



To be submitted to the Council at its meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2023

## **ECONOMY SCRUTINY PANEL**

### **28<sup>th</sup> February 2023 at 6.30pm**

#### **Present:**

Councillor Freeston (in the Chair)  
Councillors Callison, Dawkins, Reynolds, Parkinson (substitute for Lindley),  
Smith, Wheatley and Wilson.

#### **Officers in attendance:**

- Levi Anderson-Jordan (Environmental Strategy Officer)
- David Baker (Contract Business Manager Equans)
- Carolina Borgstrom (Director of Economy, Environment and Infrastructure)
- Anne Campbell (Scrutiny Advisor)
- Wendy Fisher (Estate and Business Development Manager)
- Drew Hughes (Head of Strategy, Policy and Performance)
- Simon Jones (Assistant Director Law and Governance)
- Guy Lonsdale (Deputy Section 151 Officer)
- Mark Nearney (Assistant Director for Housing, Highways and Infrastructure)
- Anthony Snell (Transport and Traffic Manager, Equans)
- Paul Thorpe (Operations Director, Equans)
- Jacqui Wells (Head of Housing Strategy)

#### **Also in attendance:**

- Councillor Jackson (Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder Economy, Net Zero, Skills and Housing)
- Councillor Harness (Portfolio Holder Finance, Resources and Assets)
- Councillor S Swinburn (Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport)
  
- Councillor Shutt

There were no members of the press or public present.

## **SPE.61 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence from this meeting were received from Cllr Lindley.

## **SPE.62      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Dawkins declared a pecuniary interest in SPE.68 as his spouse is employed by Equans.

Councillor Swinburn declared a personal interest in item SPE.79 referring to land in Immingham. Councillor Swinburn is also an Immingham Town and Parish Councillor.

## **SPE.63      MINUTES**

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meetings of the Economy Scrutiny Panel held on the 10<sup>th</sup> January 2023 be agreed as a correct record.

## **SPE.64      QUESTION TIME**

There were no questions from members of the public for this meeting.

## **SPE.65      FORWARD PLAN**

The panel received the published forward plan and members were asked to identify any items for examination by this panel via the pre-decision call-in procedure.

RESOLVED – That the forward plan be noted.

## **SPE.66      FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORTS 2022/23 – QUARTER 3**

The panel received a report from the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets providing key information and analysis of the Council's position and performance for the third quarter of the 2022/23 financial year. The panel noted this report was considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2023 and was referred to all scrutiny panels to consider matters within their terms of reference.

Mr Nearney committed to provide more information regarding the increase in bed and breakfast charges\*\*\*\*

In response to questions Mr Lonsdale confirmed that no transformation projects had been cancelled. He referred the panel to the overview report and the Section 151 officer's statement on the adequacy of reserves. However, some

members were worried about the sale of assets and use of reserves to balance the budget and were surprised that auditors were not similarly concerned. Mr Lonsdale reassured the panel that external auditors had been consulted on plans and did not have any immediate concerns.

RESOLVED – That the report and members' comments be noted.

**SPE.67 COUNCIL PLAN PERFORMANCE REPORT 2022/23  
– QUARTER 3**

The panel received a report from the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Economy, Net Zero, Skills and Housing providing oversight of performance against the council plan for the second quarter of the 2022/23 financial year (copy attached).

Please note this report was considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> February, 2023 and was referred to all scrutiny panels to consider matters within their terms of reference.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

COUNCILLOR DAWKINS LEFT THE ROOM.

**SPE.68 REGENERATION PARTNERSHIP PERFORMANCE  
REPORT – QUARTER 4 (October to December 2023)**

The panel considered a report from Equans containing a summary of performance against key performance indicators.

In response to questions about parking enforcement, Mr Thorpe clarified the number of parking enforcement operators (11.5 full time equivalent officer), rota hours, working practices, CCTV, mobile camera pilots and other technologies. Regarding targeted enforcement around schools, Mr Thorpe advised the rationale for selecting schools and that members could contact the traffic and transport teams to identify possible schools for inclusion in the school streets scheme.

Members were concerned that highways maintenance was focussed on the risks related to motorised vehicles. There were many roads that remained dangerous for cyclists due to potholes and ruts. Numerous reports of dangerous road surfaces were perceived to be not actioned, yet they cause a real risk to cyclists. The Council promotes active travel and encouraging people to cycle yet the policy for repairs to hazardous road surfaces does not appear to take cycles into account. The highways repair policy and criteria should be reviewed and linked to the priorities of the council. Mr Thorpe explained that the

council operated to a national framework in this regard. The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport acknowledged that more people were cycling for leisure and commuting and he committed to explore this further with officers to ensure the authority was doing all it could.

Mr Nearney added he was meeting with Equans shortly to review KPIs and members' concerns about targets (empty homes) would be discussed and implications for lifting empty homes target would be discussed with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport

It was proposed by Councillor Wilson seconded by Councillor Wheatley and agreed unanimously that the target for empty homes returned to use be increased from 40 to 60.

RESOLVED – That the report and members' comment be noted.

RECOMMENDED TO PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT

That the KPI regarding empty homes brought back into use be increased to 60 (from 40).

COUNCILLOR DAWKINS RETURNED TO THE ROOM

## **SPE.69 ASSET DISPOSAL PROGRAMME**

The panel received a report from the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets on the above. The report seeks authority to dispose of property and land assets that are surplus to the Council's operational requirements. Members noted that this report would be considered by cabinet at its meeting to be held on the 8th of March 2023 and was submitted to this panel for pre decision scrutiny and comment.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

## **SPE.70 LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN (LTP) DELIVERY PLAN**

The panel received requested update from the Assistant Director for Housing, Highways and Infrastructure on the above. Members noted that this report would be considered by cabinet at its meeting to be held on the 8th of March 2023 and was submitted to this panel for pre decision scrutiny and comment.

Mr Thorpe assured members that the authority had capacity to deliver the LTP; this year some schemes had been brought forward to allow more time to complete.

Regarding bus shelters, Mr Snell advised that funding was split; to repair damaged shelters (ad hoc) and planned refurbishment and updating of older shelters. Not all bus shelters were the responsibility of the authority. Mr Thorpe would respond to specific questions in writing and members were asked to contact Mr Thorpe outside of the meeting to share their questions..

In response to questions about Ellis Way/Peaks Parkway underpass, Mr Thorpe advised that an inspection of the underpass was being undertaken. Water could be seen coming through the structure and it was important that the underpass be assessed to understand the cause and condition. Any cleaning of brickwork would be undertaken after the results of the inspection were known.

Members had been consulted on the plan and were pleased to see their influence in the report now submitted.

Regarding delays to repairing accidental damage to highways and structures. Mr Thorpe explained that emergency works would be undertaken in 7 days. Regarding specific damage to railing along the Kingsway, Mr Thorpe was aware that the damage was the result of a car accident and he committed to providing more information about the likely repair time to members.

Mr Thorpe further advised that consultation on schemes continued hence, indicative timescales could not yet be approved due to the need to complete the detail design of each scheme. He would share this information after the completion of the detailed design.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

## **SPE.71      OUR GREEN FUTURE - ANNUAL REPORT**

The panel considered a report from the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport providing a progress update on three of our strategic plans. The Carbon Roadmap and Natural Assets Plan are within the terms of reference of this scrutiny panel. Members noted this report would be considered by Cabinet at its meeting to be held on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2023 and was submitted to this panel for pre-decision scrutiny and comment.

In response to questions about electric vehicle (EV) charging points Mr Thorpe advised that grants were being explored in respect of on street and off-street charging points and bidding would begin in March. Officers were assessing which grants would be potentially more successful for different types of

charging points. Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economy, Net Zero, Skills and Housing added that a planning application had recently been submitted for a private sector ultra-fast charging point in Cleethorpes. It was intended to promote areas in the borough where the private sector may be interested to invest. The panel noted that any development which included more than five parking spaces must include an EV charging point. Ms Wells added that plans for new housing developments included EV charging points in each property. The service was also working with the network to expand capacity in urban areas learning from a success approach in North Lincolnshire. The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport acknowledged that the authority had been talking about EV charging for some time and he had allocated £100k from the LTP to move forward at a pace in this regard.

Regarding the Council's vision to become carbon net zero by 2030, members thought the thrust of ambition was good. However, one member urged the authority to focus on achievable and tangible plans.

RESOLVED – That the report and members' comments be noted.

## **SPE.72 COUNCIL PLAN REFRESH**

This report informed the panel of the Council's emerging priorities. It was intended to assist members in identifying topics within the panel's terms of reference for the 2023/24 Economy Scrutiny Panel work programme. Members noted this report was considered by Cabinet at its meeting held on 22nd February 2023 and was referred to all scrutiny panels for information prior to approval at Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2023.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

## **SPE.73 ECONOMY SCRUTINY PANEL – WORK PROGRAMME**

The panel considered a report from the Assistant Chief Executive (Statutory Scrutiny Officer). This report reflects on the 2022/23 municipal year and the work undertaken by the Economy Scrutiny Panel. The panel will also consider, within its terms of reference, suggestions to be included in the 2023/24 work programme.

Regarding flood plans, the panel heard from the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport that flood alleviation works in Grimsby and Immingham were moving ahead on schedule.

Members reiterated their request to consider evaluation of the impact of the Grimsby Master Plan and its individual projects and schemes.

RESOLVED – That the report and members' comments be noted

#### **SPE.74 TRACKING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF SCRUTINY**

The panel received a report from the Statutory Scrutiny Officer (Assistant Chief Executive) tracking the recommendations of the Economy Scrutiny Panel.

The panel confirmed its desire for a workshop meeting with stagecoach. The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport and officers committed to progress this matter.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

#### **SPE.75 QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDER**

There were no members' questions to the Portfolio Holder.

#### **SPE.76 CALLING-IN OF DECISIONS**

There were no formal requests from members to call in decisions taken at recent meetings.

#### **SPE.77 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED – That the press and public be requested to leave on the grounds that discussion of the following business was likely to disclose exempt information within paragraphs 3, 5, 7 & 9 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

#### **SPE.78 ELEANOR STREET UPDATE**

The panel received a requested report from the Executive Director Place and Resources on the above providing the latest position on numbers five, seven and nine Eleanor Street. Mr Nearney advised that over the past years the buildings have deteriorated and are now in a very poor state of repair. This report explained the current situation and how the Council continues to engage and work with the owner with the support of Historic England to tackle the three derelict sites.

Members raised the following issues; Council heritage assets at risk register, legal responsibilities of council and owners, costs to emergency and other services, managing Grade II listed

properties, impact on adjoining properties, options for owners, potential outcomes and potential uses for the buildings.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

## **SPE.79 ASSET DISPOSAL PROGRAMME – EXEMPT APPENDICES**

The panel received exempt information from the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets regarding SPE.69.

Members sought clarity on the following issues; public consultation, engagement of ward councillors as part of disposal process and retention of leases for appropriate assets.

RESOLVED – That the report and panel's comments be noted.

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.45 p.m.