



**ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE
22 FEBRUARY 2022**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR R WOOTTEN (CHAIRMAN)

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

Councillors C J Davie (Executive Councillor for Economic Development, Environment and Planning), D McNally (Executive Councillor for Waste and Trading Standards) and M D Boles attended the meeting as observers.

Officers in attendance:-

Kiara Chatziioannou (Scrutiny Officer), Justin Brown (Assistant Director – Growth), David Hickman (Head of Environment), Chris Miller (Deputy Head of Environment) and Thomas Crofts (Democratic Services Officer)

Officers in attendance via Microsoft Teams:-

Dan Clayton (Sustainability Manager) and Mike Reed (Head of Waste)

52 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors M Boles and H Spratt.

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

53 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Declarations of interest are listed under each item.

54 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 18 JANUARY 2022

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2022 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

55 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND LEAD OFFICERS

Councillor Davie, Executive Councillor for Economic Development, Environment and Planning announced that he welcomed the further opening-up of the economy from pandemic restrictions and explained his concern regarding events in Ukraine and the impact that this could have on people and the economy.

Councillor Davie updated the committee on the following matters:

- The Council's economic newsletter was being distributed and included information on developments concerning the Food Enterprise Zone.
- The National Apprenticeship Week and the county's first ever Apprenticeship Champions Award were noted.
- The food sector remained strong with global and academic interest in the county's innovations regarding protein foods.
- Meetings had been scheduled with prospective investors regarding the Food Valley.
- The Leader of the Council, Councillor Hill, was able to raise matters concerning Levelling-Up, Highways funding and devolution with the Prime Minister during his recent visit to Lincolnshire.
- The Levelling-Up White Paper was launched on the 2nd of February.
- Work was underway to make the case for the relocation of the Great British Railways Headquarters to Lincolnshire – with potential locations having been identified.
- The Council was exploring new technological innovations in small modular reactors and raising housing energy efficiency.
- Ensuring the future sustainability of the county's coastlines was a priority and new research had been commissioned with the University of Lincoln to model the effects of climate change to investigate solutions.
- The Visit Lincolnshire conference was taking place on 22 March at the Lincolnshire Showground and would launch a green tourism toolkit for Lincolnshire with Ed Gillespie, environmental entrepreneur, was confirmed as keynote speaker.

Members noted the announcements and asked numerous questions – they received the following clarification from Councillor Davie:

- The Council was looking to create an environment newsletter but would always keep Members updated with relevant matters.
- Solar panel works had been programmed to roll out when buildings were scheduled for roof refurbishments.
- Research undertaken by the University of Lincoln was commissioned to show how best to adapt to issues caused by climate change and achieve sustainability.
- Holiday parks were anticipated to be affected by the spiking fuel crisis, concerning the supply of bottled gas.
- The Visit Lincolnshire conference was hosted at an environmentally sound premises and car sharing was encouraged.
- Lincolnshire proved to be a popular place to live with approximately one third of properties within the county to being sold to buyers from the South. Businesses were

also relocating away from London, both of which showed promise for local economic growth.

- It was the Council's ambition to promote economic growth but also protect the attractiveness of the county as a major asset.

56 SERVICE LEVEL PERFORMANCE REPORTING AGAINST THE PERFORMANCE
FRAMEWORK 2021-2022 - QUARTER 3

Consideration was given to a report which set out the performance of the Tier 2 Service Level Performance measures for 2021/22 Quarter 3 for Economy, Flooding and Waste which were within the remit of this Committee.

The Assistant Director for Growth reported that 899 businesses across Lincolnshire had received business assistance grants, 150 commercial tenants had received further aid, and digital provisions for educational needs had been successfully met. It was projected that external funding targets would be met and that the grants constituted an investment in the future of the county's economy.

The Head of Environment reported that Section 19 investigations were triggered by internal flooding of one or more domestic properties or where there was significant impact on the highway network and/or community amenities. The team awaited full details of impacts from the recent storms but so far impacts appeared to have been relatively limited in comparison with previous events. 18 new section 19 investigations were initiated during the last quarter.

The Head of Waste reported that household recycling had increased but remained below target, overall recycling had decreased, and the amount of household waste had increased. Changes in performance had been due, in part, to fewer visitors to recycling centres, which had been reflected nationally throughout the pandemic. The further rollout of separate collection schemes was anticipated to improve recycling performance.

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

- Concerning businesses that received grants, a robust process was undertaken to ensure the appropriate procedural management throughout. Trained accountants provided assurance on the viability of businesses and clarified trading ambitions and growth potentials with owners and whilst acknowledging that some may not stand the economic hardships efforts were made to ensure effective use of funds and guard against fraud.
- A report regarding the tracked employment prospects and outcomes of those in receipt of qualification support was due to be considered by this Committee in July 2022.
- Economic development of large sector businesses remained important, whilst acknowledging that small and micro businesses were equally important, therefore

information was sought through the Business Recovery Fund Program to facilitate shaping provision in the future.

- Flooding near misses were a concern and despite not being significant enough to be investigated under Section 19, they still merited a need for Members' oversight. A request was made that Anglian Water shared a list of near misses with Members.
- Fines were not used in the enforcement of recycling noncompliance. Instead, education and engagement proved to be a more efficient use of resources.
- Waste that could be processed locally was only exported outside the county in emergencies.
- The recent rollout of a separate paper and card collection scheme in North Kesteven had proven successful – with a 99.5% recycle purity. A robust sampling regime had been introduced a specialist sampling officer was recruited offering a detailed breakdown allowing to develop on the experience of the paper and card roll out and use knowledge and evidence to improve other recycling operations and continue good practices.
- Further information on a timeframe for further rollout of separate card and paper collection across the county was sought; Officers agreed to report back on this and combine with some additional data from the existing rollout, at a future Committee Meeting.
- Officers explained that targets concerning waste and recycling were based on historical trends previously established as benchmarks to track progress a review of those targets was required to ensure that they remained realistic and meaningful.
- Increases in fly-tipping had been recorded and were linked to activities of a small number of unscrupulous businesses. The Environmental Crime Partnership was set up to create stronger penalties to deter people from fly-tipping. It was further clarified that where people have paid for a business to dispose materials and the latter tipped that in the countryside, the former remained liable for prosecution for.
- Generic comments and feedback were offered by Members in terms of presentation of performance indicators to ensure scientific accuracy. Officers agreed to raise this with Corporate Leads. Increases in fly tipping had been recorded and was linked to activities of a small number of unscrupulous businesses.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report and comments made be noted.
2. That a scrutiny review of the effectiveness of waste and recycling targets be considered.

57 THEDDLETHORPE GEOLOGICAL DISPOSAL FACILITY WORKING GROUP UPDATE

Consideration was given to the report by the Assistant Director (Growth). The Committee was advised of the following updates from the Working Group:

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- Radioactive Waste Management (RWM) had changed their name to Nuclear Waste Services (NWS) and had identified the search area as the district level wards of Theddlethorpe and Withern, and Mablethorpe.
- The Working Group was ensuring that the process being carried out by NWS was as transparent as possible and had established a website that included all meeting minutes and a virtual exhibition.
- A community investment fund had been agreed to support the local area.
- Two other companies had also expressed interest in the site: Neptune Energy, within the blue hydrogen industry, and Harbour Energy who wished to use the site for carbon capture and storage.
- The Committee would be regularly updated as the situation progresses.

Members noted the report and discussed the following matters:

- Campaign groups had been grateful that efforts had been made to make the process transparent.
- The three interested businesses had been encouraged to speak to each other to understand if their activities could coexist within the site.
- The Council was considering proposals based on their environmental and economic impact.
- The Working Group had asked RWS to set a regular meeting to brief local councillors.
- It was anticipated that the interested businesses would offer long-term benefits for employment and education within science and engineering. However, Members noted that the site was located in an area that currently had a demographic of older people, and it was noted that Mablethorpe does not have a secondary school.
- NWS was also investigating several other potential sites to base their operations across the country. A list of the types of employment that their development would offer would be published in the coming weeks and made available to the Working Group and this Committee.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report and comments made be noted.
2. That a progress update be reported in three months' time – May 2022.

58 THE LANDSCAPES REVIEW - LINCOLNSHIRE WOLDS AREA OF OUTSTANDING
NATURAL BEAUTY

(NOTE: Councillor Carrington wished it to be noted that he worked within Local Authority Planning)

Consideration was given to a report by the Deputy Head of Environment, which updated the Committee on the Government's Glover Report. The following was reported:

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- Part of the Glover Report recommendations included the levelling up of Areas of Natural Beauty (AONBs) to an equivalent position with National Parks under a new strategy for National Landscapes.
- The Lincolnshire Wolds was an existing AONB that would fall into the category.
- Alongside the Government's planning reforms, the new categorisation of AONBs meant that they would serve as statutory consultees for relevant planning applications.
- Under the new category, AONBs would now have access to longer funding settlements.

Members welcomed the reform but expressed concerns regarding sustainability and appropriateness of development around and within AONBs. They felt that Lincolnshire's natural capital was its greatest asset, and that community and economic development should be appropriate so as not to harm the beauty of the area.

RESOLVED:

That the report and comments made be noted.

59 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.

Members noted the report and asked that the following be added to the list of items to be included in the 2022-23 Work Programme:

- A report detailing the impacts of recent changes to the Environment Act.
- A report on the timetabled rollout of new recycling and waste collection schemes.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme be approved, subject to the additions highlighted above.

60 LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN (LTP 5)

The Committee received the report for information only.

The meeting closed at 12.20 pm