



To be submitted to the Council at its meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2024

## **COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2024 at 10.00am**

### **Present:**

Councillor Westcott (in the Chair)  
Councillors Beasant (substitute for Aisthorpe), Batson, Parkinson (substitute for Astbury) K. Swinburn, Farren and Shutt.

### **Officers in attendance:**

- Neil Beeken (Commercial Regulatory Manager)
- Neil Clark (Regulatory Services Strategic Lead)
- Helen Isaacs (Assistant Chief Executive)
- Kath Jickells (Assistant Director Environment)
- Guy Lonsdale (Assistant Director Finance)
- Stephen McGrath (Strategic Special Projects Lead - Communities)
- Jo Paterson (Scrutiny and Committee Advisor)
- Eve Richardson Smith (Service Manager Consultancy and Deputy Monitoring Officer)

### **Also in attendance:**

- Councillor Ron Shepherd (Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities)
- Councillor Stewart Swinburn, (Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport)

There were no members of the public present.

### **SPC.60 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Astbury, Aisthorpe Boyd and Sandford for this meeting.

## **SPC.61      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest in relation to any items on the agenda.

## **SPC.62      QUESTION TIME**

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

## **SPC.63      FORWARD PLAN**

The Panel received the current 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.

## **SPC.64      TRACKING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF SCRUTINY**

The panel received a report from the Statutory Scrutiny Officer tracking the recommendations of the Communities Scrutiny Panel.

At SPC.22, Registered Housing Provider, Ms Paterson advised that a Housing Strategy was due to be developed and suggested that this be incorporated within this. Members agreed that this should remain on the tracking report.

Members asked that SPC.28 CCTV Update should remain on the tracking to monitor progress. Also, SPC.52, Progress Update - Play Areas and SPC.53 Public Space Protection Order Performance update should also remain on tracking until a full report had been received.

Ms Paterson noted that at, SPC.40 Waste on Private Land all actions were complete with the exception of some guidance which was forthcoming from officers.

RESOLVED-

1. That SPC.22, SPC.28, SPC.52 and SPC.53 all remain on the tracking report.
2. That SPC.40 and SPC.52 be removed from the tracking report with the exception of the outstanding action mentioned above.

## **SPC. 65      PARISH COUNCIL COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

The panel received a report from the Assistant Chief Executive which advised members of the submissions received during the third period of public consultation on the Parish Council Community Governance Review.

One member considered the Council should take account of the consultation and support option 3 which had received the most online votes. Ms Richardson-Smith advised that case law stated that members needed to take into account the consultation and should members be minded to go against that there had to be strong justification to do so.

Another member highlighted that the amount of people consulted within Barnoldby Le Beck would be smaller than those people within Waltham and questioned how accurate and fair the figures were. Members considered they needed this additional information before they could come to a decision on the most viable option. Mr McGrath agreed to obtain the additional information to assist members in their decision making.

*(N.B The Chair moved onto the next item until the additional information could be obtained from officers).*

Mr McGrath reported that there were 187 properties in Barnoldby le Beck and 3026 properties in Waltham. On the electoral register in Barnoldby Le Beck there were 352 and on the electoral register in Waltham there were 5097. In response to a query, Mr McGrath noted that the votes received through email and post did not specify where they resided. This was not known for some of the responders. Members asked for this information to be included in the report for Council where possible.

The Chair commented on the size of both Waltham and Barnoldby Le Beck Parish Council's noting that a third of total votes had come from Barnoldby Le Beck and nearly half had come from Waltham.

Members sought assurance around financial aspects including the parish precept. Members noted that if there were less houses this would impact on both Barnoldby Le Beck and Waltham. Officers advised that it was a decision for the Parish Council to determine how much precept was to be set and how it was divided out.

Another member asked whether the percentage figures for the number of houses had been calculated. The Chair considered the figures in the report were clear in terms of the difference in population of each parish.

In considering the feedback, members of the Communities Scrutiny Panel felt that option two was their preferred choice for the following reasons:

- Bradley Road would be a clear boundary line between the two parishes, which was a requirement of the guidance from the Secretary of State and Local Government Boundary Commission for England in 2010.
- It would cause less disruption to residents of both parishes, with only 5 properties moving parish.

- Removing 71 out of 186 properties from Barnoldby Le Beck parish for option 3 could have a considerable impact on the viability of the parish and, in particular, its finances.

It was proposed and seconded that Option 2 within the report be the preferred Option. Upon being put to the vote, this was unanimously supported.

#### **RESOLVED -**

#### **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:-**

1. To receive and note the feedback received during the third consultation phase of the Parish Council community governance review as set out in Appendix 1.
2. To support option 2 (move five properties from Waltham parish to Barnoldby Le Beck parish) for the proposed new parish boundary between Waltham and Barnoldby Le Beck Parish Councils, with Bradley Road made the new parish boundary with effect from the May 2027 parish council elections.
3. That the Assistant Director Law and Governance make a Reorganisation of Community Governance Order to implement the changes to parish council boundaries agreed by Council during the second and third consultation phases.
4. That the Electoral Registration Officer be asked to incorporate the changes to Immingham Town Ward boundaries and Barnoldby Le Beck and Waltham parish boundaries into the electoral registers to be published on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2026.
5. That the Returning Officer be asked to implement the changes to parish boundaries at the next full Parish Council elections in May 2027.
6. That the Assistant Chief Executive be asked to publish the Order, notify organisations of the changes made to parish boundaries in accordance with legislation, and complete any administrative tasks to conclude the review.

## **SPC. 66 COUNCIL PLAN RESOURCES & FINANCE REPORT Q3**

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

A member asked for an update on the current position regarding commissioning of Domestic Abuse related services, noting the value of existing providers. Mr Hunt advised that the information was commercially sensitive, and he could not disclose the outcome of commissioning process. However, what the Council would be commissioning was an enhanced provision of a sanctuary scheme.

Members asked if further details of the scheme could be shared with the panel. Mr Hunt stated that this could be circulated once the information was in the public domain.

A member noted the remarkable work that had gone into the Council Plan however commented that it was difficult to understand the differences between the current and previous Council Plan and suggested a section be included that showed a summary of the key changes within each service area.

Mr Lonsdale acknowledged the point being made and advised that the new Council Plan was a refresh and more of a gradual development on the previous one. Mr Lonsdale agreed to take this forward in future.

Another member sought assurance around the council's level of reserves. Mr Lonsdale noted that the Council had remained open and transparent with regards to movements made in year, and assured members that the Council was required to have adequate reserves as part of its budget setting process.

He further reported that there had been significant investment in reserves as part of recent budget/MTFP refresh and there was an acknowledgement that the Council needed to reestablish its reserves to support transformation in terms of key projects over the coming years.

On this note, the Chair was particularly concerned with project management and highlighted some of the overspends that had occurred and wished to understand the reasoning behind this. He was also concerned with the increase in business rates and how this was affecting local traders.

Mr Lonsdale noted that the Council were seeing some improvements in the economic data in terms of its performance. He further stressed that the setting of business rates was largely outside of the council's control. He advised that the Valuation Office which was independent of the Council established the ratable value of properties by applying the national multiplier.

Mr Lonsdale further outlined some interventions within central government for specific types of businesses specifically focused on support for the pub, retail and hospitality industries. On a positive note, he reported that the Council had recently seen some growth in business rates over the past year and growth expected to accelerate as a result of the agreement with Associated British Ports (ABP) with land at Pioneer Business Park. As

such, the Enterprise Zone would allow the council to retain 100% of its business rates generated.

The Chair was concerned with retail units within Freshney Place remaining vacant. Mr Lonsdale stated that the Council owned Freshney Place and held monthly meetings with the asset managers of Freshney Place. He reported that the data and intelligence indicated that there was interest and occupancy levels were good. There was also a coherent plan for the wider town centre.

Members sought clarification on some more technical matters with regard to the Valuation Office and liabilities.

A member asked whether solar farms were exempt from business rates. Mr Lonsdale advised that solar farms were not exempt and the Council did get a business rate collection from them. Mr Lonsdale offered to provide more detailed response back to the panel.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report be noted.

2. That further details of the sanctuary scheme with regard to Domestic Abuse Commissioning be circulated once the information was in the public domain.

3. That more detail be circulated to the panel on business rates payable with regard to solar farms.

## **SPC. 67     UPDATE ON GRIMSBY & IMMINGHAM BORDER CONTROL POST.**

The panel received a report from the Director of Economy, Environment & Infrastructure that provides an update to the long-anticipated changes to the Grimsby & Immingham Border Control Post (BCP) as a result of the Government's planned implementation of a new Border Target Operating Model (BTOM).

In response to queries around the new building and occupancy rates Mr Beeken explained that there was a designated border visit scheduled for next week. He highlighted various considerations around how much demand there would be under the new border control regime.

A member asked whether a repeat site visit could be arranged to the Border Target Operating Model (BTOM) for this panel.

Ms Paterson agreed to organise a site visit for members in the new municipal year.

Another member was concerned with climate change and environmental impact implications within the report. Members asked whether there would be a reduction or increase in terms of environmental changes on the docks. Mr Beeken explained this was to do with existing supply chains coming through and maintaining those. Mr Beeken explained that by having a full designated BCP there were opportunities for trade flow currently coming through other ports i.e. London and Southampton to come through places further North in the UK. He also noted that different types of trade always had an influence in terms of the carbon footprint.

A member asked how they would look to combat an increase in Co2, Ms Jickells clarified that the report focused on the new regime and Mr Beeken had stated this was about supporting local economy and allowing imports to have a suitable route into this area. Ms Jickells explained by expanding the types of material we can accept in future would provide opportunities to get more imports, any increase in emissions locally would reduce emissions elsewhere. In terms of the green agenda, the Chair noted that DFDS were looking at electric ferries in order to reduce the carbon footprint. Another member asked for more details around how much physical examination took place at the BCP. Mr Beeken advised that a minimum level of 100% documentary checks would take place on medium risk imports of relevance. With regard to risk categorisation, a substantial proportion sat within the low risk category of imports which would not receive any routine checks. Overall, it was dependent on the actual commodity of product and country of origin to determine the identity and physical check rate.

A member asked about smuggled goods, Mr Beeken advised that the UK Border Force was the lead agency responsible for this.

In concluding Mr Beeken noted that when the new BCP came into operation there would be much greater collaboration between the border agencies in terms of sharing information and working more closely as they would occupy the BCP too.

## RESOLVED

1. That the report be noted.

2. That a site visit to the new BCP Post be organised in the new municipal year.

## **SPC. 68 COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL - WORK PROGRAMME REVIEW 2023/24 AND WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25**

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

A brief discussion took place on PSPO's in relation to the full report that was due to come back to the panel. Members raised some points of clarification around the consultation undertaken to which officers provided a response.

Ms Isaacs noted that two Working Groups would formally be reporting back through this panel which included both the Depot Rationalisation and EQUANS Review. In terms of the Depot Rationalisation Working Group members requested that an appropriate officer from both the Project Management Team and Finance Team be invited to attend the meeting. This was noted by officers.

Members wished to note that they had found the recent Equality Diversity and Inclusion Workshop particularly useful and felt all members would benefit from a future workshop.

Ms Paterson would look to progress this via the new All Member Briefings.

RESOLVED – That the report and comments made by the panel be noted.

## **SPC.69 QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDER**

There were no questions for the Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities at this meeting.

## **SPC.70 CALLING IN OF DECISIONS**

There were no formal requests from members of this panel to call in decisions of recent Cabinet and Portfolio Holder meetings.

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 11.35 a.m.