economy. It was hoped that the government budget would be more favourable for Lincolnshire investments on key infrastructure projects and water management and that Lincolnshire MP's were being proactive in lobbying for a greater deal for Lincolnshire.

67 DEVELOPING A STRATEGY FOR THE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE OF THE COAST

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Environment, which outlined work to establish a partnership approach to securing the future of Lincolnshire's Coastal Areas, which builds on existing public and stakeholder aspirations. Members were informed that the strategy aimed to provide a framework to shape and support delivery of strategic objectives in a way that was most appropriate to the coastal context.

The strategy looked to create a more formed and collective view about the future of the coast in order to be able to make more informed decisions on how it could be defended.

It was suggested that the initiative be confined to the East Coast from Gibraltar Point northwards to Saltfleet and South Somercotes. The overall scope and timelines for proposed engagement were detailed in the report.

Members considered the report and during the discussion the following points were noted:

- It was confirmed that East Lindsey District Council had put a cap on development in flood risk areas with the exception of social housing as building social housing was seen to a necessity and there was desperate need for an increase in social housing.
- The Executive Councillor for Economy and Place informed Members that the Government had announced that it was planning to bring forward a planning bill to address how houses were built. The Committee were in agreement that Lincolnshire make positive steps and be an example in the progression of planning policy.

- It was expected that the Environment Agency would publish its new flood risk strategy later in 2020. The strategy would consider how communities who were extremely vulnerable to the risks of climate change could be defended.
- Within Lincolnshire, the flood prone area on the East Coast was a large area of land with significant cumulative economic value which Lincolnshire would be able to argue to protect.
- The Executive Councillor for Economy and Place noted that there was an opportunity to invest in and grow the Lincolnshire coast and its economy. A significant sum of money would need to be invested in the counties flood defences in order to ensure growth.
- Members were informed that there was a possibility that the Government would consider a sealing tax on land profits which would mean that land owners would be more likely to release land for a reasonable price.
- The Committee acknowledged the challenges faced by flooding and climate change when developing areas of growth.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

68 DEVELOPING THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN LINCOLNSHIRE

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Environment, which outlined the concept of the circular economy and explored examples of ways of implementing a more sustainable approach to using resources across the county.

Members were informed that Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) was committed to reaching a net zero carbon emissions by 2050, which was in line with national government targets. The Council approved its Carbon Management Plan in 2019, which set out the first part of this journey with a carbon reduction target of 20% by March 2023.

The Committee was advised that the Council were working with partners to develop the County Council's Green Masterplan, focusing on key areas which included energy, property, communities, waste management and transport.

The circular economy encapsulated the idea of using less resource, using what's in circulation and using as little waste as possible. Examples of action that could be taken were set out on page 20 of the agenda.

Members considered the report and during the discussion the following points were noted:

- Members suggested a need for better broadband facilities for all residents if conference calling was to become a preferred option. Officers acknowledged that digital accessibility was a key area for improvement. There were national targets set for rolling out extensive digital accessibility across the UK.

**ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
25 FEBRUARY 2020**

- It was recognised that there needed to be a shift in the mind-sets of many people and a move to being more sustainable and thoughtful by recycling and reusing resources.
- It was recognised that there was now a broader awareness and enthusiasm for change, however it was suggested that changes could be made in moderation.
- It was commented that public transport was not always convenient and improvements needed to be made if more people were going to use public transport more frequently.
- In an attempt to progress a more paperless approach, it was agreed that the Democratic Services Officer liaise with Members following the meeting to provide Members with the opportunity to go paperless.

RESOLVED:

That the report and comments made be noted.

69 TOURISM SECTOR DEAL

Consideration was given to a report by the Tourism Commissioning Manager, which invited the Committee to review the Tourism Sector Deal that was announced in Summer 2019.

In addition to the deal, there would be five Tourism Zones allocated by a competitive process and these would be enabled to operate more innovatively and ambitiously. The Tourism Commissioning Manager was of the view that securing a Tourism Zone for Greater Lincolnshire would be game-changing for Lincolnshire's tourism industry. Lincolnshire had the opportunity to put forward a bid to become a Tourism Zone and would do so for the whole of Greater Lincolnshire.

Officers were now looking to identify the challenges that were being faced by businesses in Lincolnshire. Six consultation events had been scheduled and a tourism action plan had been commissioned.

Members considered the report and during the discussion the following points were noted:

- The Executive Councillor for Economy and place supported the idea of Lincolnshire becoming a Tourism Zone. It was felt that Lincolnshire needed to be marketed more widely alongside improvements being made to the tourist attractions available.
- Members recognised a need to better maintain tourist attractions and work with district, town and parish council's on Lincolnshire's tourism agenda.
- Members expressed their disappointment in the discontinuation of the Visit Lincolnshire concept. However, it was clarified that the website was still operating and acting as a gateway to other sites.

ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
25 FEBRUARY 2020

- The Tourism Sector deal workshops were scheduled to take place in Boston, South Kesteven, Lincoln, North Lincolnshire, North East Lincolnshire and Woodhall Spa. The Tourism Commissioning Manager agreed to circulate the dates of the workshops to the Committee.
- Members emphasised the many locations that offered walking, cycling and bird watching opportunities in Lincolnshire and the potential to develop this offer.
- It was argued that Lincolnshire was 'undersold' as a Tourism destination and more could be done to encourage and promote the County. Officers agreed that marketing could be improved, however reaching target audiences in a complex mix of paper and digital can be difficult and expensive.
- It was suggested that funding could be provided towards LCC setting up a Destination Management Organisation.
- It was acknowledged that it would be beneficial for tourist areas to be operating all year round and less seasonality.
- The Chairman highlighted that LCC would also be putting forward a bid for towns funds in Skegness, Mablethorpe, Lincoln and Boston. If successful along with the Tourism Bid, it would help tourism in Lincolnshire significantly.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted;
2. That the Committee support the preparation of a bid for Greater Lincolnshire to become a Tourism Zone;
3. That the results of the consultation with the tourist industry and bidding progress be reported to a future meeting of the Committee.

70 VISITOR ECONOMY GREATER LINCOLNSHIRE PUBS - SITES & PREMISES STUDY

Consideration was given to a report by the Tourism Commissioning Manager which invited the Committee to review the work that had been undertaken on the Visitor Economy Greater Lincolnshire Pubs – Sites and Premises Study to date.

Members were advised that in 2017, through the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (GLEPP), LCC commissioned research into the possibility of further hotel development in the county. A report on the hotel study was produced and it was felt that the potential for further development of pubs and accommodation in Lincolnshire should be explored.

A free development guide had been produced for pub landlords, tenants and freehold owners and developers who were considering adding accommodation to their pub. Two workshops for pub landlords, tenants and developers had been scheduled and it was hoped that the workshops would produce future direction for the work on the Lincolnshire pubs and accommodation.

Members considered the report and during the discussion the following points were noted:

**ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
25 FEBRUARY 2020**

- Members commended the development of a free practical guide and were pleased that there was an interest in the workshops.
- It was suggested that non-serviced accommodation could become more popular and was less pressure for landlords.
- It was suggested that there was a gap in the market along the coast for bed and breakfast style accommodation. It was hoped that this could be utilised through the new towns funds.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted;
2. That a further update following the consultation workshops with pubs be reported to the Committee.

**71 ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK
PROGRAMME**

Consideration was given to a report by the Scrutiny Officer, 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 focussed where it could be of greatest benefit.

Members were advised that at their meeting on the 31 March 2020, the Committee would consider reports on the County Mixed Dry Recyclables (MDR) procurement; Lincolnshire Broadband Programme Progress Report; Carbon Management Plan and China Hunan Province outcomes.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme be noted.

The meeting closed at 12:06pm.