

**ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY
 COMMITTEE
 28 NOVEMBER 2023**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR I D CARRINGTON (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors M A Griggs (Vice-Chairman), Mrs A M Austin, A J Baxter, K H Cooke, I G Fleetwood, A G Hagues, H Spratt, G J Taylor and L Wootten

Officers in attendance:-

Justin Brown (Assistant Director Growth), Kiara Chatziioannou (Scrutiny Officer), Thea Croxall (Adult Learning & Skills Manager), Samantha Harrison (Head of Economic Development), Nicole Hilton (Assistant Director - Communities), Clare Hughes (Employment and Skills Executive Manager), Mick King (Head of Economic Infrastructure), Chris Miller (Head of Environment), Nicola Radford (Senior Commissioning Officer, Regeneration Programmes), Mike Reed (Head of Waste) and Vanessa Strange (Head of Infrastructure Investment), Ian Walker (Infrastructure Team Manager – Economic Infrastructure) and Jess Wosser-Yates (Democratic Services Officer)

36 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies were received from Councillor M Boles.

37 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No interests were declared at this point in proceedings.

38 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 24 OCTOBER 2023

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 October 2023 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

39 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND LEAD OFFICERS

The Chairman attended the meeting of the Flood and Water Management Scrutiny Committee on Monday 27th November and informed Members that it had formally resolved to form a Working Group to investigate the response to Storm Babet in Lincolnshire.

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Councillor C Davie, Executive Councillor for Economic Development, Environment and Planning, had submitted his announcements to the Chairman to be shared on his behalf. The following matters were noted:

- Devolution for Greater Lincolnshire was being discussed with local businesses.
- The Autumn Statement acknowledged an extension to the 'Made Smarter Programme' which provided digital adoption support to manufacturers. This Programme was led by the Council on behalf of the East Midlands region.
- The Business Lincolnshire Team had recently been involved with delivering multiple events for businesses such as the Taming the Dragon investment pitching event, the Greater Lincolnshire Engineering and Manufacturing Network (GLEAM) and the Business Lincolnshire's Going Global Conference.
- The Council continued to support approximately 140 small business tenants in the five business centres, the Innovation Centre, and industrial and commercial units.
- Tender for the Electric Vehicle charging pilot was live.
- The Council would propose a strong case for Lincolnshire during the consultation from National Grid regarding pylons in the county in the New Year; assurance was provided that the evaluation of the proposals would be comprehensive.
- The Executive Councillor wished all Members a peaceful Christmas and Happy New Year and thanked them for their scrutiny and work in 2023.

40 PROVISION OF CAREERS ADVICE TO ALL AGE GROUPS IN LINCOLNSHIRE

Consideration was given to a report from Thea Croxall, Adult Learning & Skills Manager and Clare Hughes, Employment and Skills Executive Manager, which provided an overview on the Careers Advice Provision available in Lincolnshire. Amanda Holmes, Senior Project Officer – Learning was also in attendance for this item.

The Committee was guided through the report, and during the discussion the following matters were noted:

- Members questioned how the Council ensured that education providers aligned with the expectation from Department for Education to use the Gatsby Benchmarks as they were not statutorily obliged to. The Employment and Skills Executive Manager that schools were still measured and assessed against the Benchmarks; their responses were collated on a national level by The Career and Enterprise Company and reported their performance annually.
- Further detail was requested on the metrics used to benchmark providers; it was highlighted that the metrics were identified following a review of systems globally and were contained within the Gatsby Report. A recent Select Committee Review had agreed to reassess the Benchmarks to ensure they were still suitable.
- Information was requested on the performance of schools in providing careers advice.

- The Council supported all publicly funded schools, including special schools, on a one-to-one basis. This offer did not extend to private schools, though they could still subscribe to relevant newsletters.
- Members noted that careers advice ought to be individually tailored to reach different audiences; they were subsequently informed that the Council was assessing the messaging of careers advice advertisements with the University of Lincoln. The Chairman requested an update on this work.
- The scope of careers advice had changed due to the digitalisation of the market, which subsequently led more people to aspire to be self-employed. The Employment and Skills Executive Manager assured that self-employment was an important strand of careers education, and one of the Gatsby Benchmarks pertained to how a young person might manage their career over their lifetime which also would include those wishing to pursue self-employment.
- Local Government could be better advertised by careers advice.
- Members welcomed the work of Operation Pumpkin and requested an update in due course.
- The Committee supported the use of successful case studies and practical examples within the report.

RESOLVED

1. That the Committee notes the contents of the report.
2. That the Committee supports the work that is underway via the Council's Skills Development Fund and the Careers Hub aiming to help fill gaps identified in the report and discussed.
3. That the comments in relation to sector approach to developing careers information and on the methods used to engage the community and showcase the types of Lincolnshire has to offer, be shared with the relevant officers and portfolio holders in support of their efforts.

41 SERVICE LEVEL PERFORMANCE AGAINST THE CORPORATE PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK 2023-24 QUARTER 2

Consideration was given to a report from Samantha Harrison, Head of Economic Development, Mike Reed, Head of Waste, and Chris Miller, Head of Environment, on the performance of the Service Level Performance measures for 2023-24 Quarter 2 for Economy, Flooding and Waste which are within the remit of the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee were guided through the report, and the following matters were noted:

Economy:

- It was agreed that the colours on the pie charts be more consistent.

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PI 70 qualifications achieved by adults

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- Members noted that there was less education provision in South Kesteven, West Lindsey and South Holland; the Head of Economic Development clarified that the Council avoided duplicating efforts of colleges and education providers which indicated provision was already available in those areas.
- The Council worked in partnership with colleges and education providers to ensure that services were tailored depending on the demand, feedback and progression opportunities.
- It was questioned whether the Council's efforts complimented other providers; it was subsequently agreed that the Committee would consider a report at a future meeting on the different education provision available in Lincolnshire from various providers.
- The Assistant Director – Growth informed that around £18 million was received in Lincolnshire for the adult education budget per year, from which the Council received around £2 million; the majority was received by colleges, and the Council worked to ensure the qualifications were accessible across the county.
- It was questioned whether the public was consulted when considering new courses. Members were subsequently informed that training and colleges providers were invited to provide courses qualifications in required subject areas and were assessed on their coverage and level of innovation as part of the annual commissioning cycle.

PI 71 Amount of external funding attracted to Lincolnshire

- Members welcomed that over £8 million of external funding had been attracted to Lincolnshire.
- Previously, funding typically was derived from the European Union. Funding sources were contemporarily more diverse and the Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) did not offer as much money. UKSPF required that community, skills, and businesses were supported which has meant some provision has scaled down.
- On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman was willing to work with the Economic Development team to maximise output in the context of UKSPF.

Environment

PI 72 Flooding incidents investigated

- It was noted that the impact of Storm Babet was not included in the data for this measure; this information would be included in the Performance Report for Quarter 3.
- The Flood and Water Team was working with external agencies to address the impact of Storm Babet; internal flooding was prioritised.
- The Head of Environment informed Members that the timescales to complete Section 19 Investigations (S19s) depended on complexity and scale.
- Investigations of 'near misses' were often commissioned by the Council despite there being no statutory obligation to do so.
- The Committee voiced their support for the Flood and Water Team and their efforts.

Waste

PI 160 Recycling Rate (new formula)

- The Environment Act was expected to introduce separate food waste collection, and it would be required that all producers of materials and packages to fund Local Authorities for disposal and collection costs.
 - Waste Collection Authorities, not Disposal Authorities, would be entitled to new burdens funding which meant the Council may have to finance an expanded service and infrastructure.
- Members noted the recycling rate was 40.63% which fell below the target of 50%, and they subsequently questioned why the introduction of separate paper and card collection had not impacted this statistic. The Head of Waste informed Members that this did not impact the recycling rate as paper and card were still processed as recycling, however it vastly improved the quality of the material collected.
- The plateau of recycling rates had been observed nationally.

PI 76 Recycling at County Council owned Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs)

- The HWRCs processed over 25 types of material and subsequently the Head of Waste suggested that further education and engagement was required at HWRC for the public.
- Where there was disruption in the supply chain that supported HWRCs, materials were rarely processed incorrectly to avoid turning the public away from the site.

RESOLVED

1. That the Committee receives the report
2. That the comments from the discussion of the performance indicators presented be forwarded to relevant officers and portfolio holders for their information and consideration.

42 SCRUTINY PANEL B - AGRICULTURE SECTOR SUPPORTS IN LINCOLNSHIRE SCRUTINY REVIEW – EXECUTIVE RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN

Consideration was given to a report from Vanessa Strange, Head of Infrastructure Investment, which invited the Committee to comment on the Executive's response to the Agriculture Sector Support in Lincolnshire report prepared by Scrutiny Panel B. Nicola Radford, Senior Commissioning Officer – Growth was also in attendance for this item.

Members were informed that the Executive had unanimously supported the recommendations of Scrutiny Panel B in its meeting in September 2023. The Committee was invited to consider the Executive Response, and was required to follow the recommendations outlined in the action plan.

During consideration of the report, the following matters were noted:

- The Executive had welcomed the inclusion of the perspectives of young people in agriculture within the report, notably the Agricultural Champions videos.
- Executive Members had discussed mental health challenges faced by those in the agricultural sector at length; the Committee was informed that since publication, it

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had been confirmed that a Mental Health worker would be supporting the Lincolnshire Rural Support Network (LRSN).

- The action plan was also welcomed by the Committee as it showed the Council's commitment to supporting the agricultural industry.
- Recent flooding events had highlighted the impact and challenges faced by the agricultural sector.
- It was requested that an update report be considered by the Committee on the implementation of the action plan.

RESOLVED

1. That the Committee endorses the report and action plan
2. That the Committee's satisfaction of the detailed account provided regarding actions that seek to discharge the recommendations be recorded
3. That a further update on the progression of the action plan be brought back to the Committee for its consideration in July 2024.

43 ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received a report from Kiara Chatziioannou, Scrutiny Officer, which enabled the Committee to comment on the content of its work programme.

The Scrutiny Officer agreed that an item be added to the February 2024 agenda following the abolishment of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) when timings had been realised and further detail had been received regarding devolution.

The Assistant Director – Growth informed Members that there was work underway regarding net transition which would be circulated to the government in December; therefore, February would be most appropriate for the topic to be considered by the Committee.

RESOLVED

That the Work Programme be agreed subject to the above amendment.

44 CONSIDERATION OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

RESOLVED

That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it is considered to contain exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

45 HORNCastle INDUSTRIAL ESTATE EXTENSION

Consideration was given to the exempt report, and the Committee raised a number of questions which were answered by the Officers present.

RESOLVED

1. That the Committee supports the recommendations to the Executive Councillor for Economic Development, Environment and Planning, and the Leader of the Council (Executive Councillor for Resources, Communications and Commissioning) as set out in the report.
2. That the Committee's comments be passed on to the Executive Councillor for Economic Development, Environment and Planning, and the Leader of the Council (Executive Councillor for Resources, Communications and Commissioning) in relation to this item.

The meeting closed at 12.23 pm