



To be submitted to the Council at its meeting on 18th July 2024

ECONOMY SCRUTINY PANEL

9th January 2024 at 6.30pm

Present:

Councillor Freeston (in the Chair)
Councillors Brasted (substitute for Sandford), Holland, Hudson, Wilson and Wheatley.

Officers in attendance:

- David Baker (Contract Business Manager - Equans)
- Anne Campbell (Scrutiny Advisor)
- Jonathan Ford (Senior Transport Officer – Equans)
- Damien Jaines-White (Assistant Director Regeneration)
- Maggie Johnson (Head of Economy and Funding)
- Simon Jones (Assistant Director Law and Governance)
- Guy Lonsdale (Deputy Section 151 Officer)
- Jo Robinson (Assistant Director Policy Strategy and Resources)
- Paul Thorpe (Operations Director - Equans)

Also in attendance:

- Councillor S Swinburn (Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport)
- Councillors Henderson, Shutt and K Swinburn

There was one member of the public present.

SPE.46 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from this meeting were received from Councillors Cairns, Sandford and Smith.

Apologies for absence were also received from Councillors Jackson and Harness.

SPE.47 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

SPE.48 MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meetings of the Economy Scrutiny Panel held on the 7th November 2023 and 28th November 2023 be agreed as a correct record.

SPE.49 QUESTION TIME

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

SPE.50 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.51 NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE CONCESSIONARY FARES SCHEME

The panel received a report from the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport on the concessionary fares scheme from 1 April 2024.

In response to questions, Mr Thorpe advised that the frequency of the review (annually) allowed the fare structure to react to the post-covid market. The authority worked closely with Stagecoach and this approach best suited their current circumstances. Costs for next year were not yet known.

Regarding bus passenger numbers, Mr Ford explained that whilst numbers were increasing, they remained around 72% of pre-covid numbers which was in line with the national situation. Increasing bus passenger numbers would reduce costs to the authority. Members were concerned that despite qualifying for free / concessionary fares, some people were choosing not to use bus services. The results of a consultation (expected end January 2024) should give a clearer picture around why people were choosing not to use public transport. It was agreed that the results of the survey plus information and analysis about concessionary fares and usage against bus routes would be reported to the panel.

RESOLVED –

1. That the recommendations to Cabinet contained within the report now submitted be supported.

2. That survey results and usage analysis be reported to this panel at a future date to be agreed.

SPE.52 SOUTH HUMBER INDUSTRIAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME (SHIIP)

The panel received a requested briefing note from the Assistant Director Regeneration on the above. Mr Jaines-White highlighted key elements within the note and invited questions from the panel.

Members raised the following issues:

- In response to a question from the Chair, Mr Jaines-White confirmed that no further disposals or acquisitions were required.
- Mr Jaines-White confirmed that matters about the use of land at Moody Lane would be the concern of Associated British Ports (ABP) and Humber Freeport.
- The business rate income for the last financial year, from identified sites, was £292,000.
- Regarding the success of SHIIP, Mr Jaines-White reminded the panel that the prime outcome of the project was to unlock land on the Humber Bank for industrial investment and improve employment in the area. This had been achieved via a complex land assembly exercise, award winning ecological mitigation sites, and completion of the link road. He acknowledged that past estimates for business rates income had been very high, and current forecasts considerably more conservative. However, he was confident that the project was a success. Mr Lonsdale explained that in the worst-case scenario, anticipated business rates would outweigh investment made into the site to date. Across the whole 7-year (2016) SHIIP project, the authority had realised a relatively modest sum in terms of corporate borrowing to deliver the mitigation sites, Pioneer Business Park and the link road. Mr Jaines-White confirmed that the authority had received additional money from ABP to store vehicles on a percentage of the site acquired.

RESOLVED – That the briefing paper be noted.

SPE.53 REGENERATION PARTNERSHIP PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER 3

The panel received a report from EQUANS containing a summary of performance against key performance indicators July – September. Mr Thorpe invited questions from the panel.

Members sought clarification on matters relating to empty homes targets, empty homes (including enforcement on overgrown gardens), the impact of empty homes on communities, improved ways of tackling empty homes and support for neighbours, the

impact of prolonged probate applications on empty homes, new homes bonus, improving data relating to empty homes, council tax liability and premiums, top town market occupancy, delivery of the disabled facilities grant,

Mr Thorpe committed to seek responses in writing to questions about;

- Services to examine houses in multiple occupation (HIMO), especially the policy to licence premises occupied by four or less persons and to confirm if the local authority had the powers to introduce the need for licences.
- HT4A&B - Performance information about killed and seriously injured (KSI), that is, presenting information in numbers rather than percentages plus historical information about the baseline.
- HT8b1 'percentage of maintenance carried out as identified by survey' and if the 55% for 2022/23 was the total annual result.
- Section 5.1.1 - confirm what the number of social (affordable) housing units included in the total net housing completions.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report be noted.
2. That a response in writing be provided where indicated.

SPE.54 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.

RESOLVED – That the tracking report be noted and SPE.29 be removed from future tracking reports.

SPE.55 QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDER

There were no members' questions to the Portfolio Holder.

SPE.56 CALL-IN OF DECISIONS

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

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 7.28 p.m.