

**ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE  
18 JANUARY 2022**

**PRESENT: COUNCILLOR R WOOTTEN (CHAIRMAN)**

Councillors M A Griggs (Vice-Chairman), A J Baxter, M D Boles, I D Carrington, I G Fleetwood, A G Hagues, H Spratt, G J Taylor and L Wootten

Councillors T J G Dyer and D McNally attended the meeting as observers

Councillor C J David attended the meeting as an observer via Microsoft Teams

Officers in attendance:-

Kiara Chatziioannou (Scrutiny Officer), Vanessa Strange (Head of Infrastructure Investment) and Emily Wilcox (Democratic Services Officer)

Officers in attendance via Microsoft Teams:-

Dan Clayton (Sustainability Manager), Matthew Harrison (Senior Commissioning Officer - Flood Risk), David Hickman (Head of Environment), Chris Miller (Deputy Head of Environment), Keith Noyland (Head of Finance - Communities), Mike Reed (Interim Head of Waste),

43 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

There had been no apologies for absence received.

44 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

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

45 MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD ON 30 NOVEMBER 2021

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**46 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND LEAD OFFICERS**

The Executive Councillor for Economic Development, Environment and Planning announced that the forthcoming White Paper would announce government's policies and measures to support the Levelling Up agenda by setting out a plan to transform the UK spreading out ways to restore pride, regenerate places and deliver economic growth and opportunity across the country. The Executive Councillor was determined that the Council would maximise opportunities for Lincolnshire.

Officers were working with stakeholders to gather intelligence to place Lincolnshire in the best possible position of preparedness to access funding and investment to help realise the County's economic potential.

The Executive Councillor was pleased to report that Gross Domestic Product (GDP) had expanded by 0.9% in November, putting total UK GDP above pre-covid levels for the first time since the pandemic began. This had largely been driven by strong growth in construction by 3.5%, in transport and storage at 3.8% and professional scientific and technical activities at 2.5%. Services (0.7%), production (1.0%) and construction (3.5%) output all increased between October and November 2021; this meant that services and construction output were both 1.3% above their pre-coronavirus levels while production remained 2.6% below.

Local business owners continued to highlight significant challenges around increasing costs, recruitment and supply chain issues. The Council continued to offer a significant level of support across the sector, some of which included the finalisation of the last contract for the Invest for Future fund resulting in 32 businesses receiving commitment of £1.6 million of grant funding as part of our COVID Recovery Fund; £621,856 of this fund has already been released to projects; aligned to this. The roll off Business Grants continue to support 112 businesses with £1.3 million having been released to date.

The Committee was advised that since April 2021, the Council had received 82 inward investment enquiries with 66 being from foreign investors from a diverse range of sectors and 36 being from the Agri-food sector, a significant number of which are being supported by Officers with finding suitable sites. Many businesses continued to see the value of working together for Greater Lincolnshire through Team Lincolnshire and there were now 137 Team Lincolnshire Ambassadors.

Officers at the Business Lincolnshire Growth Hub continued to provide vital support to a whole range of businesses. In quarter 3, 343 businesses had been supported, with support through the LCC COVID grants and uptake of some of our specialist support programme such as the Supply Chain Programme and Manufacturing Transformation Programme.

The Council's Adult Learning team continued to help build skills across the County. The 2020/21 data was now finalised and a total of 1,395 courses were delivered to 5,535 learners across Lincolnshire. Since the 1st of August 2021 641 courses had been delivered to

2,197 learners. There also continued to be an increase in the number of qualifications undertaken. 108 qualification courses had been delivered so far this academic year in subjects such as English, maths, bookkeeping, customer service, payroll, food production and food preparation, all of which supported Lincolnshire's priority employment sectors and helped to provide the skills and learning to equip learners for work.

The Committee was invited to ask questions, in which the following points were noted:

- To ensure that Members had access to the data shared in the update. The Executive Councillor would look to include such data in an economic newsletter which could be shared with Members.
- The Council had not yet formally responded to any of the solar applications that had been submitted. The process was lengthy, and the Council was only in the initial stages and was commissioning work to look at the carbon balancing argument between development versus the cost of installing

#### 47 REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET PROPOSALS 2022/23

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Finance - Communities, which invited the Committee to consider a report on the Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals for 2022/23 in relation to the Council's Environment and Economic services, prior to their consideration by the Executive on 8 February 2022.

The Committee was advised that there were no further updates on the implementation of local government funding reforms, therefore the budget proposals set out in the report were for a single year.

At the meeting on the 5 January, the Executive had approved the budget proposals for consultation, that included a proposed 3% increase in Council tax which was the 3% adult social care precept which had been deferred from 2021/22.

Members referred to the proposed revenue budgets, which could be found at Table A (page 18) of the report and showed the movements from the current year's budget in terms of unavoidable cost pressures and expected savings. The figures excluded pay inflation, which had been budgeted for at 2%, but was currently being held centrally pending agreements of any pay award.

The proposed budgets remained largely unchanged. A cost pressure of £200,000 for the Countryside Service had arisen from the increased cost of maintenance of public rights of way fuelled by materials and labour price inflation.

The Committee was also informed that there was a saving of £365,000 in waste services derived from efficiencies from the continued rollout of separated waste paper and card collections.

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Members were referred to Table B (page 20), which set out the proposed capital programme for the Economic and Environmental services. The capital programme was currently supplemented by funding of around £2m from the Development Fund, following approval in the 2020/21 to increase capacity to carry out drainage works and investigation and repair works scheme. It was proposed that the scheme be extended for another two years, using £1.4 million which remained unallocated in the Development Fund.

A consultation meeting with local business representatives, trade unions and other partners was scheduled for the 28 January. The public had the opportunity to comment on the proposals, which were now live on Let's Talk Lincolnshire. The Executive will make final proposals on 8 February for consideration by Full Council on 18 February.

Consideration was given to the report and during the discussion the following points were noted:

- The Committee acknowledged the importance of efforts made to roll out efficient waste collection services, including the separate paper and cardboard collection trial and the food waste collection trial that took place in South Holland District and South Kesteven District respectively.
- It was confirmed the funding for food waste collection in South Kesteven was still available, however it was uncertain whether the service would continue due to pressures in obtaining the appropriate vehicles when renewing their fleet.
- The Committee welcomed future plans for wider roll out of the food waste collection appreciating that these were affected and shaped by the implementation of the Environment Act 2022 in which food waste collection would be mandatory. The Committee requested to receive a timeline of the proposed roll out across the County.
- The Chairman acknowledged the importance of monitoring the recycling and food waste collection across the County and requested that a future report be added to the Committee's work programme.
- The Committee expressed a concern over the apparent removal of the development management budget and the anticipated impact on services and were pleased to hear that this was a budget that received income from development contributions, and therefore the income received, exceeded the cost of providing that service, thus not reflecting a reduction in budget year-on-year.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the recommendations to the Executive be supported;
2. That a summary of the comments made be passed on to the Executive as part of their consideration of this item.

48 LINCOLNSHIRE CARBON TOOL

Consideration was given to a report by the Sustainability Manager – Environment, which provided an update on the work that had been done to quantify the carbon dioxide emissions across the County and sought support for the work underway to reduce emissions.

The Council was making good progress on reducing their carbon emissions in order to achieve the target of Net zero by 2050. Reductions had been made to the Council's direct emissions through buildings and their fleet. Etude consultancy had been commissioned to look at carbon emissions in the County from the wider economy outside of the Council's direct emissions.

It was estimated that if reduction of emissions was left for the end of the 2040s this could have a significant impact on the overall climate missions around the Country which then led the County exceed its climate carbon budget for that period up to 2050. The estimated total of carbon dioxide emissions for 2018/19 were 3.57m tonnes across the Lincolnshire economy. With the largest being from the transport sector at just under 40%; arounds 30% from business and commerce sector and around 30% from domestic housing. Each sectors represented a particular challenge and further actions were suggested to mitigate these through investments that the Council made in projects being set up.

The Committee was referred to Figure 3 in the report, which showed that for most sectors of the economy emissions had been steadily reducing over the period since 2005 for several reasons, including the electricity grid having decarbonized (switch from coal fired power stations to gas fired power stations) and the increase of the amount of renewable energy generated in the Country

Emissions within the transport had stayed consistent despite vehicle engines becoming more efficient. This was due to an increase in mileage across the County including a significant increase in cars delivering goods ordered online. The number of delivery vans on the road had increased by around 70% and was expected to double in size over the next 10 year.

The total number of carbon dioxide emissions had fallen from 6.1m tonnes per annum in 2005 to 4.4m tonnes per annum in 2019, which was a significant reduction. A breakdown of carbon dioxide emissions for each District Council area could be found within the report.

There were a number of methods proposed to reduce emissions in the three main sectors. A reduction in transport emissions would be largely driven by national government policy such as ceasing the sale of fully diesel and petrol cars from 2030. In the industrial sector, the Council was looking at funding options to help businesses introduce energy efficiency technologies into business premises, and encouraging businesses to switch to LED lighting; improve insulation levels and install solar panels. Within the domestic sector, the Council had helped to set up the greater Lincolnshire Energy Efficiency Network (GLEEN) which coordinated the activity on energy efficiency funding that was mainly being directed at social housing altering the domestic sector. There was also the new future homes standard which

was being introduced into the commercial sector from 2025 which would significantly increased the building standards for new houses.

Overall, the Council had made excellent progress in reducing its own carbon emissions, but it was recognised that the Council was only directly responsible for less than half of 1% of the carbon emissions in the County, so there was a need to work with businesses, local communities and other parts of the public sector to reduce emissions in the coming years.

Consideration was given to the report and during the discussion the following points were noted:

- Members welcomed working in partnership with District Council's on the installation of electric vehicle charging points in suitable locations across the County. It was recognised that there would need to be installation of significantly more charging points across the County, which needed to be suitably located to ensure all residents had access not too far from their homes.
- It was acknowledged that the battery life for electric vehicles required development to ensure that it was sufficient for long distance traveling and that they could be charged in a timely manner.
- The importance of addressing the issue of domestic energy efficiency and upgrades to housing in a timely manner was emphasised. It was noted that North Kesteven District Council were carrying out an advanced programme for retrofitting within their Council housing stock. Although efficiency improvements to some dwellings may be difficult and costly, they were not impossible and the importance of making the improvements in order to meet the net zero target was emphasised.
- There were a number of online delivery collection points across the County. The Council were liaising with a representative of a company that was looking to install a national network of collection points that would be used by a range of companies and had identified Lincoln and Boston as two priority areas. The project proposed that, by the end of the roll-out, residents would be no more than one kilometre from a collection point at any time, when in urban areas. Libraries, community centres and village halls had been identified as possible locations and there would also be the opportunity for income generation at the sites.
- The Committee welcomed the opportunity to reduce emissions by encouraging children to walk or cycle to school. Work was ongoing for a number of possible cycle and walking routes which would provide alternative means of transport to a number of school children and as a result cost savings would be made. An update on alternative school transport measures and potential walking and cycling routes was agreed to be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.
- Western Power had proposed a programme of installation for electric vehicle charging substations across the County which would also allow solar panels to feed back into the electricity grid.
- The Council would continue to consider alternative fuels for their transport fleet, including the possibility of using hydrogen.

- Members were encouraged by the reductions in emissions that had been made to date. However, it was suggested that some reduction had been made by changes in supply rather than demand. It was felt that the Council needed to do more to influence the way that individuals act to climate change.
- It was suggested that the UK needed to use more renewable energy sources such as solar panels.
- Concerns were raised over the capacity of the national grid to cope with the increase in electric cars on the road.
- Funds for the local authority delivery programme had been distributed at a district council level. The Council had a small influence over the spending allocated to Midlands Energy Hub through the programme.
- The Council had invested a significant amount of money on making energy efficiently improvements at County Council operated buildings across the County.

**RESOLVED:**

That the work that had been carried out to quantify carbon dioxide emissions across the County be noted.

**49      LINCOLNSHIRE HOMEOWNER PROPERTY FLOOD RESILIENCE ASSISTANCE SCHEME UPDATE**

Consideration was given to a report by the Flood and Water Manager which invited the Committee to consider the Lincolnshire Homeowner Property Flood Resilience Assistance Scheme.

The Committee was informed that following the devastating impact on several communities following the flooding incidents in 2019 and 2020, the Council saw an opportunity to pilot a Property Flood Resilience scheme (PFR), based on a similar scheme being ran by Essex County Council.

The approach to the project in Lincolnshire was unique and several systems and bespoke measures had been developed which were specific to each property, including a case management system to minimise the administrative burden on the flood risk and the use of standard templates to align with processes within national property flood resilience.

Residents of properties which had suffered internal flooding as part of a Section 19 investigation had been approached as part of the pilot and asked whether they would like to participate. 10 properties had participated in the scheme to date and the pilot had been useful in identifying learning both in the systems used and the practical measures that could be delivered for properties. The scheme allowed property owners and individuals to build some resilience to their own properties.

The Flood Risk Team had now developed mechanisms for the delivery of bespoke PFR measures, ensuring that the scheme was tailored to specific needs of residents for the

County and delivered value for money whilst minimising the resource and expenditure of administration.

A target had been set with the aim to protect up to 35 eligible properties from all sources of flooding via the installation of proportionate and bespoke resistance, recoverability and preparedness measures, details of which could found within the report.

Consideration was given to the report and during the discussion the following points were noted:

- Members acknowledged the devastating effects flooding could have for residents of the County and welcomed the scheme.
- It was suggested that the programme work alongside the Upper Witham Basin Groundwater Project.
- The project would run alongside the Innovation Resilience Fund which focussed on improving ground water flooding incidents in Lincolnshire which would help to determine appropriate measures for property level resilience.
- The £2.9m that had been invested by the Government was a national fund used to support projects elsewhere in the UK.
- The £5000 per property, financial assistance offered by the Council had been predominantly used to support the 12-month pilot and 10 properties were signed up to. Officers continued to promote the scheme and engage with more properties within the County.
- Officers were actively working with local Planning Authorities to ensure that sustainable drainage systems were prioritised within new developments, as well as recommending retrofitting.
- Officers were working to better promote the scheme and its benefits to ensure residents were better protected against future flooding events.

RESOLVED:

That the report be considered, and the comments made be noted.

## 50 GREEN MASTERPLAN: 2021 PROGRESS REPORT

Consideration was given to a report by the Sustainability Manager, which invited the Committee to review and comment on the proposed progress that had been made in the initiated delivery of the Green Masterplan.

The Committee was advised that the Council had reduced their carbon dioxide emissions from 55,000 tonnes in 1990 to just under 22,000 tonnes in 2019, which was due to a number of reasons. The Council were now looking at how to further improve their carbon footprint.



The figures for 2021-2021 showed a 24% saving in electricity consumption and a 10% gas reduction, which equated to a 17% reduction in consumption over the period.

The coronavirus pandemic and the requirement for staff to work from home, if possible, had a significant impact on the Council's energy consumption and carbon emissions. Carbon dioxide emissions for the year for the start of the pandemic were reduced by 932 tonnes.

The Sustainability Manager highlighted some key progress for the Green Masterplan since its adoption in February 2021, such as the Lincolnshire Climate Summit; Zero Carbon Castle; establishing a Countywide baseline; local climate impacts profile update; tree planting; active travel, sustainability impact assessment tool; directorate/departmental zero carbon plans and an assessment of the impact of the Environment Act 2021. Further details of which could be found within the report.

A series of projects had been developed and will be funded from the dedicated Green Masterplan budget for 2022, which included Lincolnshire Climate Partnership; Schools engagement; tree planting projects, zero carbon parishes; carbon management plan update; biodiversity net gain analysis; cargo bike – last mile project and a local energy asset review.

Consideration was given to the report and during the discussion the following points were noted:

- The Committee was pleased to see the progress that had been made on the Green Masterplan.
- The process of biodiversity net gain had been begun with the passing of the Environment Act and it was now necessary to establish how and when it would be introduced. A consultation had been launched in which the Council would be responding. The Council would also be considering how they could utilise the net gain measures which could include using unused Section 106 money to create and enhance biodiversity sites across the County.
- The schools project would engage children through theatre groups.
- There was currently a project underway using funding through the heat network delivery unit to carry out a study on the energy from waste plant and suitable nearby heat sources that could utilise the energy produced by heat at the plants.

RESOLVED

That the progress of the Green Masterplan be noted.

## 51 ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report by the Scrutiny Officer, which invited the Committee to consider and comment on its own work programme to ensure that scrutiny activity was focussed where it could be of greatest benefit.

The Committee was referred to the work programme, which was set out on pages 44-45 of the agenda pack.

Following discussion by the Committee earlier in the meeting, the Scrutiny Officer proposed that reports on:

- Food waste collection in Lincolnshire;
- Lincolnshire Carbon Tool 3-month update; and,
- Lincolnshire homeowner property flood resilience assistance scheme be added to the work programme.

It was also requested that a report on sustainable urban drainage systems and flooding prevention techniques be added to the future work programme, as well as an update on the Environment Act and its impact on Lincolnshire.

Subject to coronavirus restrictions, the meeting on the 24 May 2022 was scheduled to take place at the Gibraltar Point Nature Reserve which would also provide Members with the opportunity to see how the Council worked with its partners at the Wildlife Trust.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed work programme be approved, subject to the additions proposed.

The meeting closed 12:20