



To be submitted to the Council at its meeting on 14th March 2024

## **TOURISM AND VISITOR ECONOMY SCRUTINY PANEL**

**25<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 10.00 a.m.**

### **Present:**

Councillor Brookes (in the Chair)  
Councillors Cairns, Henderson, Mickleburgh, Morland, Parkinson and Westcott

### **Officers in attendance:**

- Nick Browning (Head of Culture, Heritage, Leisure and Tourism)
- Damien Jaines-White (Assistant Director – Regeneration)
- Lisa Logan (Strategic Lead Environment)
- Beverly O'Brien (Scrutiny and Committee Advisor)
- Helen Thompson (Strategic Lead for Tourism)
- James Trowsdale (Strategic Lead for Culture)

### **Also in attendance:**

- Councillor Dawkins (Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and the Visitor Economy)
- Matt McNally (Royal National Lifeboat Institution)
- Councillor Shutt (Heneage Ward Councillor)

There was one member of the public in attendance.

### **SPTVE.41 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Hudson for this meeting.

### **SPTVE.42 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received in respect of any item on the agenda for this meeting.

#### **SPTVE.43 MINUTES**

One Councillor asked what the current position was on the Grimsby Library moving somewhere whilst works took place on the current building. Mr Jaines-White explained that subject to viability and feasibility there was a strong desire to provide a temporary provision somewhere else. He confirmed that he had been instructed to look at alternative options within the town centre. Another Member wondered what Lincs Inspire were doing to increase the capacity of individuals using the library. Mr Browning confirmed that the service was currently out to consultation. Members asked that Mr Browning inform Lincs Inspire that Members expect them to have full involvement in trying to revive this service.

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Tourism and Visitor Economy Scrutiny Panel meetings held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2023 be agreed as a correct record.

#### **SPTVE.44 QUESTION TIME**

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

#### **SPTVE.45 FORWARD PLAN**

The panel considered the current Forward Plan and were asked to identify any items for examination by this panel via the pre-decision call-in procedure. No such items were identified.

RESOLVED - That the Forward Plan be noted.

#### **SPTVE.46 TRACKING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF SCRUTINY**

The panel received a report from the Assistant Chief Executive tracking the recommendations of the Tourism and Visitor Economy Scrutiny Panel. Ms O'Brien informed members that an update on SPTVE.43 had been provided for them. Members were happy with the update but asked that they were kept up to date on the plan on what was happening for the Boating Lake. The Panel were happy that this be added to the work programme to come back when a more sustainable update was available for the panel.

At SPTVE. 71, Mrs Thompson informed Members that the TransPennine timetable was now back to an hourly service. Members were happy for this item to be removed from tracking.

Ms O'Brien informed Members that part of SPTVE. 8, was to be received at today's meeting, but in terms of the unannounced visit to a Lincs Inspire service, Mr Browning explained that the service was not willing to facilitate an unannounced visit. Members thought it would be a good idea to invite the Chief Executive of Lincs Inspire to a future panel meeting. Some panel Members explained how they weren't completely comfortable with an

unannounced visit, they felt it would make service users uncomfortable. Mr Browning explained that Members could see how they do an annual user survey, and the Chief Executive could come to a future meeting to discuss the outcomes of that survey.

SPTVE.10, requested that a water quality report be received at a future meeting, but Mrs O'Brien informed members that this had also come forward as a motion at Full Council and Members have received information from all local water authorities setting out where we currently were with water quality. Ms O'Brien pointed out that Members were welcome to receive a report on water quality, but we needed to be careful that we weren't duplicating the work that Full Council were doing. Members were content with the information they had already received and agreed that this be removed from tracking.

RESOLVED – That tracking items SPTVE.43, SPTVE.71, SPTVE.8 and SPTVE.10 be removed from the tracking report and all other items be noted.

## **SPTVE.47 CREATIVE STRATEGY – ACTION PLAN 2024**

The panel received a report from the Director of Economy, Environment and Infrastructure to consider the activities within the Creativity Strategy Action Plan for 2024.

Members stated that it was obvious that the team were clearly on top of this. One Member did wonder how much the strategy was dependent on external funding and how do we mitigate the risk of our momentum being broken due to our fragile cultural eco-systems. Mr Trowsdale explained that ultimately, they were always trying to build networks and connections between local creatives and heritage practitioners to strengthen the ecosystem. They were currently engaging with creatives at networking and drop in events and organising go and see visits to encourage collaboration and attract funding to deliver projects. There was a greater maturity in the culture and heritage sector and a greater trust in us as local authority.

A panel member stated that it was obvious that they were making massive steps around the town. It had been noticed that there was a large amount of young people becoming involved, especially with a sense of pride for the area.

Another Councillor added that the service had moved leaps and bounds since Officers had arrived. Great work had been done and brought into the borough and Members were happy to receive annual updates on this.

RESOLVED –

1. That the update be noted.
2. That an annual report showing progress against the Creativity Strategy and Action Plan be added to the work programme of the Tourism and Visitor Economy Scrutiny Panel for 2024/25.

## **SPTVE.48 NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE PROVISIONAL EVENTS CALENDAR 2024**

The panel received a report from the Director of Economy, Environment and Infrastructure on the events season for the Meridian Showground during 2023 and the North East Lincolnshire provisional events calendar for 2024.

One Member stated that the report mentioned using websites, but they wanted to point out that they need to be aware that not all people can easily go on websites.

A panel member gave more praise to the team and said how great it was that they were now drawing better acts to the area. They were confident that this would also draw people in from other areas. They believed that only good things could come from this and that hopefully statistics should start getting back to pre-pandemic levels.

One Member felt like the events had moved up a division, but the report wasn't showing data on how we had improved. Was there a sense yet whether last year's interventions contributed to the goals of having more visitors, staying longer, and spending more money in the resort. Mrs Thompson explained that they did use STEAM data, but it was not received until the summer the following year. She reassured members that they did try to produce the data as quickly as they can and call upon other data, such as footfall, to give an indication of visitor numbers.

One Member suggested that setting a few small Key Performance Indicators (KPI) could help to help track our success. Mr Jaines-White stated that it was a very small team, they already collect footfall data and also gathered intelligence from local businesses. He explained that their resources were very limited, and it may not be possible to justify what the Member was asking for. The Elected Member wondered how Officers were able to assure members that the investment was driving revenue and how it benefitted the town, without having that type of data. Mr Jaines-White reiterated that resources were very tight and as they already produced a lot of data, particularly from STEAM, it was not preferable to pull an Officer away from the necessary work they already do for additional data collection. It was agreed for relevant officers to meet and review the situation.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

## **SPTVE.49 SPORTS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY DASHBOARD**

The panel received a report from the Director of Economy, Environment and Infrastructure on the development of the sport and physical activity dashboard.

Members welcomed the report. One Member wondered how we were reaching the hard to engage families in physical activity and enquired whether we get any data from academies and schools about what goes on in their remit. Mr Browning explained that the Borough was lucky to have a lot of outdoor space, so families had good opportunities to use the outdoor space available. He explained that the influence of schools was important, particularly how it was delivered. Mr Browning added that the strategy touched on this and collaboration on education and how it impacted on positive experience.

One Councillor commented on a lot more children becoming more obese during Covid. There was now a lot of inactivity. He stated that there had been a lot of investment now, especially in terms of tennis. He wondered what plans were in place to get more involved. Mr Browning explained that the tennis court refurbishments were currently in the process of being finished and they were now finalising an operator for the courts. There would be an element of the service delivery specification with local schools and an ask to focus on courts in the borough being free to use at the weekend. The Elected Member asked if schools and special needs schools would have to use their own funding to use these newly refurbished courts or would there be an element of negotiation on prices for big groups/regular use. Mr Browning stated that he was only aware of the lawn tennis association offering a free weekend service. He added that in terms of schools, it would be for them to discuss and agree affordability for the service. The Elected Member stated that if these organisations did need extra help, Members may be able to use their Ward Funding to support the use of this equipment.

Councillor Dawkins explained that if Members were to look back in history on the facilities that were historically provided, it was apparent that facilities had become neglected and were no longer user friendly. When Members see the finished product, there would be a massive encouragement to help get service users to use these facilities.

Another Councillor stated that they would be happy to investigate supporting it via their Ward Funding. He believed they were great facilities which would get groups to organise things. If it would help it may be worth going back to Elected Members to use their links within the community to get organisations to programme into using these facilities.

**RESOLVED –**

1. That the report be noted.

2. That an annual report showing progress against the headline indicators of the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy be added to the work programme of the Tourism and Visitor Economy Scrutiny Panel for 2024/25.

## **SPTVE.50 ROYAL NATIONAL LIFEBOAT INSTITUTION UPDATE**

The panel received a verbal update from the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RLNI) on the current Cleethorpes development.

Mr McNally explained how the last time he came to panel he stated that the main building would have been completed by now, but unfortunately, a year ago the main contractor for the building works went into administration and work had to stop. He explained that they've still had continuity with architects on the project, but they've had to retender for the works. They were now back on site doing remedial compulsory works, but full construction would be started on the 19<sup>th</sup> February 2024 and full completion of the structure would be in October 2024. They would then go to fit out the building as soon as possible.

Mr McNally mentioned the outside area of the build site where a patch of mud had developed, which has caused some problems. He confirmed that they had now submitted a request to enclose that mud within their building site.

One Member welcomed the good news of works starting again. They asked whether any plans were changing from the original plans. Mr McNally confirmed that everything would be built as agreed with planning and would remain the same.

One Member wondered why the RLNI were building a new station when they already had a sufficient current building. Why were they spending all this time and money when only getting so little gain. Mr McNally explained that it would provide the capability to position a second lifeboat at Cleethorpes, a more powerful B Class Atlantic 85, this would allow the charity to respond more quickly. He confirmed that they would not be spending the money if they didn't feel it was necessary.

One Councillor asked whether the original contractors were the RLNI first choice or one of several organisations that tendered to them. Mr McNally explained that they tendered through the usual procurement process, and he believed the company had previously carried out other work for the RLNI but did win the contract on their own merits. Mr McNally pointed out that they awarded the previous contract in 2019 and their financial due diligence at that time was acceptable. Their issues did not become apparent until 2022.

**RESOLVED** – That the verbal update be noted.

## SPTVE.51 QUESTIONS TO THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER

The Portfolio Holder received two questions from Councillor Henderson.

*'Please can the Portfolio Holder set out how he inputted to the current Local Plan consultation. The scope of consultation and the questions being asked in the section on tourism do not cover some of the tourism-driven engines of growth, such as Armed Forces Day and other key events, and do not cover some of the housing issues we face in Cleethorpes, such as the status of the Fitties in itself and in relation to the opportunity for housing and tourism strategies to work together.'*

Councillor Dawkins responded that, as part of a robust Local Plan Review governance process, a Local Plan Oversight Board, which included the leaders of each political group, had convened regularly with senior officers to oversee its process and act in an advisory capacity on material matters, including consultation.

In addition to the form of draft Local Plan being considered by Scrutiny and Cabinet, the Local Plan Oversight Board supported the outlined consultation process and agreed the suitability of the scope of questions in the context of the review and its proposed changes to policy. The consultation process allowed respondents to provide comment throughout the Draft Plan, either in direct response to a question presented or as a more general comment/query, through a variety of means, including, but not limited to, the online portal and a series of drop-in events. In terms of the specific points raised, he stated how he would encourage Councillor Henderson to raise these in response to the consultation and moreover, he had requested that Councillor Hendersen's points be noted in any event'.

Councillor Hendersen asked the Portfolio Holder his second question.

*'Please can the Portfolio Holder confirm the status of developments in Grimsby Library. We were in the middle of an ostensibly very well designed, open, transparent, and clear consultation about our future need for library services. We have also documented that there was a business case for converting parts of the Grimsby Library building into a Green Hub. The public could be forgiven for thinking that the consultation was not open, and that the Hub was a done deal, was it? If so, what messages would the Portfolio Holder like to share with the public.'*

Councillor Dawkins responded that the Council had started a review of its Library and Archives service and had recently started the first phase of public consultation that closed on 22<sup>nd</sup> March. He stated that he would encourage members to share the consultation survey and raise awareness as much as possible to get residents views and feedback as part of the consultation process. It was important to highlight that the results of the first stage of consultation would inform proposals about how the services may look in the future, which would be the subject of the second stage of consultation, likely to be released in the late spring or summer of 2024.

Regarding the Grimsby Central Library building, the Grimsby Town Centre Masterplan and subsequent Town Investment Plan, which resulted in Town Deal funding for the building, proposed to bring unused upper floors of the building back into use as a Skills Hub. Development of the Masterplan and Town Investment Plan was the result of an extensive consultation exercise in advance of securing government grant funding for the project. The final usage of the upper floors was still being determined and a business case was being prepared, which would be considered by Councillors, before works commenced.

The Portfolio Holder reiterated that he would encourage the public to take part in the open consultation on the library and archives service, in both the first phase and subsequent second stage of this process.

The Council was committed to the Central Library building with funding secured for the development of the upper floors, this included essential works to protect the long-term future of the building, including works to the roof, upgrades to mechanical and electrical services, asbestos works, and window replacement.

## **SPTVE.52 CALLING IN OF DECISIONS**

There were no formal requests from members of this panel to call-in decisions taken at recent meetings of Cabinet.

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 11.43am.