TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND HOUSING SCRUTINY PANEL

14th July 2026 at 6.30 p.m.

Present:

Councillor Mill (in the Chair)
Councillors Bright, Charlesworth, Crofts, Jackson, Mills, I. Oliver (substitute for Russell) and Wilson

Officers in attendance:

- Katie Brown (Director of Adult Services)
- Liz Brummer (Head of Finance)
- Paul Evans (Assistant Director of Infrastructure)
- Simon Jones (Assistant Director Law and Governance)
- Jo Robinson (Assistant Director Policy, Strategy and Resources)
- Andy Smith (Engineer – Highways and Transport)
- Jacqui Wells (Housing Strategy Lead)
- Paul Windley (Democratic and Scrutiny Team Manager)

Also in attendance:

- Councillor P Batson (Portfolio Holder for Transport, Infrastructure and Housing)
- Councillor Aisthorpe
- Councillor Augusta

SPTIH.1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

It was noted that at the Annual General Meeting of the Council held on 21st May 2026, Councillor Mill had been appointed the Chair and Councillor Crofts, the Deputy Chair of the Transport, Infrastructure and Housing Scrutiny Panel for the ensuing Municipal Year.

SPTIH.2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from this meeting were received from Councillor Russell.

SPTIH.3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Crofts and Councillor Mill declared other registrable interests in item SPTIH.9 as trustees of Harbour Place.

SPTIH.4 MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Transport, Infrastructure and Strategic Housing Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 3rd March 2026 be agreed as a correct record,

SPTIH.5 QUESTION TIME

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

SPTIH.6 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.

SPTIH.7 TRACKING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF SCRUTINY

The panel considered the report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer tracking the recommendations previously made by this scrutiny panel and to track the Full Council Decisions that were relevant to this scrutiny panel.

At SPTISH.47 (Corporation Bridge Update), it was reported that the clearer guidance on the release of financial information was expected be issued to panel members by the end of the week of this meeting.

At SPTISH.72 (Asset Management Plan Update), Councillor Wilson questioned the response that had been provided around biodiversity. Although he accepted it in terms of smaller projects, he felt that it should be more prescriptive around set amounts, reflecting best practice and with better targets. Overall, we need to be clear on what we are asking. It was agreed that this be reviewed and brought back to this panel by January 2027 to enable the panel to consider any recommendations.

Note – Councillor Bright attended the meeting at this point and took no part in the debate or vote on this item.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report be noted and that items JSPCT.16, SPTISH.41, SPTISH.46, SPTISH.68, SPTISH.71. SPTISH.73 and SPTISH.76 be removed from future tracking reports.

2. That the issues raided by this panel on the Asset Management Plan around biodiversity be further reviewed and brought back to this panel by January 2027.

SPTIH.8 COUNCIL PLAN PERFORMANCE AND FINANCE REPORT – QUARTER 4 2025/26

The panel considered a report from the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets providing information and analysis of the provision financial position for the 2025/26 financial year.

Referring to the Greener Future – Our Green Ambition' priority, it was noted that a decarbonisation project had not progressed, the panel sought clarification of the reasons for this. Mr Evans agreed to seek a written response for panel members.

The panel asked for an explanation of the amber ratings for the achievements, challenges and risks for Infrastructure. Mr Evans commented on the issues arising from the transfer of staff and services from the Equans partnership and the full business review that had been undertaken. He hoped that the panel would see a green rating by the end of this year.

The panel similarly challenged on the amber performance rating for Housing. Ms Brown commented that this rating was for a combination of housing and adult services. Whilst good progress was being made, it would be unfair to rate it as green largely due to the current asks of government around housing.

The panel enquired about the financial pressures in relation to reclaiming full housing benefit subsidies from unregistered accommodation providers. It was noted that one of the main providers had now registered but it was acknowledged that more people presenting as homeless would create additional pressure on providers. Work was underway to improve how cases were being dealt with and further data could be provided on this.

There was a query around highways and transport spend. Mr Evans agreed to include details of spend against budget available within the report on highways maintenance that was due to be submitted to the next ordinary meeting of this panel.

The panel noted that there were 77 uncompleted projects out of a total of 147 within the council's corporate backlog maintenance programme and asked for details of how many were not on budget. It was further noted that this was due to be referred to as planned preventative maintenance. Mr Evans agreed to look into that and report back to panel members.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Council Plan Performance and Finance Report for Quarter 4 2025/26 be noted.

2. That a written response be provided to members of this panel clarifying the reasons that the decarbonisation project within the Greener Future – Our Green Ambition priority had not progressed.

3. That details of highways and transport spend against budget be included within the report on highways maintenance that was due to be submitted to the next ordinary meeting of this panel.

4. That further information be provided to members of this panel on the 77 uncompleted projects within the council's corporate backlog maintenance programme and on plans to rename the programme.

SPTIH.9 HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY

The panel considered a report from the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Infrastructure and Transport on the draft Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy, providing detail on the steps needed to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping in the borough.

The panel enquired about reducing the use of bed and breakfast accommodation in the context of limited availability of social housing in the area. It was noted that there needed to be a focus on providing affordable housing and working with private sector partners.

The panel enquired about progress with the review of the Home Choice Lincs housing register. It was noted that this had been undertaken and those not actively looking for accommodation had been taken off the register. This was part of a move towards housing need rather than want.

The panel explored the approach to multi-agency working and raised a particular concern about financial sustainability and resilience. Organisations would be encouraged to get in touch with the council if they were experiencing financial difficulties.

The panel requested a briefing paper setting out levels of outreach that were being put in place.

There was a comment about insufficient reference to children and young people in the strategy and it was suggested that this be looked at.

RESOLVED –

1. That the draft Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy be noted.

2. That a briefing paper be provided to members of this panel setting out levels of outreach that were being put in place

SPTIH.10 NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE LOCAL FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY REVIEW

The panel considered a report from Portfolio Holder for Housing, Infrastructure and Transport on the review of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy. This report was due to be considered by Cabinet in August 2026 and was presented to the panel for pre-decision scrutiny.

The panel raised queries on the following matters:

- Steps being taken to prevent flooding in rural areas, including improvements to drainage systems.
- How the council and Anglian Water worked together?
- The need to raise awareness of the impact of flood risk amongst Elected Members.
- How the strategy would inform planning decisions?
- Whether historic flooding issues with the River Freshney had been resolved.
- The success of rain gardens.

Officers present responded on these points.

At 2.9.4, officers were asked to reflect on the accuracy of the statement that ‘property owners of domestic and commercial premises were responsible for the drains within the curtilage of their property’ as it was felt that this was not the case.

In terms of planning decisions, the panel suggested that reference to the council’s role as a statutory consultee on drainage issues in relation to decisions on new developments, be included within the strategy.

On the River Freshney, the panel made reference to the Environment Agency committing to dredge the river but this hadn’t happened. It was suggested that representatives from the Environment Agency be invited to a future meeting of this panel to further discuss this, as well as its plans for Buck Beck. Mr Smith agreed to raise this at the next Strategy Board meeting and report back.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report be noted and the panel’s comments be considered for amendment of the strategy prior to being considered by Cabinet.

2. That representatives from the Environment Agency be invited to a

future meeting of this panel to further discuss its plans for the River Freshney and Buck Beck.

SPTIH.11 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2026/27

The panel considered a report from the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Infrastructure and Transport on the Highways and Transport Capital Programme for 2026/27. This report was due to be considered by Cabinet in August 2026 and was presented to the panel for pre-decision scrutiny.

The panel raised concerns about the following:

- Traffic signals – it was felt that they were not all properly co-ordinated and needed to be much smarter. It was also noted that smart signals did not appear to recognise bicycles.
- Potholes – it was suggested that filling of smaller ones together would save money and prevent future issues. Again, there was mention of the danger for cyclists.
- Communications to Members – it was suggested that the borough-wide maintenance and resurfacing plan be issued to Members sooner. However, it was reported that the new mapping system would be available shortly and this would provide up-to-date information to Members (and the public).

RESOLVED – That the report and the panel's comments be noted with no recommendations made to Cabinet.

SPTIH.12 CORPORATION BRIDGE UPDATE

The panel received a verbal update on progress with the Corporation Bridge project.

It was noted that good progress was being made overall but there were a couple of small issues which were presenting some risk to the project plan. These had been identified early and mitigation measures had been put in place. It was anticipated that further information would be available in the next two weeks to confirm the impact on the project plan.

The Chair enquired how confident officers were that the bridge would re-open in December as planned.

Mr Evans commented on the fantastic progress that had been made and he hoped that the opening date could be maintained but it would be a matter of weeks, not months, if not.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

SPTIH.13 TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND HOUSING SCRUTINY PANEL - WORK PROGRAMME 2026/27

The panel approved the work programme for 2026-27 for the Transport, Infrastructure and Housing Scrutiny Panel.

The Chair invited Councillor Aisthorpe to address the panel on matter that she wished to be added to the panel's work programme.

Councillor Aisthorpe reported that significant concerns had been raised after the mains water network at Carr Lane Allotments was decommissioned without consultation with plot holders, leaving 238 tenanted plots primarily reliant on rainwater harvesting. Plot holders had raised serious concerns about the practicality, accessibility and long-term sustainability of these arrangements, particularly for older and less mobile tenants. It had been advised that a like-for-like replacement of the historic water network was estimated to cost approximately £2.7 million and was therefore considered unaffordable. However, it was difficult to accept that a full £2.7 million like-for-like replacement was the only option available, and there appeared to have been limited public scrutiny of whether alternative, more proportionate solutions could improve water provision.

Given the scale of the site and the potential implications for a major community asset, she asked if the panel would consider adding this matter to its work programme and request a report setting out:

- the rationale for decommissioning the mains water network;
- the options considered and discounted;
- the impact on tenants and accessibility implications; and
- the options available to improve water provision going forward and to safeguard the long-term sustainability of the allotment?

A panel member proposed that a briefing note be circulated to members of this panel to allow them to establish what was planned. However, concerns were raised that this was a significant issue that had not been resolved. It was felt that receiving a report at a future panel meeting would send a signal that the council was taking this matter seriously.

Mr Evans provided an update setting out the background to the issue and plans that were being put in place.

The panel felt that this should be dealt with as Councillor Call for Action, involving a report being submitted to the next scheduled meeting of this panel. This report should include a review of options available.

RESOLVED –

1. That the panel's work programme for 2026/27 be approved, as set out in the appendix to the report now submitted.

2. That a report setting out a review of options available to the council in relation to the mains water network at Carr Lane Allotments, be submitted to the next scheduled meeting of this panel.

SPTIH.14 QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDER

A question to the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Infrastructure and Transport had been submitted by Councillor Humphrey as follows:

Following a resolution at full Council back in September 2025, please can the Portfolio Holder provide an update on work with officers to develop a proposed Article 4 Direction regarding Houses in Multiple Occupation in all areas of the Borough?

Councillor P Batson, Portfolio Holder for Housing, Infrastructure and Transport, responded that officers had been identified to support this process and move it forward and the portfolio holder stated that he would work with officers to make sure it happened.

A question to the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Infrastructure and Transport had been submitted by Councillor Wilson as follows (the question had been submitted beyond the three-day deadline):

Could the Portfolio Holder please commit to an urgent road surface replacement on Macaulay Street, specifically on the stretch from Littlefield Lane to Haycroft Avenue?

The current surface has deteriorated to a point where it is actively dangerous for cyclists. This is particularly acute for those traveling toward Littlefield Lane and facing oncoming traffic. The space left for cyclists along this section is incredibly narrow, leaving absolutely no room for manoeuvre. If a cyclist has to swerve to avoid a pothole or an uneven surface, they could be forced directly into the path of oncoming traffic. Given the council's duty of care and its goals for safe, sustainable transport, what urgent action will be taken to resurface this specific stretch and protect vulnerable road users before a serious accident occurs?

Councillor P Batson acknowledged the issue and agreed to pass this on to the Highways team, asking them to report back to him. He would keep Councillor Wilson updated.

SPTIH.15 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 9.20 pm.