



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

ECONOMY SCRUTINY PANEL

27th February 2024 at 6.30pm

Present:

Councillor Freeston (in the Chair)

Councillors Pettigrew (substitute for Sandford), Holland, Hudson, Wilson and Wheatley.

Officers in attendance:

- David Baker (Contract Business Manager Equans)
- Paul Evans (Assistant Director Environment, Economy and Infrastructure)
- Guy Lonsdale (Deputy Section 151 Officer)
- Beverly O'Brien (Scrutiny and Committee Adviser)
- Jo Robinson (Assistant Director Policy Strategy and Resources)
- Paul Thorpe (Operations Director, Equans)

Also in attendance:

- Councillor Harness (Portfolio Holder Finance, Resources and Assets)
- Councillor Jackson (Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder Economy, Net Zero, Skills and Housing)

SPE.57 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

SPE.58 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

SPE.59 MINUTES

Panel Members felt that the minutes for the special meeting held on the 19th December didn't show a true reflection on what was discussed by Members. Councillor Wilson asked that they be

looked at to include what he had said around SPE.45 Call in of the refurbishment of Corporation Road Bridge, Grimsby.

RESOLVED –

1. That the minutes of the meeting of the Economy Scrutiny Panel held on the 9th January 2024 be agreed as a correct record.
2. That the minutes of the meeting of the Economy Scrutiny Panel held on 19th December 2023 be deferred to be looked at in more detail.

SPE.60 QUESTION TIME

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

SPE.61 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.62 QUARTER 3 – COUNCIL PLAN RESOURCES AND FINANCE REPORT

The panel received a report from the Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economy, Net Zero, Skills and Housing and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets providing key information and analysis of the Council's position and performance.

Members asked what the pay award liability meant. Mr Lonsdale explained that the pay award budget for 2023/24 was lower than what the pay award actually came out at. To note, the Council was signed up to national pay bargaining.

One Member stated that they were aware that reserves reduce over time, but they wondered why the report brought forward a recommendation to reestablish reserves. Mr Lonsdale highlighted a range of challenges which would require investment e.g. devolution, refresh of the Health Section 75 and end of EQUANS contract term.

Another Member commented on the revenue budget overview. They wondered why they could not see where the variance of £500K had gone within the figures from the last quarter. Mr Lonsdale explained that the original and revised budget could change for a variety of reasons. Sometimes budgets had to be

realigned. He stated that the report did show reasons for revenue budget movement. Members thought that for future reports it would be helpful if this was done in more detail quarter by quarter. Mr Lonsdale added that the variance should not be compared to the original budget as specific things come from different budgets and things can crop up to make it change. One Councillor commented on how transparency had increased. They thought it helped to refer back to the last quarter to see whether the service area forecast spend was well budgeted for.

Members also pointed out that some of the report showed figures but there was no context behind them. They wondered if graphs may help show the trends. Ms Robinson informed Members that the online dashboard provided additional historic information with trends, but she understood that it could be presented in a different way for these agendas.

One Member asked about the big percentage jump for gross weekly pay. They wondered whether it was correct. Ms Robinson explained that this data was received from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) on an annual basis, this was the latest information received January 2024.

A panel Member mentioned the percentage of spend on allocation of the Local Transport Plan (LTP). They saw that it had doubled in the last quarter. They asked if it would be spent by the end of the financial year. Mr Thorpe stated that they were on target to spend the full LTP budget and that all schemes of LTP were currently on target.

An Elected Member commented on how Officers had promised to give a completion date on the Corporation Road bridge works assessment report before the end of March 2024. They wondered if this was still the case. Mr Thorpe explained that they were currently reviewing the programme to see when the expected completion date was to be achieved. They suspect that they would have more certainty as the result of completion of the assessment report by the end of March. Mr Thorpe advised Members that the feasibility study had been received, which confirmed the detail of what they needed to do and this was informing detailed designs and costings.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

SPE.63 COUNCIL REFRESH PLAN

The panel received a report from the Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economy, Net Zero, Skills and Housing on the above.

One Member thought that the report needed to be refocused and consideration given to the target audience. They believed it

needed to be simpler so that members of the public were more inclined to read it. Another Member pointed out that the plan had now been adopted by Full Council so there was very little the panel could recommend.

Ms Robinson explained that they were now currently timetabling to develop the new plan and consultation would start with Elected Members during the summer. It would then go to formal scrutiny in the Autumn before it was received at full Council.

Councillor Jackson stated that they would take on board the comments made and when they put together the new plan, they would try to ensure that it was both user friendly for elected members and members of the public.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

SPE.64 REGENERATION PARTNERSHIP PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER 4

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

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

SPE.65 NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE ELECTRIC VEHICLE (EV) STRATEGY

The panel received a report from Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport on the above.

One Member asked if research had been done on where to put the Electric Vehicle (EV) sites. Mr Thorpe explained that the strategy allowed them to look borough wide on where was best to put EV infrastructure. It could either be for off street or on street parking and they were looking for a solution that suited everyone best. They were also working with private organisations to look where they were planning to introduce EV sites within the Borough, which could then also be taken into consideration.

The Chair asked about the mention of the word inclusion for EV sites across borough. He showed concerns that these infrastructures may be put in areas just for the sake of it, he hoped they would be allocated in areas that had a significant increase in the use of electric vehicles. Mr Snell explained that we have to provide the opportunity to everyone borough wide. It may be that an individual had been provided a work van that was electric, and they were working in an area that may not particularly have a high purchase rate of private owned EV's, but it may be an area where a large range of businesses require this kind of service. He

reassured Members that they would be driven by data and not the ideology of us wanting them.

One Member was not convinced on the strategy. They believed that if an individual purchased an EV, they would also purchase a charger to be installed at home. They stated that public ones were expensive and if people had them at home, they wouldn't use public ones unless they were out of area visitors. They also felt that the strategy didn't reflect the infrastructure needed to suit all house types. They believed that it would be much more beneficial if the grants were used to capture on-street parking requirements for terrace or similar properties. Mr Thorpe explained that within the strategy there was an On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS) that would allow the technology for residential properties without private parking facilities to have access to on street EV charging infrastructure. It would mean reutilising streetlights etc. He added that the ORCS scheme had already worked well in North Lincolnshire. The Member thought it would be beneficial if something was included in the strategy to reflect what each individual scheme did. Officers added that future plans would be discussed through monthly meetings with the Portfolio Holder at an EV Steering Group meeting. Members thought it would be useful if this would be added to their work programme for 2024/25.

One Member had concerns over safety of the EV infrastructure, they wondered who would be legally responsible if there was an accident with a charging lead on a public footpath. Mr Thorpe stated that they were working with a range of organisations where the authority could place the infrastructure, so they were in the safest place for anyone using them.

Another Member asked about the mention of having to go through planning procedures. They wondered what that meant in physical terms. Mr Thorpe explained that it came under part S, Building Regulations, but it now sat more with building control. It was more to do with developments having to think about including EV infrastructure if the site met certain requirements.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET –

1. That the draft Electric Vehicle Strategy be adopted and its publication on the Council's website be approved.
2. That delegated authority be given to the Director of Economy, Environment and Infrastructure, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport, to:
 - Apply for and accept external grant funding that enables the delivery of the EV Strategy.

- Procure measures to allow for the delivery of projects identified in the EV Strategy.
 - Award contracts for measures within the allocated budgets for the project and to carry out all activity to mobilise and fully implement.
3. That the Assistant Director Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer) be authorised to execute all documents in connection with the above.
 4. That the Electric Vehicle Strategy specifically capture the on-street parking requirements for residents in terrace or similar properties.

SPE.66 ECONOMY SCRUTINY PANEL - WORK PROGRAMME

The panel received a report from the Assistant Chief Executive (Statutory Scrutiny Officer). This report reflected on the 2023/24 municipal year and the work undertaken by the Economy Scrutiny Panel. The panel also considered, within its terms of reference, suggestions to be included in the 2024/25 work programme.

Members asked that alongside the subjects already noted on the report that the Electric Vehicle Strategy, the electrification of buses and updates on Freshney Place be added to the work programme for 2024/25.

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

SPE.67 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.

One Member felt the response to the governance of projects response was not detailed enough. Mr Evans stated that a more detailed response would be received by all panel members within two weeks' time.

All Panel Members confirmed that they were happy for all completed actions to come off the tracking report.

RESOLVED – That recommendations SPE.32, SPE.33, SPE.43, SPE.55 be removed from the tracking report and all other actions be noted.

SPE.68 QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDER

There were no members' questions to the Portfolio Holder.

SPE.69 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 7.46 p.m.