



ECONOMY, CULTURE AND TOURISM SCRUTINY PANEL

27th November 2025 at 10.00am

Present:

Councillor Holland (in the Chair)

Councillors Cairns (substitute for Parkinson) Crofts, Farren, Lindley and Morland

Officers in attendance:

- Nick Browning (Head of Culture, Heritage, Leisure and Tourism)
- Zoe Campbell (Senior Scrutiny and Committee Advisor)
- Simon Jones (Assistant Director Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer))
- Guy Lonsdale (Section 151 Officer)
- Damien Jaines- White (Assistant Director Regeneration)
- Jo Robinson (Assistant Director Policy Strategy and Resources (Statutory Scrutiny Officer))
- Helen Thompson (Strategic Lead - Tourism)
- James Trowsdale (Strategic Lead – Culture)

Also in attendance:

- Councillor Dawkins (Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and the Visitor Economy)
- Councillor Jackson (Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Economy, Regeneration, Devolution and Skills)
- Maggie Johnson (Head of Economy and Funding)

There were no members of the present or public present.

SPE.30 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received for this meeting from Councillors Brookes, Mickleburgh and Parkinson.

SPE.31 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

SPE.32 MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the Joint Economy, Culture and Tourism and Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 11th September 2025 and the Economy, Culture and Tourism Scrutiny Panel meetings held on 2nd October 2025 be approved as an accurate record.

SPE.33 QUESTION TIME

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

SPE.34 FORWARD PLAN

The panel considered the current Forward Plan and were asked to identify any items for examination by this panel via the pre-decision call-in procedure.

It was noted that the Humber Strategy report, led by Hull City Council, was due to go to Cabinet in January 2026. It would be circulated to all councils in the region for adoption. A special meeting would be required if the panel wished to receive it for scrutiny.

The Council Plan Refresh was scheduled for Cabinet on 10th December 2025. It would subsequently be disseminated to all scrutiny panels in January for comment, with feedback to be returned to Cabinet before escalation to Full Council.

RESOLVED - That the Forward Plan be noted.

SPE.35 TRACKING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF SCRUTINY

The panel received a report from the Statutory Scrutiny Officer tracking the recommendations of the Economy, Culture and Tourism Scrutiny Panel.

Referring to the results of the tourism review, members were concerned if this report would be ready to come to scrutiny before the end of the municipal year. Officers agreed to clarify the target date for the completion of the Tourism Review report to enable its scheduling for a future panel meeting.

RESOLVED –

1. That the tracking report be noted.
2. That the tourism review report be presented at future meeting of this panel.

SPE.36 QUARTER TWO 2025/26 COUNCIL PLAN PERFORMANCE AND FINANCE REPORT

The panel received a report from the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets providing information and analysis of the Council's financial performance during the second quarter of 2025/26.

A member enquired about differentiating footfall between Freshney Place and the new Community Diagnostic Centre (CDC). Mr Jaines-White confirmed that no differentiation was made, as a key purpose of the CDC was to drive overall footfall and secondary spend within Freshney Place. Footfall was expected to increase significantly upon completion of the leisure scheme, acknowledging current accessibility impacts due to the closure.

A member observed that there was an image within the report depicting closed shops on Sea View Street and felt this presented a negative visual for a section discussing "stronger economy and shopping". Ms Robinson confirmed she would arrange for a replacement picture.

Concerns were raised regarding a marked decline in the number of new businesses surviving three years or more. The panel suggested developing additional indicators to identify which sectors (e.g., retail, leisure) were most affected and to understand contributing factors such as COVID-19 fallout or wider economic pressures. Officers agreed to investigate if national data allowed for sector-specific analysis.

Members noted that there were permanent reductions in business rates for the retail, hospitality, and leisure sectors, offset by increased rates for larger businesses. The panel were concerned about the potential impact of a proposed surcharge/tax on hotel and guesthouse accommodation announced at the budget on tourism across the borough.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report be noted.
2. That this panel receive a briefing paper on sector-specific analysis for businesses, if this information was available.

SPE.37 KASBAH REGENERATION PROGRAMME UPDATE

The panel received a report from the Director of Economy, Environment and Infrastructure providing an update on the delivery of a programme of regeneration on the Kasbah Conservation Area, principally through the Partnership Schemes in Conservation Areas Grant scheme, for which the Council was the accountable body.

A member requested a clearer, consolidated overview of all public money invested in the Kasbah regeneration scheme. Mr Trowsdale explained and gave a breakdown of the money that came from ABP, public funding, National Lottery funding and other external funders. Mr Jaines-White clarified that the council was not the accountable body for all projects taking place on the Kasbah, as an example Unseen Arts were supported by council officers to make their own application to Historic England for their Heritage at Risk programme.

Questions were raised by members regarding the equality assessment for the location of Unseen Arts as a community arts centre, particularly concerning accessibility e.g., proximity to public transport. Mr Trowsdale stated that the Historic England programmes were focused on Conservation Areas and noted recent changes to access routes. The upcoming site visit on 5th December would provide members of the panel an opportunity to discuss these points directly.

The panel enquired about the tracking of business success and failure rates within the Kasbah, referencing a previous business closure. Officers confirmed that monitoring occurred but noted that business outcomes were influenced by wider factors not directly related to the programme or ABP.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

SPE.38 SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STRATEGY UPDATE

The panel received a report from the Director of Economy, Environment and Infrastructure providing an update on Sport and Physical Activity Strategy delivery over the past year.

The panel sought further detail on the initiative of the test and learn scheme. Mr Brown explained that small grant funding from Sport England had been distributed to organisations in priority areas identified with low physical activity levels and significant barriers to participation. The aim was to support new activities, learn from their effectiveness (or lack thereof), and inform a larger funding application in the spring. Concerns were expressed by a member that the current approach might lead to siloed efforts across different community groups. It was suggested that successful schemes tested in one area could be more efficiently rolled out to others. Mr Brown agreed that effective approaches could certainly be expanded.

A member highlighted the absence of beach-based activities such as paddleboarding in the strategy, noting the beach was a free and valuable resource for physical activity. Mr Brown concurred on the need for a broader approach to encourage the use of natural assets.

Concerns were raised by a member about declining activity levels in the over 55s age group and the increasing use of mobility scooters, suggesting this could lead to dependency and further inactivity. Another member offered a counter perspective, arguing that mobility scooters could be an essential and affordable mode of transport for individuals with limited mobility or low income, enabling them to access town centres and services.

A member reiterated concerns about the proliferation of fast-food establishments and asked about best practises from other areas to promote healthier options. Mr Brown noted this issue fell within broader public health strategies, encompassing schools, policy such as PE time and food provision regulations.

It was proposed by a member that a joint scrutiny panel meeting with the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel be organised to examine the wider implications of physical activity and health, linking to the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Professor Marmot's work. This proposal was unanimously supported.

Referring to the Sport England active life survey response rate, the Chair questioned the reliability of the data derived from a random sample size, requesting information on the survey's response rate to assess potential biases (e.g. less active individuals being less likely to respond). Mr Brown agreed to come back to the panel with this information.

Significant concern was raised regarding the increasing number of children and young people engaging in less than 30 minutes of physical activity per day, as depicted with the report. Mr Brown outlined ongoing efforts with health services and schools, largely dependent on securing external grant funding. Emphasis was placed on influencing the entire "system" to achieve long-term, sustainable benefits rather than relying on short-term funded programmes.

The Chair questioned the long-term sustainability of relying on short-term external funding and suggested the need to establish a baseline cost for essential, sustainable activity provision. Mr Brown confirmed that it was not possible at this stage. He confirmed officers were just starting to look at the barriers and were not in the position to give an acute figure.

The panel suggested that Lincs Inspire include more specific data in their January 2026 report, particularly on swimming facility usage, as previous reports were perceived as generic.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report be noted
2. That a joint scrutiny panel meeting with the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel be organised to examine the wider implications of physical activity and health, linking to the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Professor Marmot's work.
3. That Lincs Inspire include more specific data, particularly on swimming facility usage, in their report to a future meeting of this panel.

SPE.39 STATUS OF THE LIBRARY SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE

The panel received a verbal update from the Chair of the Economy, Culture and Tourism Scrutiny Panel on the newly established Library Services Select Committee.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

SPE.40 ECONOMY, CULTURE AND TOURISM SCRUTINY PANEL 2025/26 – WORK PROGRAMME REVIEW

The panel received a report from the Statutory Scrutiny Officer providing panel members with the opportunity to reflect on the progress of the panel's work programme at the half-year stage and providing a formal opportunity for the panel to update its work programme.

Members generally felt the panel was performing well, noting good crossover between scrutiny areas and strong engagement from portfolio holders.

The Chair acknowledged that the Library Services Select Committee had absorbed a significant portion of work that might otherwise have fallen to this panel and confirmed that the select committee's final report would be presented to this scrutiny panel before proceeding to Cabinet.

The panel agreed to receive the Freshney Place business plan in January 2026.

Following the review of tourism, it was agreed that if the panel felt they needed more clarity around the use of green spaces and eco-tourism, that this information would come back to a future panel meeting.

RESOLVED – That the Freshney Place business plan be received at a future meeting of this panel.

SPE.41 QUESTIONS TO THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER

There were no panel members' questions to the Portfolio Holder.

SPE.42 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 11.22 a.m.