



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

COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL

27th February 2025 at 2.00 pm

Present:

Councillor Aisthorpe (in the Chair)

Councillors Augusta, Bonner, Boyd, Brookes, Farren, Shutt and Silvester.

Officers in attendance:

- Paul Caswell (Head of Safer Towns and Communities)
- Dee Hitter (Head of Environmental Sustainability)
- Spencer Hunt (Assistant Director Safer and Stronger Place)
- Kath Jickells (Assistant Director – Environment)
- Lisa Logan (Head of Open Spaces)
- Jo Paterson (Scrutiny and Committee Advisor)
- Eve Richardson Smith (Legal Services Service Manager, Consultancy)
- Joanne Robinson (Assistant Director Policy, Strategy and Resources)

Also in attendance:

- Councillor Shepherd (Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities)
- Councillor S. Swinburn (Portfolio Holder for Housing, Infrastructure and Transport)
- Councillor Hudson (Portfolio Holder for Environment and Net Zero)

SPC.57 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence had been received for this meeting.

SPC.58 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from members in respect of any items on the agenda for this meeting.

SPC.59 MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Panel held on 9th January 2025 be agreed as a correct record.

SPC.60 QUESTION TIME

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

SPC.61 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.62 TRACKING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF SCRUTINY

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

The Chair asked how officers intended to monitor the success of the dog fouling campaign. Ms Jickells advised that this was being dealt with by the Council's Insights Team, and they needed to allow time before they were able to report on any success.

Under SPC.28, CCTV Update the Chair asked whether the new schools within the borough had been included within the CCTV network.

Under SPC.35, further information on street lighting upgrades, it was noted that most street lights had now moved over to LED's. It was understood that the Transport Infrastructure and Strategic Housing Panel had received a briefing note on this matter. Ms Paterson agreed to circulate this to the panel for information.

At SPC.38 Food Poverty Action Plan, the Chair was aware that this was now near complete, and members agreed this should remain on tracking.

The panel agreed that SPC.51, Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) and SPC.49 call-in on selective licensing were now complete and could be removed from the tracking report.

At SPC.22, the Council registering to become a housing provider it was agreed that this remains on tracking to monitor progress.

RESOLVED - That the tracking report be noted and that SPC.51, Public Space Protection Orders and SPC.49 call-in on selective licensing be marked as complete and be removed from the tracking document.

SPC.63 2024/25 Q3 COUNCIL PLAN RESOURCES AND FINANCE PERFORMANCE REPORT

The panel considered a report from the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets presenting the Council Plan Performance Report for quarter three of 2024/25.

One member highlighted that under the Economy, Growth Leisure, Tourism and Regeneration section, the number of workless households had risen and asked what action had been taken to deal with this. Members also suggested it would be useful to have a breakdown showing which categories had shown an increase.

Ms Robinson agreed to provide a further breakdown on the number of workless households if the data was available via a briefing paper from the relevant department and circulate this to the panel.

Members commented on the number of fly tipping incidents, noting that this had increased for quarter one, two and three. Members were concerned whether this was being managed properly. Members also noted the increase in rural fly tipping and asked if the data could be split into urban and rural fly tipping. Ms Jickells confirmed that the fly tipping data was presented as a cumulative figure increasing each quarter to give the final total for the year.

A member referred to the percentage of adults qualified to level two and above and also level four and above and wished to understand why there had been an increase in 2024 and how this was calculated. Ms Robinson stated that the data came from national statistical data and was not aware there had been any changes to the way this data was reported. It was noted that there was a Joint Children and Lifelong Learning and Economy, Culture and Tourism Scrutiny Panel meeting on Monday to look at the Skills Action Plan in more depth.

Another member asked for the reasoning why the household recycling rates had dropped by five percent in quarter two and three. Ms Jickells explained that this was likely due to the seasonal element of recycling green waste.

Members asked whether there were any campaigns around recycling taking place. Ms Jickells explained that officers were always trying to identify areas where they could make the greatest difference such as identifying champions in households and improving the quality of recycling.

Members made some suggestions around how to tackle dog fouling including looking at giving out free dog waste bags.

RESOLVED

1. That the report be noted

2. That a further breakdown of the number of workless households if available be provided to the panel via a briefing paper.
3. That data on urban and rural fly tipping be provided to this panel.

SPC.64 WEED CONTROL

The panel considered options for the Council phasing out the use of Glyphosate with possible alternatives.

A member referred to Appendix 2 which listed the 25 areas where the green open space was currently not controlled by the application of Glyphosate and asked what was being used on these sites to control weeds.

Ms Logan confirmed that nothing was being used to control weeds on these sites.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Net Zero stated that the European Union had just conducted a comprehensive and transparent assessment, concluding that Glyphosate had no impact on human or animal health, or the environment. It also did not class it as a carcinogen.

Ms Logan outlined the three options for consideration within the report which required a recommendation to Cabinet to take forward.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing, Infrastructure and Transport referred to Appendix 3 which showed that of the 49 councils previously pledging to ban or phase out Glyphosate, 33 councils were not sticking to their pledge and wished to understand why this was.

Ms Logan stated that this was likely due to the number of weed complaints they could not deal with and also the cost.

A member asked whether there was currently any credible alternative. Ms Logan confirmed the alternative was more acceptance of weeds from citizens.

The Chair considered that residents may need to begin to have a greater acceptance of weeds, and felt this was really down to what our local residents wanted in terms of a way forward.

A member suggested combining options two and three within the report to allow more time for Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to decide on future policy.

Members asked how many people had signed the petition. It was confirmed that Democratic Services held the petition, and it was confirmed that there was in total 21,268 signatures. However, most

signatures had been from outside the local area, around 372 were confirmed as being from within Cleethorpes, Grimsby or Immingham.

The Chair stated that her preference would be for option four which was to phase out Glyphosate using the Pesticide Action Network UK 3-year Plan. Ms Jickells outlined the implications with Option four which included both a commitment to phasing out Glyphosate and the ability to be able to deliver this.

Another member suggested it may be more productive to trial a small patch of land without use of Glyphosate to understand the impact of non-spraying of weeds with a subsequent report back to scrutiny to look at it again.

Other members asked why there was no alternative to the use of Glyphosate. Ms Jickells advised that although there were alternatives these were either costly or not as effective. In terms of trials, officers were committed to ensuring they did not undermine the highway network in any way.

Another member was concerned that with phasing out the use of Glyphosate this could lead to increased complaints from residents due to a decline in the street scene.

It was proposed and seconded that Recommendation two and three be combined and taken forward to Cabinet. The panel supported this way forward.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:-

Fully phase out Glyphosate in parks and open spaces but retain use on highways and paths until a cost-effective option is available and instigate a trial to phase out in a specific area for highway and report back to scrutiny.

SPC.65 SAFER STREETS 5 ANNUAL REVIEW

The panel considered a report from the Director of Economy, Environment and Infrastructure that provided an annual report on the Safer Streets 5 programme of activities within the Grimsby Town Centre.

Members asked how popular the new Haven Hub had been in the town centre.

Mr Caswell stated that this had already moved and had been relocated to Queen Street and stated that by the end of this month it would be fully open and functional. Overall, officers had seen more young people move away from the town centre which was a really positive move.

The Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities referred to the Safer Streets Crime and Disorder data, noting what a positive impact this had made to the area including local businesses.

Mr Caswell noted that investment from the Humberside Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) had helped to provide more police patrols and active drug control.

A member was concerned that often young people loitered in certain areas to use free Wi-Fi and asked whether free Wi-Fi was provided at the new hub. Mr Caswell advised that Youth Services were aware of this issue, and he would look into this. He further stated that Horizon Youth Centre did provide free Wi-Fi and other facilities which was reducing loitering around areas in the town centre.

The Chair was pleased with the work that had taken place to deliver the programme around violence against women and girls, which included giving first aid and also directing people to the new Haven Hub. The Chair expressed thanks to all officers and partners involved.

RESOLVED – That the Safer Streets 5 annual review be noted.

SPC.66 ANNUAL GREEN FUTURES REPORT

The panel considered a report on the above ahead of consideration by Cabinet.

A member referred to the Council's Natural Assets Plan and asked what work was being done to engage young people with this. Ms Hitter advised that they worked closely with the Council's Insights Team around teaching new behaviours including tree planting. Officers also worked closely with schools and nurseries in the education sector to submit funding bids.

The Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities considered that educating young people around tree planting was really important in getting them to understand the importance at an early age.

A member asked about the new Procurement Act 2023 and how these changes had been adapted to their everyday practices. Ms Hitter stated that they had fed into the strategy which included pulling together a learning package to ensure they could provide relevant guidance to officers. Overall, they wanted to make sure that sustainability fed through everything they did as an organisation.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

SPC.67 CLEETHORPES HABITAT MANAGEMENT PLAN

The panel considered a report on the above ahead of consideration by Cabinet.

The Chair complimented officers on the considerable amount of work that had been put into this plan which was unique to North East Lincolnshire.

Members were given the opportunity to provide feedback on the plan.

A member referred to Figure 15 within the officer's report, an educational sign in Cleethorpes resort, commenting that this was a bit long-winded. Ms Hitter took on board the feedback from members.

The Chair also suggested the possibility of interactive signs for our next generation.

Members also asked about Cleethorpes Country Park and whether there was any intention to clear the waterway. Ms Logan responded that they were awaiting the Capital Plan to be approved to understand what finances would be available.

Members asked about funding bids, Ms Hitter advised that once they had gathered an evidence base this could be used to support a further bid to deliver the capital.

Members asked about the effectiveness of some of the recent developments seeking assurance that these conditions would be observed. Ms Hitter explained that planning developments provided their own mitigation regulated through planning conditions. In terms of recreational activity and damage to a specific area, the Council could use enforcement such as PSPOs to address some of these issues.

Another member asked what partners the Council worked in collaboration with around the waterways. Ms Hitter stated that some of the partners they worked with included Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, the RSPB and the Humber Nature Partnership.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

SPC.68 COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL - WORK PROGRAMME REVIEW 2024/25 AND WORK PROGRAMME 2025/26

The panel considered a report from the Statutory Scrutiny Officer which reflects on the 2024/25 municipal year and the work undertaken by the Communities Scrutiny Panel. The panel will also consider, within its terms of reference, suggestions to be included in the 2025/26 work programme.

The Chair commented that this panel had experienced a good year.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

SPC.69 QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDER

There were no questions for the Portfolio Holder 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 15.19 p.m.