

**ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE
12 JULY 2022**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR I D CARRINGTON (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors M A Griggs (Vice-Chairman), A J Baxter, I G Fleetwood, A G Hagues, Mrs J E Killey, G J Taylor, L Wootten, R Wootten and N Sear

Councillors C Davie, S Wooley, D McNally and T Dyer attended the meeting as observers via Teams

Officers in attendance:- Adrian Winkley (Minerals & Waste Policy and Compliance Manager – Planning), Chris Miller (Acting Head of Environment), Justin Brown (Assistant Director – Growth), Kiara Chatziioannou (Scrutiny Officer), Mike Reed (Head of Waste), Samantha Harrison (Head of Economic Development), Thea Croxall (Adult Learning & Skills Manager), Mary Powell (Place & Investment Manager) and Thomas Crofts (Democratic Services Officer)

8 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M D Boles.

It was reported that, under Regulation 13 of the Local Government Committee and Political Groups) Regulation 1990, Councillor N Sear was replacing Councillor H Spratt for this meeting only.

9 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest at this point in proceedings.

10 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 24 MAY 2022

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 may 2022 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

11 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND LEAD OFFICERS

The Chairman welcomed Members of the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee who were observing the meeting in relation to Item 6 Adult Skills & Family

ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
12 JULY 2022

Learning Programme 2021/22, which was requested to be taken under this Committee's business at the beginning of this Council Term Year.

Councillor Davie, Executive Councillor for Economic Development, Environment and Planning, made the following announcements:

- The cost of living was continually rising.
- Lincolnshire's visitor economy was braced for falls in spending.
- An Energy strategy was being developed, which incorporated the measures to counter rising fuel prices.
- Business Lincolnshire and Team Lincolnshire held a net zero business event at Sutton on Sea last week, with over 60 businesses in attendance. The event helped support business transition towards net zero.
- Works on Eventus at Market Deeping were nearing completion, within budget and on time, creating 2,000 square feet of lettable space for businesses.
- Plans had been submitted for the Council's Multiply Programme.
- Lincolnshire County Council was the regional lead for the Government's local electric vehicle infrastructure fund.
- Business Lincolnshire and Team Lincolnshire were supporting this week's Stokes business event, which provided a workshop for local hospitality businesses.

Members noted the announcements, and the following comments were raised:

- Electric vehicle charging points were needed across the county where there was a discernible demand.
- The Energy Strategy was to be an all-inclusive strategy that looked at domestic and business costs, and encouraging labour and business growth.
- Workforce and labour challenges were recognised to be an issue. Labour shortages were also due to pressures caused by the pandemic.

12 SERVICE LEVEL PERFORMANCE REPORTING AGAINST THE PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK 2021/2022 - QUARTER 4

Samantha Harrison, Head of Economic Development, Chris Miller, Acting Head of Environment, and Mike Reed, Head of Waste, presented reports on performance achieved in Quarter 4. The following was highlighted:

Economic Development

- 457 businesses were supported, bringing the total for the year to 1982, exceeding the yearly target of 1737.
- 454 qualifications were achieved, bringing the total for the 2021/22 to 1,724, exceeding the target of 1,400.
- Over 50% of qualifications were delivered in deprived areas of the county.
- An additional £1,682,631 of external funding had been received, bringing the total for the year £20,863,130 just falling slightly short of the target of £21,000,000.

Flooding

- There were 3 Section 19 Investigations started affecting 2 residential and 8 commercial properties.

Waste

- The recycling rate at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) had decreased to 70.04% due to there being less green waste in winter for composting.
- The amount of waste collected at the kerbside was 991kg per household for the full year, which was s below the target of 1000kg per household

During consideration of the report, the following comments were raised:

Economic Development

- ESOL courses were designed to fill a gap in learning provision – delivered on a need basis.
- More focus on employment outcomes concerning the hospitality, construction and health sectors would be ben useful to the Committee in future reports.

Flooding

- Officers were exploring options in reporting the flooding of outbuildings. However, there was a backlog of work pertaining to existing Section 19 investigations which took priority.

Waste

- More data was needed to analyse the fall in recycling at HWRCs and better inform performance target so that they are made more meaningful.
- The Government was pushing to tax businesses on waste.
- Separate paper and card collections rolled out across the county were improving the quality of recycling.
- The Committee were to be updated on how performance targets were calculated and set.
- Paper and card collections were kept separate form other recycling and processed a separate facility.
- Work was underway to investigate haulage capacity of waggons.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report and comments be noted and passed on to the relevant Executive Councillor.
2. That the Committee receive an update on how waste performance targets were calculated and set.

ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
12 JULY 2022

Justin Brown, Assistant Director – Growth, and Thea Croxall, Adult Learning & Skills Manager, presented a report on the recent work and activity of the Adult Skills & Family Learning Programme. The following was reported:

- Covid had continued to impact the Adult Learning programme, especially concerning staffing.
- Adult Learning provision was provided through 22 sub-contracted. A total of 5,793 unique learners had been engaged on Adult Learning Programmes this year.
- ESOL course were provided as required for Afghan and Ukrainian refugees.
- Course were supporting the tourism and construction sectors recover from the impacts of covid.
- The Learner of the Year awards were presented at the Lincolnshire Show and were a great celebration of the programme and the efforts of learners.
- An outline of the planed programme for next year was presented. It was highlighted that next year’s programme intended to fill the gaps of other funded provisions and recognised a shortfall if provision in South Holland.

During consideration of the report, the following comments were raised:

- Information on learner pass rates and future prospects would be circulated to Members.
- Learners were offered the opportunity to retake assessments.
- Funding for Level 3 qualifications had been secured to roll out additional courses.
- The adult learning system was an awkward and fragmented system and work was underway between the Council and the Government to help join up the system and allow greater focus for local priorities.

Members commented that the report could be made more accessible for the public to understand.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report and comments be noted.
2. That a further update be added to the Committee’s work programme for progress captured in 2022-23.

14 ENVIRONMENT ACT 2021 - GENERAL IMPLICATIONS

Chris Miller, Acting Head of Environment, presented a report on the Council’s requirements when the elements of the Environment Act 2021 come into force. The following was reported:

- In terms of the Council’s business, key impacts of the Environment Act 2021 were within the following areas:

- Regulation – with a new government office for environmental protection.
- Waste – with expectations for the weekly collection of separate food waste.
- Air – with expectations for the environmental health authority to maintain air quality management plans.
- Water – with regard to drainage management.
- Nature – with expectations to increase biodiversity and conservation management by 10% and the introduction of nature banks.
- Sustainability and impact assessments relating to the Act were to become necessary for all future Council decision making.
- An evaluations of the Act’s impacts were currently underway.

During consideration of the report, the following comments were raised:

- New burden funding was available to help with the costs of resourcing new waste collection plans. However, the funding was limited and it was unclear how it was to be administrated.
- Per household waste production metrics were favoured by waste collection authorities so they could calculate service provision.
- PM emissions represented particulate matter in the air.
- Traffic measurements were administrated by the environmental health authority under air quality plans.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report and comments be noted.
2. That the Committee supports preparatory work to be undertaken – including the creation of a sustainability and natural environment assessment template for inclusion in Council decision making.
3. That the Committee receives further updates when various elements of the Environment Act 2021 are brought into force.

15 UPDATE ON VISIT LINCOLNSHIRE & TOURISM COMMISSION

Mary Powell, Place & Investment Manager, presented a report on activities undertaken in the first year of the Tourism Commission Action Plan. The following was reported:

- New funding from the Covid Recovery Fund was evenly split in terms of spend profile 2021/2 and 2022/3.
- A Green Tourism Toolkit had been produced to show to help businesses address changing consumer trends, attract and retain staff; reduce operational costs, reduce negative environmental impact, and help ensure local areas thrive.
- Business.Visitlincolnshire.com was launched in November 2021. The site covered business planning, finance, funding, planning, marketing and digital as well as legislative and industry updates.
- Various new visitor products had been created including a new bird trail.

- Public relations had been overhauled with new video promotions and social media profiles.

During consideration of the report, the following comments were raised:

- Lincolnshire had historically not promoted its tourism offer as well as neighbouring counties. Work was underway to promote the county and make up for lost opportunities.
- Visitors to the Visit Lincolnshire website were as follows:
 - 3% - international
 - 20%
 - The rest were domestic
- Lincolnshire had a lack of accommodation to support the visitor economy at busy points throughout the year. Work was underway to improve this, with hotel studies and pub development initiatives underway.
- Tourism Officers across the county were currently meeting once a week to establish a joined-up approach across authorities.
- The pandemic had skewed data reporting for the past two years. Pre-pandemic data from 2019 was being used to inform work going forward.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report and comments be noted.
2. That the Committee is satisfied with progress reported on Year 1 of the Tourism Commission Action Plan.

16 BUSINESS LINCOLNSHIRE GROWTH HUB ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND FUTURE BUSINESS SUPPORT LANDSCAPE

Samantha Harrison, Head of Economic Development, presented a report on the Business Lincolnshire Growth Hub and the activity of other business support delivery partners. The following was highlighted:

- The Business Lincolnshire Growth Hub was launched in April 2015.
- Further funding bids to BEIS for additional core revenue funding of £286,625 for the year 22-23 had been successful.
- Additional funding had been received to help transition business readiness post Brexit, support business through the pandemic public health measures, and aid staffing issues.
- Client monitoring and evaluation was undertaken with the following conclusions:
 - 92% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of the service.
 - 96% of respondents were very or somewhat likely to recommend the service they received to a friend or colleague.

- A big challenge facing the work of the Growth Hub was that £20 million worth of EU funding and support was to terminate or be scaled back in June 2023, which may end some service provision.

During consideration of the report, the following comments were raised:

- The success of the Growth Hubs was measured by the number of jobs created. It was also pertinent to measure and report value added.
- The Growth Hubs proved to have a positive net effect on job creation.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report and comments be noted.
2. That the Committee support the work of the Growth Hub.

17 ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report by Kiara Chatziioannou, Scrutiny Officer, which invited the Committee to consider and comment on the content of its own work programme for the coming year.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme be approved.

The meeting closed at 12.14 pm