



**ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
28 NOVEMBER 2017**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR T BRIDGES (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors B M Dobson (Vice-Chairman), B Adams, Mrs A M Austin, G E Cullen, R P H Reid, S R Kirk, Mrs E J Sneath, C L Strange and Dr M E Thompson

Councillor M J Storer attended the meeting as an observer

Officers in attendance:-

Steve Blagg (Democratic Services Officer), Justin Brown (Commissioner for Economic Growth), David Hickman (Growth & Environment Commissioner), Susannah Lewis (Principal Commissioning Officer (Funding)), Vanessa Strange (Accessibility and Growth Manager) and Daniel Steel (Scrutiny Officer)

35 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT COUNCILLORS

Apologies for absence were received from Executive Councillors C J Davie and E J Poll.

36 DECLARATION OF COUNCILLORS' INTERESTS

Councillor C L Strange requested that a note should be made in the minutes that Vanessa Strange, report author, was his daughter (minute 42).

37 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 OCTOBER 2017

RESOLVED

(a) That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 October 2017, be agreed as a correct record subject to it being acknowledged that the meeting was held at the Eventus Centre, Market Deeping.

(b) That a letter of appreciation be sent to the Manager of the Eventus Centre for allowing the Committee to use their Centre.

38 MINUTE 32 (HERITAGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL BASED TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES)

Following an enquiry by a Member, officers agreed to bring a report to the meeting of the Committee on 27 February 2018, in connection with the provision of hotel accommodation in Lincolnshire.

39 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS
AND LEAD OFFICERS

The Executive Support Councillor for Economy and Place made the following announcements:-

- He gave details of the plans for a medical school in Lincoln to which all members of the Council's Executive had signed a letter of support for the University of Lincoln's bid. He stated that the project would provide training and job opportunities for the local community and would help to attract investment.
- He stated that the Government had made two announcements in connection with the autumn budget and the launch of an Industrial Strategy and added that an announcement was expected on Friday 1 December 2017, in connection with skills.
- He stated that he and Executive Councillor C J Davie had met their equivalents in the Lincolnshire District Councils to discuss collaboration issues over the power challenges (smart grids and electric vehicle charging points) and utility constraints in Lincolnshire. He stated that the Leader of North Kesteven District Council was keen to become involved in skills and helping businesses to install more automation.
- He stated that the LEP Board had recently met and one of the issues they had scrutinised was the progress of the Business Lincolnshire Growth hub. He stated that it was clear that the Lincolnshire Growth hub was about assisting businesses to grow and offered a wider range of services to more businesses than most of Lincolnshire's neighbours.
- He stated that he wanted all Members to publicise the "World of Work" website which informed students, parents and teachers about career opportunities in Lincolnshire. This would encourage young people to stay in the county and help tackle the skills shortage.

Councillor A Austin enquired whether the Secretary of State's decision on the Boston Barrier had been received. Officers stated that they would notify Members as soon as any decision was known.

40 INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY & AUTUMN BUDGET STATEMENT

The Committee received a verbal update on the Government's Industrial Strategy and Autumn Budget Statement. Officers circulated an overview of the main points from the Strategy and stated that they would present a detailed report on the Strategy to a future meeting. Their initial observations included:-

- The strategy would be used to allocate resources.
- The strategy examined the issues of poor productivity in the UK.
- One of the issues addressed was the UK's ageing population which provided opportunities for Lincolnshire because of its aging population.
- An emphasis on innovation and its connection to education.
- The provision of more training and helping people to get into training.
- The provision of infrastructure to get people and goods moving more quickly.

- Improving the business environment.

Officers were concerned that there appeared to have been little inter-departmental discussions within government in the preparation of the Strategy particularly Defra as there was little information about food production which was important in Lincolnshire. Officers stated that the Strategy could easily be interpreted as "city focussed" and that Local Government and the East Midlands were barely mentioned. Officers stated that a detailed report on the strategy would be submitted to the Committee on 27 February 2018 and consideration would be given to how the Council should respond to the strategy.

Officers stated that the "National Infrastructure Commission-Consultation draft National Infrastructure Assessment" which accompanied the "Industrial Strategy" had come out too late for consideration and that the Commission had requested a response on the Assessment four days before the next meeting on 16 January 2018. Officers stated that they would consider a consultation response to the Strategy at the next meeting.

Comments made by the Committee and the response of officers, where appropriate, included:-

- The comments about training and getting people into work were welcomed and an example was given of food businesses in the south of the county struggling to find suitably skilled workers.
- The focus on skills was welcomed although it was acknowledged that there were problems with the apprenticeship levy and funding for education.
- The comments made by officers about the Strategy being too "city focussed" were supported. The help of local MPs, the Local Government Association and the "Midlands' Engine should also be sought to put pressure on the Government to emphasise the importance of rural areas like Lincolnshire to the country's economy.
- Officers welcomed the Committee's support on transport infrastructure in the Strategy and stated that this would be discussed at a future meeting of the Committee.
- The dualling of various existing and future carriageways should be considered in any future infrastructure proposed.

RESOLVED

(a) That the circulated briefing paper on the Government's Industrial Strategy and the comments made by the Committee be noted.

(b) That a detailed report on the Industrial Strategy be considered on 27 February 2018.

(c) That officers examine the arrangements to report on the Council's engagement with the National Infrastructure Commission during the development of the consultation draft National Infrastructure Assessment.

41 ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The Committee received a report in connection with performance information for the performance indicators relating to the Committee.

Officers stated that overall performance was satisfactory and in absolute terms in relation to the rest of the country Lincolnshire's performance was good. Officers stated that two performance indicators not being met were in connection with the proportion of waste received at Household Waste Recycling Centres that was recycled and the proportion of waste collected by Lincolnshire's District Councils that was recycled. Both indicators had been the subject of significant changes in global markets for waste products which had substantially altered the context with which waste was managed. The Council together with its partners was in the process of preparing a new Waste Management Strategy.

Officers stated that a quarterly review had recently been undertaken with businesses on the economic indicators and it was businesses' view was that while the current economic situation was satisfactory the increased costs that businesses had incurred from suppliers would eventually be passed onto the consumer and consumer confidence would be affected.

Comments made by the Committee and the responses by officers, where appropriate, included:-

- Members agreed with the comments made about increased costs faced by businesses.
- A Member enquired about the high figure of "23" for complaints for " Q2 17/18" and the reason for this. Officers stated that the reason why this figure was so high was due to the large number of complaints and comments about a planning application for an extension to a waste recycling site at Long Leys Road, Lincoln.
- Officers stated that they would respond to Councillor R P H Reid's enquiry about the increased cost of dealing with waste.

RESOLVED

(a) That the report, the comments made by the Committee and the responses of officers to the comments, be noted.

(b) That the process in place to adapt the performance indicators over the autumn 2017/winter 2018 period be endorsed.

42 THE THIRD CARBON MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Committee received a report in connection with the Council's second Carbon Management Plan which covered the period 2013-18. Officers stated that current figures suggested that the Council was on target to meet its targets of reducing carbon emissions by 22% and with an ambition to reduce energy costs by £2m. The current figures demonstrated a 17.5% reduction from the 2011/12 baseline.

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Comments made by the Committee and the responses of officers, where appropriate, included:-

- There was a need to give more publicity to the carbon reductions and savings made by Council both internal and to the public and to emphasise the importance of the Council continuing to reduce its carbon levels.. The SCORE programme in schools was welcomed and officers stated that the expansion of the programme to academies was being examined.
- An enquiry was made about whether the savings included savings made by Lincolnshire's District Councils. Officers stated that the report did not include savings made by District Councils and agreed to speak to the Districts about including this information in future reports.
- Had the more straightforward carbon savings now been made? Officers stated that while the most straightforward savings had been made the effects of new technology would need to be examined. Officers were also talking to large businesses about sponsorship of schools on this matter.
- Infrastructure issues in Lincolnshire prevented carbon reductions. Officers stated that the Council's Property section had been instrumental in helping to reduce carbon levels in the Council's properties and that any further reductions depended on decisions made by the Council.
- Officers stated that there was a need for locally produced power and gave an example of Siemen's development at Teal Park where only 20 charging points were required. Officers stated that the diversion of energy from the Energy from Waste plant was too much for Siemens' needs.
- Officers stated that research was on-going into battery technology to store electricity and gave an example of the research being carried out by SirJames Dyson.
- Infrastructure had the biggest impact on utilities but how did this fit in with the Midland's Engine? Officers stated that the LEP and the Council had carried out a study into this matter which suggested that the cost of investment into infrastructure was £250m. The issue had been raised in Parliament by Caroline Johnson MP. Discussions were on-going with the Midlands Engine.

RESOLVED

(a) That the progress made during the Second Carbon Management Plan be noted.

(b) That the Committee receive a report on the Third Carbon Management Plan in 2018.

43 ACHIEVING ADDED VALUE FOR TOURISM AND BUSINESS FROM COASTAL MANAGEMENT

The Committee received a report on the review of progress on developing a long term plan for promoting tourism and environmental protection in the context of investing in coastal management.

Officers stated that coastal management and economic development were key elements to developing the Lincolnshire Coastal Country Park area and that there

was a need to find out who visited and the type of visitors that needed to be attracted to the area.

Comments made by the Committee and the responses of officers, where appropriate, included:-

- The importance of having a brand for the area and the "Wild Atlantic Way" on the west coast of Ireland was given as an example.
- The origin of visitors to the coast could be better understood and the Council needed to work with East Lindsey District Council's Tourist Office in connection with branding. Officers agreed to submit a report to the next meeting of the Committee on visitors to Lincolnshire.
- The Coastal Country Park needed to be publicised alongside the current publicity for Skegness and Lincoln
- The location of the Lincolnshire Coastal Country Park needed to be made clearer.
- A bus service was required to take tourists to and around the area. Officers agreed that one of the key elements was access within the Park. The Lincolnshire Wolds and the English Coastal Footpath, when completed, were important attractions for visitors.
- A recent successful event about Lincolnshire's aviation heritage had been held at Stoke Rochford Hall and bus companies had been invited. Officers agreed to discuss bringing more visitors into Lincolnshire with the national bus companies. A bus link to Butlins was suggested and that there were over 40,000 caravans on the east coast.
- Officers stated that car parking would be addressed in the strategy for the area.
- There was a need to make the coastline more appealing to visitors.
- The holiday season on the coast should be extended to the end of November.
- The quality and quantity of hostelrys for visitors to the coast needed to be improved.
- Officers stated that they would require the help of Members to implement the recommendations in the report.
- Frampton Marsh was an important destination for bird watchers.
- Officers agreed to invite the Council's PR contractor to the next meeting if he was available. East Lindsey District Council's Tourism office would be invited to make a presentation to a future meeting.
- Visitors were now more transient and therefore Lincolnshire Coastal Country Park should be seen as part of the tourist trail on the east coast of England.

RESOLVED

(a) That the comments made by the Committee, and the responses of officers, be noted.

(b) That the range of activities and priorities for action identified in the report be endorsed, subject to priority 3 being amended to read – "Establish a marketing strategy for the area, building on the area's natural and heritage strengths. This

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strategy should include signage and branding, and it should be used to attract independent visitors and those following coach tour itineraries".

(c) That officers have discussions with the national bus companies about attracting more visitors to Lincolnshire.

(d) That the World Travel Market's representative be invited to make a presentation on their role to the next meeting.

(e) That the East Lincolnshire District Council's Tourist office be invited to make a presentation on their role to a future meeting of the Committee.

44 MANAGING THE FINAL ALLOCATIONS OF EU FUNDING

The Committee received a report on updated management information of Greater Lincolnshire's European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Growth Programme. Officers stated that they always tried to over commit on the various programmes so that projects were always available to go forward in the process in the event of a sudden request by the Government.

Comments made by the Committee and the responses of officers, where appropriate, included:-

- The bidding process was imminent and was it possible for projects to be rolled over from one year to the next? Officers stated that although the bidding deadlines had passed there would be other bidding rounds which would allow schemes to be submitted.
- It was noted that three projects had come from North East Lincolnshire. Officers stated that the Lincolnshire's LEP covered all of greater Lincolnshire and liaised with the Humberside LEP.
- Officers stated that occasionally they received a request from the Government to reallocate money around quickly which led to a democratic deficit in the decision making process. Officers suggested two principles to cover the reallocation of money between different projects – (a) knowing the existence of bids and (b) only reallocating money from one budget heading to another if it did not jeopardise other bids in the system. Officers stated that by applying these two principles this would help to maximise funding available for Lincolnshire. The Committee agreed that Executive Councillor for Economy and Place should be recommended to approve these principles. Justin Brown stated that in his capacity as the Accountable Officer for this budget he reported any action taken to the LEP.

RESOLVED

(a) That the Committee's comments on the new call dates for projects to come forward be noted.

(b) That the proposed allocation of the remaining ERDF funds be endorsed.

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(c) That the Executive Councillor for Economy and Place be asked to approve the two principles recommended by officers to consider changes to the bidding process at very short notice.

45 ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK
PROGRAMME

The Committee received its Work Programme for consideration.

RESOLVED

That the Work Programme be noted subject to the following:-

- That further consultations take place between officers on the programming of a report on the Government's Industrial Strategy and the Council's response to the Strategy, to the meeting on 16 January 2018.
- The postponement of the report on "The Future Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy" from 16 January 2018, to a future meeting in 2018, and that the date to be agreed by officers.
- A report on hotel provision in Lincolnshire to the meeting on 27 February 2018.
- A report on the Third Carbon Management Plan to be programmed in 2018.
- To receive presentations from the East Lindsey District Council's Tourism Officer and the Council's PR contractor at a future meeting and the 16 January 2018, respectively.

The meeting closed at 12.28 pm