TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND STRATEGIC HOUSING SCRUTINY PANEL

16th September 2025 at 6.30 p.m.

Present:

Councillor Mill (in the Chair)
Councillors Augusta, Boyd (substitute for Lindley), Bright, Crofts, Pettigrew K. Swinburn (substitute for Hasthorpe) and Wilson.

Officers in attendance:

- Martin Dixon (Planning Manager, Development)
- Paul Evans (Assistant Director of Infrastructure)
- Damien Jaines White (Assistant Director Regeneration)
- Simon Jones (Assistant Director Law and Governance)
- Martin Lear (Head of Highways and Transport)
- Richard Limmer (Principal Planning Major Projects)
- Guy Lonsdale (Assistant Director Finance, Deputy Section 151 Officer)
- Jo Paterson (Scrutiny and Committee Advisor)
- Anthony Snell (Traffic and Transport Manager, Infrastructure)
- Adrian Dennington (Head of Highways and Transportation)

Also in attendance:

- Councillor Jackson (Leader of the Council)
- Councillor Harness (Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets)
- Councillor S Swinburn (Portfolio Holder for Housing, Infrastructure and Transport)
- Councillor Bonner (Ward Councillor for Yarborough Ward)
- Councillor Holland (Ward Councillor for Freshney Ward)
- Mr Stuart Ashton, Haworth Group (Developers, Grimsby West Masterplan)

There were 30 members of the public and one member of the press in attendance.

SPTISH.18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hasthorpe and Lindley for this meeting.

SPTISH.19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest for this meeting.

SPTISH.20 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 15th July 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

SPTISH.21 QUESTION TIME

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

SPTISH.22 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.

SPTISH.23 TRACKING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF SCRUTINY

The panel received the report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer tracking the recommendations previously made by this scrutiny panel which had been updated for reference at this meeting.

At SPTISH.44 (Electric Vehicle Strategy update), it was noted that this item was on the agenda for today's meeting and therefore could be removed from the tracking report.

At SPTISH.57 (Equans Performance Report), it was noted that officers did not have the survey results back but would update members in due course.

At SPTISH.65 (Transport Hub update), it was noted that work had now commenced, and this was to remain on tracking.

At SPTISH.74 (Temporary Accommodation Review) Ms Paterson advised that a special joint panel meeting with this panel and Communities Scrutiny Panel would be taking place on 7th October to bring members up to date with the current housing position.

At SPTISH.3 (Minutes from 4th March panel meeting) Ms Paterson advised that she understood this had now been resolved and the minutes had now been corrected, Ms Paterson asked the Chair and panel if they were happy for this to be removed from tracking.

One member remained concerned that the recommendations made by this panel were not going through to Cabinet and asked what the process was for this to happen.

Ms Paterson explained that recommendations made by this panel would be noted in the minutes and recorded as an action and that a 'scrutiny recommends' form would be completed and forwarded onto Cabinet for consideration.

The member asked that this item remain on tracking until confirmation could be given that the recommendations had gone forward to Cabinet. Ms Paterson agreed to follow this up with officers.

RESOLVED - That the report and updates against the tracking report be noted.

SPTISH.24 QUARTER ONE FINANCE AND COUNCIL PLAN MONITORING

The panel considered a report from the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets providing key information and analysis of the Council's performance and financial position at the end of quarter 1 2025-26.

A member referred to the dashboard noting that the RAG rating for this panel's area (Economy, Housing, Highways and Transport) was marked mostly as red which represented being under target.

Members were also concerned with the reported £1.5m overspend against the council budget in the first quarter of 2025/26 and asked whether the council had the ability to reclaim full housing benefit subsidy from accommodation providers. Mr Lonsdale reported that they had no direct influence over whether providers were registered or not, noting there was a lower-level subsidy for unregistered providers which put pressure on the council's finances.

The member asked how these providers could get registered, officers advised this was a matter for the Housing Oversight Board.

Further queries were raised around the increase in demand for temporary accommodation and what the current status of those providers was. Additional comments were made around the forecast overspend with members asking what the key driver was for this. Mr Lonsdale noted that, in general terms, budgets were only estimates and the council needed to continue to respond to various challenges they faced.

Mr Lonsdale would take the comments back and look to reflect these in the budget setting for this year.

A member asked about demand for temporary accommodation. Mr Lonsdale advised that the demand was increasing and that the supply had to come from somewhere and that the housing team needed to procure some more accommodation. Mr Evans advised that the special meeting to be held on 7th October 2025 would address this issue.

Another member asked for an update on the current position with the waiting list for Swan House. This again would be something that could be addressed at the special meeting.

The Chair referred to the temporary accommodation placements for 2025-26 and wished to clarify if this was the number of individuals placed or the number of flats. Mr Evans understood this figure related to Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs).

Another member wished to understand what the council was doing to renovate empty properties and who currently owned them. Mr Evans assured members that the council did engage with landlords but had limited powers. This was also very resource intensive and would be discussed at the special meeting on 7th October as part of the wider update led by the Director of Adult Services.

A further discussion ensued around empty homes with members asking with the New Homes Bonus (NHB) whether there was a financial incentive to get empty homes back into use. Mr Evans reported that his team was looking into whether this was achievable and would ensure this was also covered off at the special meeting on 7th October.

Ms Lonsdale added that in terms of the new homes issue and the upcoming review of local government funding it was likely that the NHB would not exist in future.

A member noted that staffing resources and structures would require a review in coming months following the Equans transfer and asked officers how the staff were feeling post transfer. Mr Evans advised that the council were trying to accommodate staff into a new culture and provide necessary training which had overall been positive.

A member referred to the net number of new homes noting that in previous years this had been around the 400 mark, but was only 18 for this year. Mr Dixon responded that this figure related to a technical issue with the valuation officer recording this data, and an update on this would be provided in due course.

A member referred to a review that was taking place around the housing register and asked whether the outcome and results could be provided via a briefing note to scrutiny in future. Mr Evans noted that, in terms of reporting the results, there was a new ICT system being put in place that would take some time to embed and assured the panel this was in progress.

A member referred to the lack of sufficient housing supply for those people requiring social housing and asked officers if they could expand on this. Mr Evans noted that this would be reported back to the special meeting on 7th October.

The Chair asked Ms Paterson to record the various information the panel had requested for this to be included in the report that the Director of Adult Services would bring to the meeting on 7th October.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report be noted.

2. That the queries raised by the panel be addressed in the report on housing to be provided at the special joint meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Panel and this panel on 7th October 2025.

SPTISH.25 GRIMSBY WEST MASTERPLAN

The panel received a report on the Grimsby West Masterplan ahead of its submission to Cabinet on 8th October 2025. It was noted that the developers were in attendance at the meeting. Mr Dixon set out some of the key highlights within the report.

Members raised a number of queries in relation to the masterplan:-

- Concerns around surface water going directly into the River Freshney and what could be done to address this, noting that this was not mentioned in the plan. In response, officers advised that the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) and swales would form part of any future application and explained how these worked in practical terms. It was confirmed that the Masterplan did reference an approach.

- Members asked about education contributions. It was noted that the education establishment on site would include around 500 school places, which was quite small for a large urban area covering around 3,000 properties. Officers stated that they were working with the education team, and this would be captured through Section 106 agreements at the planning stages.

- Members wished to understand more about the proposed link road being funded by public money. It was confirmed by officers that there was no proposal from the developers to use public funding for this.

- Members asked whether the council could choose to refuse the masterplan given that the masterplan was not a council proposal. Officers reminded members of the democratic process that was in place for such decisions to be taken.

- Officers referred members to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) noting that currently the authority did not have a five-year supply of housing and warned that with the absence of a masterplan this may cause greater challenges, leaving no control over where houses were built.

A detailed discussion ensued with members asking for more detail on the following: -

- How much allocation within the plan was for affordable housing and could that be regulated via a planning condition. Officers present provided a percentage breakdown of housing.

- Reference was made to Planning Policy 14 and the requirement of 3,500 homes clearly being a challenge to meet and how would this impact on the National Grid proposal. Officers advised that the supply of houses would be managed through the Local Plan process. Officers advised that the Local Plan consultation was due to come to this panel at its meeting in November 2025.

- Overall, members remained concerned around two key issues: potential flooding of the River Freshney and flooding in general. It was felt that a Flood Risk Assessment should have been completed prior to the master plan. Officers stated that this was not a requirement of Policy 14, and these aspects would be determined through the planning application stages.

- Members were also particularly concerned that no traffic assessment had been completed and whether the link road was fit for purpose. Members felt this impact needed to be assessed beforehand.

- Other members felt more consideration should be given to ‘Save Freshney Valley’ campaign and asked for assurance around how this plan sought to address maintaining green space so that people could enjoy their natural environments and have a higher standard of living. Mr Stuart Ashton, from Harworth Group developers, responded that it was in their interest to make this scheme attractive and that further details would form part of the planning application.

- Members asked how much social housing would be allocated to the site. Mr Ashton stated that some would be 20% and some 10%, in terms of what was classed as 'affordable' this often changed, and they worked to what the need was at that time.

- Members asked about the country park elements of the plan in terms of size, it was confirmed that the site covered over 200 hectares with 43 hectares of that being the county park area.

- Members remained unhappy with traffic issues, flood risk and the Freshney Valley and wished to recommend to Cabinet that the Masterplan be rejected subject to a number of issues being addressed. This was unanimously supported by the panel.

RESOLVED - That the report and comments be noted.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET -

That the Grimsby West Masterplan be rejected, subject to the following being addressed:

- Flood risk and waterflow and pollution into the River Freshney.
- Completion of a Traffic Assessment
- More graphic detail on the Freshney Valley Country Park

SPTISH.26 GRIMSBY TO WALPOLE NATIONAL GRID ELECTRICITY LINE

The panel received the proposed Grimsby to Walpole National Grid electricity line report ahead of its submission to Cabinet on 8th October 2025.

Mr Jaines White outlined the background to the report and set out how the decision-making would work to respond to the Development Consent Order (DCO) process. Mr Dixon highlighted the importance of the technical issues that needed delegation.

The panel wished to confirm when the decision on this matter was made by Full Council. The Leader confirmed this was in March 2024 with the outcome being that the council objected to the proposed pylons, suggesting that the power line be placed within the North East Lincolnshire boundary underground or re-routed so that it was subsea. The leader had written again when round two of the consultation took place, and he had now received a response from the government which he would circulate to members.

A member noted that the new Mayor of Greater Lincolnshire had expressed her opposition to this and asked if there was any coordination among the council leaders on how they were going to oppose it. Mr Jaines White noted that the council was responding at a localised level and was aware of the Combined Authority's position on this. Mr Jaines White was not engaged in any coordination at a political level and noted this was a matter for each level of planning authority.

Members were concerned who would be responsible for funding the cables should they go underground. Mr Jaines White stated that this would be a scheme for the organisation itself to fund.

A member noted that the recommendation within the report was to delegate authority to officers and asked what happened thereafter. Mr Jaines White advised that this decision was not made by the local planning authority, this authority was just an 'interested party' and therefore would feed into that process. The inspector would consider the wider application and make a determination on it, assuming the application went forward.

Members sought clarification on paragraph 1.9 within the report regarding a full planning review not being established until various matters were responded to and addressed. It was noted that this was the view of officers and officers advised of the council's overarching position as expressed by the Leader on this being to object to the scheme with a preference for underground cables.

Members supported the recommendations within the report.

RESOLVED –

1.That the report be noted.

2.That the response from the Government on the consultation be circulated to elected members.

SPTISH.27 ELECTRICITY VEHICLE STRATEGY UPDATE

The panel received a report which gave an update on the Electric Vehicle Strategy projects delivery and next steps. Mr Lear set out the background to the report and detailed the key areas for consideration.

The Chair referred to the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) capital funding, noting that units would be installed from early 2026-27 and asked for a specific start date. Officers expected the project to be delivered in late 2025.

In terms of charging costs and infrastructure, concerns were raised about the potential cost of using public EV charging points, particularly in relation to the cost of electricity and infrastructure. It was noted that the council bought electricity in bulk for street lighting and could potentially offer a lower rate for EV charging.

The Chair asked about the cross-pavement channels, noting that a bid to fund this would be evaluated with partners, and enquired when this would start. Officers advised that funding would be devolved from the the Greater Lincolnshire Mayoral Combined County Authority, and the council were already working with the two other unitary councils. Mr Evans noted that there was a lot of due diligence to be undertaken before officers deployed this onto the network.

Members also asked how cross pavement channels would work and how this would affect people parking outside their property. A member did not support the offer of free parking for those using EV charging. Mr Evans assured the panel that this would be looked at on a wider scale.

Another member was pleased with the cross-pavement solution feeling this was the way to go. The member suggested the use of second-hand electric cars as another more affordable option.

Overall, the potential benefits of the EV charging scheme for residents without private driveways were highlighted, provided the pricing was competitive. Members were satisfied with the progress made on EV charging infrastructure and supported the recommendations in the report.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

SPTISH.28 LOCAL TRANSPORT GRANT

The panel received a report on the proposed schemes to be delivered utilising the Local Transport Grant. Mr Dennington set out the background to the report and highlighted some key areas for consideration including how the twelve different schemes had been selected and an update on resourcing.

The Chair noted that the council had a local transport grant of £6.24 million to improve and enhance the existing transport network and asked whether the council were expecting similar amounts in years ahead. Mr Evans stated that the council anticipated receiving between £10m and £11m annually for the next five years for highways and transport projects.

A councillor emphasised the importance of considering villages outside the main town when allocating transport funding, particularly regarding road repairs and speed traps.

Members discussed the potential for incorporating car parks with real-time space availability information on main routes as a way to reduce traffic congestion and environmental impact.

In terms of funding streams, clarification was provided on the various funding streams, including the pothole fund and other grants from the

Department for Transport, which were now combined into a single allocation.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

SPTISH.29 CORPORATION BRIDGE UPDADE

The panel received a verbal update on progress with the Corporation Bridge refurbishment. Mr Evans updated members on progress so far since termination of the contract, some of the key highlights included:

- The council re-gaining control over the security of the site.
- Securing the environmental and green maritime breaks permits.
- A scaffold that had been maintained, inspected regularly and was being used as access for inspections and possible use for the new contractor.
- A full insurance and liabilities programme carried out to make sure everything was secured and in place to maintain the site until handover to the contractor.
- The council's partners, 'Pell Frischman', had attended the site for the full scoping of the remaining work, to review snagging issues such as defects from the previous contract, it was noted that both of these reports were now complete.
- The council had engaged a paint specialist, a specialist company that looked at the chemical bonds and how this had been applied.
- The council had also secured a Structural Highway Specialist which had helped put consistency back into the project in terms of management.
- The council had obtained external legal advice from a specialist, civil contracting arm, and was deciding on what action it would take.
- In terms of procurement, the council had looked at several options from direct award through to frameworks, opting for an award of a Pre-Construction Services Agreement (PCSA) contract.
- Discussions had taken place with the dockmaster around maintaining more access under the bridge to keep work moving.

The Chair asked for timescales around when the bridge would be finished. Mr Evans advised that once the council had awarded the second contract, they could give a more accurate timescale for commencement.

Mr Evans noted that a more detailed update would be provided at a special meeting of this panel towards the end of October. However, he stressed that there may not be anything to discuss around legal action or costs by this time. He further reiterated that the council would be managing this contractor and would bring in its own project team who would be working alongside the contractor.

A member noted that in June this year at the informal work programme workshop, the panel were assured that they would receive the full costings of the bridge. It was agreed to add this to the panel's work programme again for consideration.

Overall, the panel considered it better that the council was directly managing the bridge rather than a third party and, for reasons around transparency, the public deserved to see the full costs of the works.

The panel considered that the project now needed to be completed as soon as possible. Members also felt there needed to be some reflection and lessons learned from this.

RESOLVED – That the verbal update be noted.

SPTISH.30 REVIEW OF SUBSIDISED BUS SERVICES

The panel received a report on the review of subsidised bus services ahead of its submission to Cabinet on 8th October 2025. Mr Lear set out the background to the report and highlighted some key areas for consideration.

Concerns were raised about the phone and ride service being oversubscribed and not fully meeting community needs. Officers stated that the council was exploring opportunities to work with the combined authority to improve the phone and ride service and create efficiencies.

Members expressed concerns about elderly residents who did not have access to a vehicle, resided out of town, and were reliant on bus services and asked what the council was doing to cater for these people.

Officers advised that the Bus Service Improvement Plan aimed to address gaps in service coverage, particularly for elderly residents who relied upon bus services for social activities. The council encouraged residents to submit ideas and requirements through the Revenue Enhancement Partnership.

A brief discussion ensued about demand; it was confirmed that the council collected data on the number of phone and ride calls and waiting times to assess demand and each subsidised service would be assessed individually to tailor the procurement based on specific needs.

It was noted that a Bus Strategy would be refreshed aligning with the Greater Lincolnshire Combined Authority's policies. Also, the potential for the combined authority to take over some of the subsidised services in the future was discussed.

The panel supported the recommendations within the report.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

SPTISH.31 QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDER

There were no questions to Portfolio Holder.

SPTISH.32 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 8.30 pm.