

**ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
16 FEBRUARY 2021**

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 and Dr M E Thompson

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

Officers in attendance:-

Amanda Bond (Special Projects Officer), Justin Brown (Assistant Director Growth), John Coates (Head of Service - Waste), Simon Evans (Health Scrutiny Officer), Nick Harrison (Democratic Services Officer), Samantha L Harrison (Head of Economic Development), David Hickman (Head of Environment), Lindsay Hill Pritchard (Principal Commissioning Officer), Nicole Hilton (Assistant Director - Communities), Karen Seal (Principal Officer for Place and Investment), Vanessa Strange (Head of Infrastructure Investment) and Nigel West (Head of Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Officer)

53 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

An apology was received from Councillor T Bridges.

54 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor C Matthews and Councillor G E Cullen declared an interest in agenda item 5 (minute 57) Business Support Programme and reported that they would leave the meeting for consideration of this item.

55 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 12 JANUARY 2021

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

56 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND LEAD OFFICERS

Councillor C J Davie, Executive Councillor for Economy and Place reported that the current lockdown meant that the country remained in unprecedented times. Although, the statistics showed some growth for GDP in December 2020. Lincolnshire County Council continued to offer vital support to the many businesses in the County across sectors and also to prepare them for a buoyant future. The meeting today would

discuss the extraordinary £12million package of support that had been developed to assist businesses.

Many of the UK leading economists were talking very positively about the future including references to the UK economy as a "coiled spring" ready to release large amounts of "pent-up financial energy". The Council was determined that local businesses were going to be well positioned to maximise those opportunities. He recognised the Committee continued to support work across local sectors – the excellent work being done around the agriculture sector for example and he looked forward to bringing a report from the Tourism Commission very shortly. The Committee had long recognised the importance of businesses, of all scales, in the County and those who worked in them. During this electoral cycle the Committee had highlighted work on the skills agenda – producing future talent and adding new skills to our current workforce. Employment and skills was now a corporate priority too.

Enabling businesses to connect, collaborate and promote the County was central to the work of Team Lincolnshire and he was pleased to see that the Committee would be discussing the business plan. He acknowledged how valuable Team Lincolnshire was to its members and the new opportunities that had been created. He highlighted an upcoming event which he would be introducing and which Team Lincolnshire were promoting: the South Lincolnshire FEZ launch event on 17th March 2020. Judith Batchelar Brand Director at Sainsburys would be one of the speakers at the event, along with wider pre event promotion by Sir John Peace – Chair of Midlands Engine.

Developing physical spaces for business to expand into was another key part of the jigsaw and Committee at the meeting would be hearing how the team were building spaces fit for modern working practices. Blending physical workspace with digital demands.

Movement of goods and people was also critical to local businesses. He reported that he was pleased to see that the committee would today be helping to shape the Local Transport Plan. With an increased focus on supporting sectors, place and the environment, it strongly aligned with many of the discussions had at this Committee and connects across to the Green Masterplan.

He recognised that the Committee had actively followed and contributed to the debate around the Environment Bill, which, although delayed to the next session of Parliament had not been lost, and would be going forward as a continuation of the process so far. The Council would continue to collaborate with a range of stakeholders to improve the environment in Lincolnshire – in particular to champion the Nature Recovery Networks across the county, a great opportunity to build on and strengthen our longstanding partnership with the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership as well as with other partners.

57 BUSINESS SUPPORT PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report from the Assistant Director (Growth), on the creation of a £12M business support budget in response to the economic challenges presented by Covid-19. The report would be presented to the Leader of the Council

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(Executive Councillor: Resources and Communications) between 19 – 26 February 2021 for approval. The views of the Committee would be reported to the Leader as part of his consideration of this item.

On 19 February 2021 the Council meeting would be invited to allocate funding to create a new Support for Businesses Reserve of £12m for the purpose of implementing schemes for supporting Lincolnshire businesses. Subject to Council approval for the creation of the reserve, the business support budget would be a direct response to the financial challenges presented by Covid-19, and it would be used to support businesses who had received no help from other government schemes as well as being used to provide a platform for other businesses to respond to the economic emergency created by the pandemic and enable them to adapt to the changing environment and grow once restrictions were lifted.

It was reported that the Council already provided a lot of support to businesses, but that Covid-19 had exposed some gaps, for example, businesses who had not received government support. Following the Committee meeting some draft criteria would be published on the Council website so that businesses could prepare for the application round opened in the week beginning 22 February 2021. The aim of the Executive was to make quick payments to businesses in difficulty, but that aim for a quick payment would increase risk of misuse of funding and so a risk management process had been developed accordingly. It was noted that between 1000 and 2000 local businesses had been unable to attract a government grant.

The Committee considered the report, and during the discussion the following comments were noted:-

- The report was supported and officers were congratulated on the report.
- It was stated that the County Council were in a position to assist businesses financially at this time due to its good financial management of its resources.
- It was thought that this type of scheme and rapid roll out was a good example of devolution benefiting local communities.
- There were some concerns that High Street banks no longer seemed to be interested in lending in the long term to businesses to sustain their forward planning.
- It was hoped that the programme would help create and protect some jobs.
- It was noted that there could be risks with a quick roll out. However, this would to be balanced against the need of local businesses, many of whom had limited cash reserves. The Council would be entering into a pilot scheme with the National Fraud Initiative which would add a further check to the process.
- It was thought that obtaining evidence to support an application such as obtaining three quotes quickly may be difficult in the current Covid-19 pandemic. It was confirmed that other sources of evidence would be used such as bank statements, invoices, receipts, cancelled orders, bookings etc.
- A communications plan had been developed to publicise the programme as widely and quickly as possible.

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- Liaison with District Councils was taking place regarding the coordination of grant payments as it was noted that District Councils had been administering the national scheme on behalf of the Government.
- It was confirmed that businesses must have been in existence since 20 December 2020 to qualify for consideration.
- Where businesses agreed to the sharing of information, it could be passed to Councillors on both local grant awards and refusals. Local councillors also offered to provide advice about some of the businesses and the applicants if that would help officers to take decisions.
- The first payments from the programme were expected to be paid from mid-March.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the recommendations to the Leader of the Council (Executive Councillor: Resources and Communications) outlined above and in the report be supported;
- 2) That the comments of the Committee as outlined above be passed on to the Leader of the Council (Executive Councillor: Resources and Communications) for his consideration.

(Councillors G E Cullen and C Matthews re-joined the meeting following consideration of this item. Councillors C J Davie, M J Hill OBE and E Poll gave their apologies and left the meeting at this point)

58 TATTERSHALL HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRE

(Councillor A Hagues joined the meeting at this point)

Consideration was given to a report from the Head of Service (Waste), on the Tattershall Household Waste Recycling Centre which was the subject of an Executive Councillor decision between 24 and 26 February 2021. The views of the Committee would be reported to the Executive Councillor as part of his consideration of this item.

The Report sought approval to proceed with a project to deliver a new Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) at Tattershall. The facility would replace an existing privately owned HWRC at Kirkby. The report recommended that the construction of the Household Waste Recycling Centre at Tattershall be approved and a delegation for the approval of final proposals for the operation of the facility and the finalisation of all contractual documentation.

The report outlined a business case for the recommendation as well as budget, funding and procurement information. It was reported that proceeding with the construction of a new HWRC would maintain the service in the Horncastle area and meet the requirements of the Council's existing policy on HWRC provision.

Members considered the report, and during the discussion the following comments were noted:-

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- The access road to the site required some maintenance and this matter had been passed to the Highways Department for consideration.
- If the proposal was not approved it was thought that there would possibly be an increase in 'fly-tipping' in the area.
- Designs of recycling facilities in other local authority areas had been reviewed as part of the project.
- The Committee also welcomed the timetable for the implementation of the scheme.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the recommendations to the Executive Councillor for Commercial and Environmental Management, outlined above and in the report be supported;
- 2) That the comments of the Committee as outlined above be passed on to the Executive Councillor for Commercial and Environmental Management for his consideration.

59 MARKET DEEPING GROW-ON BUSINESS SPACE

Consideration was given to a report from the Special Projects Officer, Economic Infrastructure, on a Market Deeping Business Space project, which was the subject of a Leader of the Council and an Executive Councillor for Economy and Place decision between 19 March to 30 April 2021. The views of the Committee would be reported to the Leader and the Executive Councillor as part of their consideration of this item.

In May 2019 in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Economy and Place and the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee, the Economic Infrastructure Team began to pursue a project to deliver around 10,000sq ft of 'grow on' space provision in the Deepings area, by leveraging external funding sources to match the County Council's allocation. Two separate solutions were then sought which, for different reasons, were ultimately not deliverable. To mitigate this, a shorter term project had been developed for delivery in 2021, as part of a revised strategy. The report sought approval from the Executive Councillor for Economy and Place for the principle of proceeding to provide "Grow On" space in the Deepings area through alterations to the Eventus Business Centre in Market Deeping. It also sought approval from the Leader of the Council for the capital scheme business case. The outline estimate for delivering the project was in the region of £875,000 - £975,000.

The report outlined the previous development work, provided a breakdown of the costs and highlighted the benefits of the proposal which included:- an increase of over 2,000sq ft of lettable space; new opportunities for flexible and collaborative working for existing tenants and local businesses; improved layout, accessibility, safety and operability for tenants, visitors and staff; increased income generated from new lettable space; and efficiency savings resulting from upgrades to ageing equipment/fittings where appropriate.

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Members considered the report, and during the discussion the following comments were noted:-

- The general principle pre Covid-19 was to encourage growing businesses to move on within three years.
- It was felt that the facility was well run; however the original rationale and benefits of locating the Reception on the first floor were not apparent. A question was raised regarding whether sufficient parking provision had been considered for the future. It was noted that the Council encouraged environmental sustainability and the use of other modes of transport, with features such as cycle parking and showers already being available on site. A small number of additional parking spaces had been included in the planning application for future implementation, although it was expected that some blended working patterns post Covid-19 would continue and could have an effect on the number of spaces required.
- Eco-friendly upgrades would be considered where possible.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the recommendations to the Leader of the Council and an Executive Councillor for Economy and Place, outlined above and in the report be supported;
- 2) That the comments of the Committee as outlined above be passed on to the Leader of the Council and an Executive Councillor for Economy and Place for their consideration.

60 LINCOLNSHIRE PROPERTY FLOOD RESILIENCE ASSISTANCE PROJECT

Consideration was given to a report from the Head of Environment on a Lincolnshire Property Flood Resilience Assistance Project, which was the subject of an Executive Councillor decision between 22 and 26 February. The views of the Committee would be reported to the Executive Councillor, Economy and Place, as part of his consideration of this item.

Lincolnshire County Council, in its role as Lead Local Flood Authority, was developing a project to allow individual householders that found themselves at risk of flooding to benefit from financial support for property flood resilience measures. These measures were designed to protect their property from flooding or, where this was impractical, to speed recovery from a flood event.

The report sought approval in principle for proceeding with a county-wide Property Flood Resilience Assistance Project as set out in the report; and the delegation to the Executive Director for Place, in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Economy and Place, for the taking of all decisions necessary to give effect to the project, up to and including the award of a contract for the works.

Initially it would be a 12 month trial project designed to protect up to 30 properties at significant risk of surface water flooding. Funding for the trial was expected to be on a matched basis using the resources already budgeted for in the Council's 2021/22 Capital Programme, subject to approval by the County Council on 19 February 2021,

to attract external funding. The report outlined the detail of the funding and how it would be applied.

Tender documents were being prepared for issue to seek bidders for delivery of the Property Flood Resilience (PFR) assistance scheme. This would involve expenditure of up to £100,000 of Lincolnshire County Council capital funds at this stage which would cover the 12 month trial period. A progress report would be provided to Executive in September 2021. It was anticipated that the tender documents would be ready for issue in early March 2021, with a target start date of 1 April 2021. The scheme would be based on invitations and dialogue with local communities was expected.

The Committee expressed their support for the trial project. It was explained to the Committee that applications for schemes would be invited, and this would thus generate dialogue with local communities on the content of schemes.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the recommendations to the Executive Councillor for Economy and Place, outlined above and in the report be supported;
- 2) That the comments of the Committee as outlined above be passed on to the Executive Councillor for Economy and Place for their consideration.

61 THE FIFTH LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN (LTP V)

Consideration was given to a report from the Head of Infrastructure Investment, on the emerging concepts for Lincolnshire County Council's Fifth Local Transport Plan and an overview of the work being undertaken and the themes being considered. The Committee were invited to consider the development of the Local Transport Plan and provide input to help shape the document's development.

The production of a Local Transport Plan was a statutory requirement, under the Local Transport Act 2008, for local authorities where the long term policy structure for local transport delivery would be set out, including a set of scheme priorities and a vision connecting across the area's wider policy backdrop. The Plan would become one of the crucial strategic documents for Lincolnshire and would sit alongside: Greater Lincolnshire's Local Industrial Strategy, the Economic Recovery Plan, Greater Lincolnshire's Planning for Growth agenda, Lincolnshire County Council's corporate plan, the Green Master Plan.

The document would address transport modes such as walking and cycling to freight and infrastructure, from roads to ports to cycle paths and would look at the rail and local bus services. The report suggested that the fundamental challenge for the future transport network would be how to balance the demand for clean growth and improved connectivity with an increasingly congested transport system that was, in many places, at capacity. The aim was to ensure that the existing infrastructure was used to its maximum efficiency through key strategic infrastructure investments and a significant mode shift from the private car to public transport and active forms of travel.

Members considered the report, and during the discussion the following comments were noted:-

- It was noted that many of Lincolnshire's rural country roads were too narrow for cycle paths.
- It was acknowledged that e-charging facilities for electric vehicles and linked up cycle routes would help drive the visitor economy in the coastal and rural areas of the County.
- The importance of having a strategic overview of cycle networks was stressed with the aim of ensuring linked up cycle networks where possible. Examples of disparate and randomly positioned cycle routes in the Eagle and Hykeham West Ward were highlighted for review.
- The benefits of building a bridge at Gibraltar Point to link the Lincolnshire Coast Path were outlined.
- It was noted that some parts of the Witham Path between Boston and Lincoln required maintenance.
- Including an area on trains for bike and pram storage may encourage more visitors to the coast.

RESOLVED: That the report be received.

62 TEAM LINCOLNSHIRE INVESTMENT STRATEGY

Consideration was given to a report from the Principal Officer for Place and Investment, which set out the future direction of the Team Lincolnshire (TL) Ambassador Programme through a new two year Business Plan that outlined the strategic objectives, aims and outcomes clearly linked to the investment priorities of Lincolnshire County Council and the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (GLLEP).

The Team Lincolnshire (TL) Ambassador Programme had been formally launched in 2017 as a public/private sector programme created to promote Greater Lincolnshire as a place to live, work, learn and invest. Lincolnshire County Council and the GLLEP recognised the value of the knowledge and expertise that the TL members had and how this, together with their ambassadorial role, had an important part to play in Lincolnshire's growth.

The Investment Strategy for Team Lincolnshire was a two year business plan (2020 – 2022) which had been developed with a Steering Group. It set out the future direction through five strategic objectives which aligned with both Lincolnshire County Council's and the GLLEP's ambitions for growth and investment: To attract and achieve business investment into the construction sector both commercial and residential in Greater Lincolnshire; to demonstrate that investors were welcome by providing them with a comprehensive soft landing package; to attract and achieve business investment into the office relocation sector in Greater Lincolnshire; to attract and achieve business investment into the food manufacturing sector, including automation and robotics in Greater Lincolnshire; to attract investment that benefited all.

The report also outlined examples of the activities, key performance indicators and programme of work that would contribute to achieving the objectives within the Business Plan.

The Committee welcomed the report and recognised the good work which had been undertaken in difficult circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic.

RESOLVED: That the Team Lincolnshire Investment Strategy as outlined in the report be endorsed.

63 SERVICE LEVEL PERFORMANCE REPORTING AGAINST THE
PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK 2020 - 2021 - QUARTER 3

Consideration was given to an update report from the Head of Economic Development, the Head of Environment and the Head of Service – Waste, on the Service Level Performance Reporting against the Performance Framework 2020-2021 – Quarter 3 for Economy, Flooding and Waste. The report was presented to the Committee by the Head of Infrastructure Investment.

The Committee acknowledged the impact the Covid-19 pandemic had on achieving targets and, in particular, its effect on recycling.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

64 ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK
PROGRAMME

The Committee received a report from the Scrutiny Officer, which enabled the Committee to 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.

Review on agriculture and support to farmers working group

The Chairman reported that at the last meeting of the Committee on the 12 January 2021, there was reference to a potential scrutiny review on agriculture and how farmers could be better supported. However, with the elections on the 6 May, there would not be enough time for a scrutiny panel to complete an in depth review on this topic. The Chairman therefore reported that she would like to set up a working group instead to identify some areas for further investigation to help inform the scoping for a possible scrutiny review. This scoping would then be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board after the elections for its consideration, and to determine whether a scrutiny panel would undertake a review on agriculture and support to farmers. She anticipated the working group would only need to meet once or twice in March to discuss this.

Committee support

The Chairman thanked the Vice –Chairman and all officers and committee members for their support this session.

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RESOLVED:

- 1) That the work programme be approved;
- 2) That it be recorded that Councillors A Austin, W Bowkett, A Hagues, C Matthews and R Oxby put their names forward for the Review on agriculture and support to farmers working group.

The meeting closed at 12.02 pm