



To be submitted to the Council at its meeting on 20th March 2025

ECONOMY, CULTURE AND TOURISM SCRUTINY PANEL

5th December 2024 at 2.00pm

Present:

Councillor Brookes (in the Chair)
Councillors Bright, Cairns (substitute for Crofts), Jervis, Lindley,
Mickleburgh and Parkinson

Officers in attendance:

- Nick Browning (Head of Culture, Heritage, Leisure and Tourism)
- Damien Jaines-White (Assistant Director Regeneration)
- Guy Lonsdale (Assistant Director Finance)
- Eve Richardson-Smith ((Deputy Monitoring Officer)
- Jo Robinson (Assistant Director Policy, Strategy and Resources)
- Paul Windley (Democratic and Scrutiny Team Manager)
- Sharon Wroot (Executive Director Place and Resources)

Also in attendance:

- Adrian Peachey (Montagu Evans) for item SPE.34
- Paul Sargent (Queensbury) for item SPE.34

SPE.31 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from this meeting were received from
Councillors Crofts and Morland.

SPE.32 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

SPE.33 MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the Economy, Culture and Tourism Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 3rd October 2024 be agreed as a correct record.

SPE.34 FRESHNEY PLACE LEISURE SCHEME

The panel considered a report from the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Economy, Regeneration, Devolution and Skills providing detail and recommendations around the next steps to progress the Freshney Place Leisure Scheme.

Councillor Jackson, Leader of the Council, introduced the report and provided background information on the scheme. He referred to comments from two key investors – Richard Parkes, owner of Parkway Cinemas and Mark Webb, the managing director of E-Factor – in support of the scheme. He announced that deals were in the process of being signed up with Starbucks and Nando's but these were conditional on the leisure scheme progressing. The Leader commented on the finances and clarified that income received from the centre would cover the costs of the additional borrowing. He also cautioned that grant funding would need to be returned to the government if the scheme did not progress and he felt that it was time to bring some certainty to the project.

The Chair invited Councillor Aisthorpe to ask a question that she submitted in advance of the meeting. She felt that there was a lack of information to support key assumptions within the report and, given the significant financial implications she asked whether the panel would recommend that Cabinet provide further evidence for some of these assumptions, along with a contingency strategy, to help ensure the scheme's viability and address growing public concern about Council finances.

With the support of Mr Peachey and Mr Sargent, Mr Jaines-White responded to Councillor Aisthorpe's concerns and provided further detail on the key assumptions within the report.

The panel gave detailed consideration to the proposals within the report and expressed a will for the scheme to succeed. However, panel members sought clarification on a number of points, including:

- Community safety in Grimsby town centre
- The requirement for additional borrowing and the risk associated with that being spread across 40 years
- The proposed diversion of funding streams

- The valuation of Freshney Place and the increased car park refurbishment costs
- Asbestos removal costs

Officers present provided responses on these matters.

RESOLVED – That the recommendations within the report now submitted be noted and that it be recommended to Cabinet that further evidence be provided for some of the key assumptions, along with a contingency strategy, to help ensure the scheme's viability and address growing public concern about Council finances.

SPE.35 LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES REVIEW

The panel considered a report from the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage, and the Visitor Economy presenting an update on the findings of phase 1 of public consultation and engagement, including the development of a needs assessment for the Library and Archives services, that had informed the future proposals that were recommended for phase 2 of public consultation and engagement.

The panel acknowledged that no decisions had been taken in relation to future library provision and the proposals would be subject to a further round of consultation. However, concerns were raised about the proposed co-location of Cleethorpes Library and Cleethorpes Leisure Centre, particularly around accessibility, parking, reduced footfall and the possible loss of the autism room at the library. As such, the panel recommended to Cabinet not to proceed with the proposed co-location.

The panel felt that it was important to get the questions right for the second round of consultation and asked to be involved in that process, noting that it did not have the final decision on the wording of questions.

RESOLVED –

1. That the recommendations within the report be accepted but that it be recommended to Cabinet that members of the Economy, Culture and Tourism Scrutiny Panel be engaged in the formulation of the Phase 2 consultation questions.
2. That it be recommended to Cabinet not to proceed with the proposed co-location of Cleethorpes Library and Cleethorpes Leisure Centre.

SPE.36 QUESTION TIME

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

SPE.37 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.

RESOLVED - That the Forward Plan be noted.

SPE.38 TRACKING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF SCRUTINY

The panel received a report from the Assistant Chief Executive tracking the recommendations of the Economy, Culture and Tourism Scrutiny Panel.

RESOLVED – That the Tracking report be noted.

SPE.39 2024/25 COUNCIL PLAN RESOURCES AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER TWO

The panel received a report from the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets providing key information and analysis of the Council's resources position at the end of quarter two.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

SPE.40 ECONOMY, CULTURE AND TOURISM SCRUTINY PANEL - WORK PROGRAMME REVIEW

The panel received a report from the Chief Executive (Statutory Scrutiny Officer) providing panel members with the opportunity to reflect on the progress of the panel's work programme at the half year stage and provide a formal opportunity for the panel to update its work programme

Councillor Bright referred to his previous request for the panel to consider town twinning arrangements. It was noted that officers had been asked to prepare a briefing note on our approach to town twinning, from an economic development and civic perspective. This would be circulated to panel members to

confirm whether they wished to add this item to the panel's work programme.

Councillor Mickleburgh requested that the briefing note on the Grimsby Minster clock be recirculated to panel members as he could not recall receiving it.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report be noted and that a briefing note on the council's approach to town twinning, from an economic development and civic perspective, be circulated to members of this panel to confirm whether this should be added to this panel's work programme.
2. That the briefing note on the Grimsby Minster clock be recirculated to members of this panel.

SPE.41 QUESTIONS TO THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER

There were no panel members' questions to the Portfolio Holder.

SPE.42 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 3.56 p.m.