

**ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
14 JULY 2020**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR MRS W BOWKETT (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors C R Oxby (Vice-Chairman), Mrs A M Austin, G E Cullen, C Matthews, E J Sneath, H Spratt and Dr M E Thompson

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

Officers in attendance:-

Steve Brookes (Lincolnshire Broadband Programme Manager), John Coates (Head of Waste), David Hickman (Head of Environment), Karen Seal (Interim Principle Officer for Place), Daniel Steel (Scrutiny Officer), Vanessa Strange (Head of Infrastructure Investment), Emily Wilcox (Democratic Services Officer) and Helen Jenkins-Knight (Sustainability Officer)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

An apology for absence was received from Councillor T Bridges.

2 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor A M Austin declared a personal interest in relation to Item 6 as had been personally affected by issues with poor broadband connectivity.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 25 FEBRUARY 2020

In relation to the minutes, it was confirmed that two of the Tourism Sector Deal workshops had taken place, one had taken place virtually and three workshops planned for Boston, South Kesteven and North East Lincolnshire had been postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND LEAD OFFICERS

The Chairman recorded the Committee's respects for Councillor Lewis Strange, who was a member of this Committee. The Chairman explained that Lewis was a former Executive Councillor for Waste, as well as a former Chairman of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee and the Flood and Drainage Management Scrutiny Committee. He had a real passion for the Countryside and the natural environment and the Committee would miss his presence. The Chairman passed on the Committee's best wishes to his family.

The Executive Councillor for Economy and Place echoed the Chairman's comments, describing Councillor Lewis Strange as a great colleague, friend and representative of Lincolnshire. The Committee noted the great contribution that Councillor Strange had during his years as a councillor.

The Executive Councillor for Economy and Place advised that the Council continued to respond to the challenges faced by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Getting Building Fund had been awarded £25.8m to Lincolnshire, more details would be reported to a future committee. The Business Lincolnshire Growth hub was working on three new support offers: £10m for SME Tourism businesses in England, with businesses being able to receive £5000 to adapt their businesses following the covid-19 pandemic; a £20m kick start grant – the Council were liaising with MHCLG and awaited the final funding level available to Greater Lincolnshire before opening to bidding; and thirdly, the council had also bid to deliver a programme of 25 peer to peer networking events across key business sectors in Lincolnshire.

The Covid-19 pandemic had caused a major shock to the economic and social system, but all sectors were now reopened. A fear of a second wave remained, but Lincolnshire County Council and the Greater Lincolnshire Enterprise Partnership were doing everything they could to support businesses in Lincolnshire, although challenges still remained.

Members were pleased to see funding announcements and the on-going support that was being provided to local businesses.

5 GREEN MASTER PLAN

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Environment, which provided a progress update on the Green Master Plan (GMP) which provided a progress update on the Green Master Plan (GMP), highlighted the key activities taken to date and proposing a delivery schedule.

On 17 May 2019, the Council committed to making its activities carbon neutral by 2050. As a result, the Council began to develop a GMP as the mechanism that it would use to deliver net zero emissions.

The GMP was a detailed action plan which would set out Lincolnshire County Council's roadmap to how it would achieve carbon neutrality, as well as how the Council would support partners and communities in achieving a more sustainable future.

Members were invited to consider the development of the GMP and endorse the proposed timescale for the delivery of the plan as set out in the report.

The Executive Councillor for Economy and Place advised the Committee that the GMP was a critical piece of work for the Council in moving forward with the reduction in carbon emissions and offered an excellent opportunity for Councillors to shape the place for the future generation. Many people were working differently as a result of covid-19, with less people travelling which reduced mileage and pollution and an increase in cycling and walking which was positive. It was noted that Lincolnshire had been allocated £105,000 in the first tranche of the governments active travel fund and the cycling and walking agenda featured strongly in many of local conversations.

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

- Members supported the increase in cycling but emphasised the need for suitable cycle paths and cycle routes for their residents.
- Many people living in rural areas still relied heavily on the call-connect service so it was important that funding levels were maintained for the service.
- It was explained that the sustainability of transport would be key elements in the GMP and officers were working to address transport issues as part of the plan. Increasing opportunities for people to cycle and walk more was a priority. A report would be brought back to the Committee in due course on transport and sustainability opportunities.
- It was agreed that the Scrutiny Officer would email members of the Committee to ask for volunteers for a possible working group to look into the development of transport and sustainability as part of the GMP.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee endorse the proposed timescales for the delivery of the Green Master Plan by early 2021;
2. That the comments made be considered by Officers as part of the Committee's views on the delivery of the Green Masterplan.

6 LINCOLNSHIRE BROADBAND PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report by the Lincolnshire Broadband Programme Manager, which provided an update on the current status of the Lincolnshire Broadband Programme.

The Programme outlined future plans and provided details relating to the difficulties of deploying faster broadband to rural end users.

An additional 20,300 premises had now had their broadband upgraded and under contract two, which ended on 31st March 2020. Superfast coverage at 1st July 2020 was 94.5%

The Council had now closed an Invitation to Tender for a third contract where total funding would be £11M and with an aspiration to get as close to 100% Superfast coverage as possible.

BDUK were considering how best to utilise £5 billion funding that had been allocated to improving rural broadband connectivity. BDUK will look to provide full fibre (FTTP) to the last 20% of the UK that isn't deemed to be commercially viable.

Early discussions were on-going regarding potential full fibre broadband investment into the county by private investors.

Members considered the report and as part of the discussions the following points were noted:

- Some Members raised concerns about broadband speeds in their areas. Covid-19 had meant that there had been a significant increase in home working which was proving difficult for those without a satisfactory broadband speed.
- Members were advised that the current contract looked to provide value for money and to increase connectivity in as many premises as possible. Officers would continue to work to improve connectivity for those who properties who were still having issues including the universal service obligation where residents could request a link to give minimum 10MB of speed. Officers were working closely to try to get as much funding as possible to improve speeds across the county.
- It was noted that the BT link had been used by some constituents and had worked and improved connectivity for those people.
- Quantum were not thought to be an approved supplier by BDUK so were unable to utilise government funding available to the Council so any solutions provided by Quantum would have to be paid for separately.
- Members were concerned that the information provided on the On-Lincolnshire website was currently out of date and felt that it would be beneficial to update the information and to provide information to Parish Councils to update them on any alterations and the best solutions available.
- It was noted that the On-Lincolnshire website had not been updated as there was soon to be a system upgrade and a new website which would contain all up to date information.
- The Lincolnshire Broadband Programme Manager agreed to re-circulate information on the Broadband offers available so that the information could be shared with Parish Councils.

RESOLVED:

1. That the progress of the Lincolnshire Broadband Programme be noted;
2. That the comments made above be noted in relation to future rural broadband provision.

7 TEAM LINCOLNSHIRE AND FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT
 ACTIVITIES

Consideration was given to a report by the Interim Principle Officer for Place and Investment, which provided an update on the activities and support being provided to the Team Lincolnshire Ambassador Programme; the Foreign Direct Investment Key Account Management Programme and a brief update on the Investment Strategy for Lincolnshire.

Members were advised that in light of the current pandemic, a new awareness campaign had been launched called *#TeamLincolnshireCares*. The campaign included a weekly virtual coffee club as well formal webinars which were proving to be popular.

Due to the pandemic, a payment holiday for the Team Lincolnshire annual subscription had been instituted and would be reviewed in June 2020.

In relation to the Foreign Direct Investment and the Key Account Management Programme, it was noted that the Principal Officer for Place & Investment on behalf of the Greater Lincolnshire Enterprise Partnership had made a successful bid for £49,000 from the Midlands Engine Challenge Fund, which followed on from the £35,000 obtained under Round 1 for the Foreign Direct Investment Key Account Management Programme which came to an end in March 2020.

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

- The Committee were advised that officers were working with the partnership of international trade in preparation for the UK's exit from the European Union to ensure that Lincolnshire remained a priority.
- The Executive Councillor for Economy and Place felt that the Team Lincolnshire programme was a fantastic asset and paid tribute to the private sector businesses for their work on the programme.
- The Committee noted uncertainties faced by the Travelodge hotel chain but hoped the proposed development in Boston would continue as planned. The Executive Councillor for Economy and Place agreed to update the Committee on this once more information was available.
- The Committee were pleased to see that support was still being provided virtually and supported the recommendations set out in the report.

6

ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14 JULY 2020

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee endorse the that the Team Lincolnshire Ambassador Programme has a vital role to play in the restart of Lincolnshire's economy and future investment and development;
2. That the committee recommend that officers consider waiving the Team Lincolnshire Membership Fees for 9 months of the 2020/21 financial year due to the impact of Covid-19
3. That the Committee recommend receiving a future report on the Investment Strategy detailing the core elements of the Strategy and the activities taking place to drive the Strategy forward.

8 ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report by the Scrutiny Officer, which invited Members to consider the Committee's work programme, as set out on page 44 of the agenda.

The Committee were advised that since the agenda had been issued, the following reports had been added to the work programme:

8 September 2020:

- Update on the tourism infrastructure bill

20 October 2020:

- Historic places strategy
- Update report on charging for pre-application for planning

24 November 2020:

- Lincolnshire growth hubs
- Update report on the Green master plan
- Local transport plan
- Employment and skills audit and action plan

RESOLVED:

That the work programme and updates be agreed.

9 CONSIDERATION OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

RESOLVED:

In accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the following agenda item had not been circulated to the press and public on the grounds that it was considered to contain exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended. The press and public would be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of Item 8 of the agenda

10 INTRODUCING SEPARATE COLLECTIONS FOR PAPER AND
CARDBOARD IN LINCOLNSHIRE

Consideration was given to an exempt report by the Head of Waste, which outlined the proposed introduction of separate collections for paper and cardboard in Lincolnshire, which was being considered by the Executive on Executive Councillor for Commercial and Environmental Management on 2 September 2020.

Members discussed the report and a number of comments were noted.

RESOLVED:

That the recommendations, as set out in the exempt report, be approved.

The meeting closed at 11.35 am