



TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND HOUSING SCRUTINY PANEL

15th September 2026 at 6.30 p.m.

Present:

Councillor Mill (in the Chair)

Councillors Jackson, I. Oliver (Substitute for Charlesworth), Russell and Wilson

Officers in attendance:

- Carolina Borgstrom (Director of Economy, Environment and Infrastructure)
- Katie Brown (Director of Adult Services)
- Katie Chadwick (Accommodation and Housing Support)
- Masum Choudhury (Agency Strategic Lead Traffic and Transport)
- Charlotte Dring (Assistant Director Housing and Communities)
- Drew Hughes (Head of Strategy Policy and Performance)
- Simon Jones (Assistant Director Law and Governance)
- Beverly O'Brien (Scrutiny and Committee Advisor)
- Lindsay Sands (Head of Property Services)

Also in attendance:

- Councillor Freeston (Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategic Renewal, Delivery and Place Leadership)
- Councillor Taylor (Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets)
- Councillor Aisthorpe (Ward Councillor)
- Councillor Augusta (Ward Councillor)

There were 8 members of the public and no press present at this meeting.

SPTIH.19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from this meeting were received from Councillors Bright, Charlesworth, Crofts and Mills.

SPTIH.20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

SPTIH.21 MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Transport, Infrastructure and Strategic Housing Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 14th July 2026 be agreed as a correct record.

SPTIH.22 QUESTION TIME

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

SPTIH.23 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.24 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.

Mrs O'Brien took the panel through all the outstanding actions. She explained that the briefing note on the Corporation Road Bridge financial release was confirmed as complete. Updates on the Transport Hub, including safety, anti-social behaviour and violence against women and girls and the Asset Management Plan, were all scheduled to be received at the January 2027 meeting. A written response on the lack of progress against the Greener Future / Green Ambition priority remained outstanding and would be chased by officers. Information on the 77 outstanding projects within the corporate backlog maintenance programme had been received and would be circulated to members. Masum advised that the budget amendment for town centre parking provision would be implemented first at Grimsby Town Hall, with work in Cleethorpes delayed due to administrative issues. Councillor Wilson also raised concerns about a Full Council budget amendment being referred to a Portfolio Holder, the monitoring officer agreed to investigate the process and provide clarification.

RESOLVED – That SPTISH.47, SPTIH.9, SPTIH.13 be removed from the tracking report and all remaining items be noted.

SPTIH.25 QUARTER 1, 2026/27 COUNCIL PLAN PERFORMANCE AND FINANCE REPORT

The panel considered a report from the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets that provided information and analysis of the Council's performance and financial position at the end of Quarter one 2026-27 April to June 2026.

A Councillor cited legacy staffing pressures from the Equans contract as a risk to delivery. Given that the contract ended in July 2025, they wondered why were these staffing issues were still affecting the service over a year later. Ms Borgstrom explained that following the transition from the Equans contract, which ended in July 2025, Ms Borgstrom reported that a service restructure was agreed with trade unions on 1 August 2026. Recruitment and apprenticeship programmes were now underway, although building the required highways engineering capacity was expected to take up to 18 months.

One Councillor asked whether officers could provide an update on funding for the Transport Hub, particularly in light of the previous public commitment from the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority Mayor to support transport hub projects. Ms Borgstrom noted that a business case for the Transport Hub had been submitted to the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority (GLCCA), with a funding decision expected in October 2026. Another Councillor followed on from this and asked whether any of the major projects were currently at risk of overspending their budgets and were any contingency funds likely to be required. Ms Borgstrom also advised that major projects in Cleethorpes, including the Sea Road development, Pier Gardens and the marketplace, were experiencing challenging ground conditions, with risks being managed through contingency funding.

RESOLVED – That the Quarter 1 2026/27 Council Plan Performance and Finance Report be noted.

SPTIH.26 POTHOLE RESILIENCE AND COMMUNICATIONS

The panel considered a report that provided an overview of pothole resilience and highway maintenance within North East Lincolnshire and outlines how the Council manages highway defects through an established risk-based inspection and maintenance approach

One Member had concerns whether the Council had effectively addressed road maintenance and safety issues. They mentioned that if the Council were not sure that they were doing the right things, how can the Council confidently communicate their approach to the public. Before promoting the Council's work, they needed reassurance that the underlying actions and outcomes were correct. Ms Borgstrom reassured members that highway defects were prioritised and repaired based on their assessed level of risk and severity. The Council aimed to make the most effective

use of its available resources and budget, focusing on the highest-priority issues first. A further report would be brought to the November scrutiny meeting, covering pothole management, new repair methods, and trials of alternative materials to improve outcomes for all road users. Members were invited to submit any specific concerns or questions in advance so the report can address them and provide greater assurance about the Council's risk-based approach. The Member said that they were reassured that the Council's approach addresses risks to motorists, but they remain concerned that the needs of other road users, particularly cyclists, were not being adequately considered. They highlighted that road defects such as tramlining or longitudinal ridges can be particularly dangerous for cyclists. Ms Borgstrom suggested that at the November meeting the report included hard data on pothole repair targets, historical comparisons, and cyclist-specific impacts.

One Member asked whether the ongoing staffing shortages and legacy workforce issues inherited after the Equans contract transition have affected the highways service's ability to repair and manage potholes effectively. Specifically, they wanted to know if a lack of staff capacity has contributed to difficulties in tackling potholes and maintaining the road network. Ms Borgstrom explained that staffing had been increased, but a severe winter and wider service pressures had also affected pothole repairs. She said the Council needs the right skills and capacity within the highways team to secure additional funding and improve its ability to tackle highway defects more effectively in the future.

RESOLVED –

- 1) That the pothole resilience and communications report be noted.
- 2) That the Highways Maintenance Policy due to be received at the November meeting include hard data on pothole repair targets, historical comparisons, and cyclist-specific impacts.

SPTIH.27 CORPORATION ROAD BRIDGE UPDATE

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

The Chair asked whether the project timeline for reopening the Corporation Road Bridge had changed. They noted that the Assistant Director of Infrastructure had previously given assurance that the opening of the bridge by December 2026 was a realistic expectation, but recent updates suggested there may now be risks of delay. The Chair sought confirmation on whether the completion date could slip into 2027. Ms Borgstrom stated that there was a risk of completion slipping past the December 2026 target into early 2027. This was driven by regulatory

delays in obtaining the Environment Agency (EA) scaffolding permit and potential winter/tidal weather disruptions before Christmas.

One Councillor asked what communication was being provided to residents about the Corporation Road Bridge reopening, and were the public being informed of any potential delays to the expected December 2026 opening date. Ms Borgstrom explained that the leader wants to increase public communication about the Corporation Road Bridge project. However, it was agreed that scrutiny members would receive the latest updates and have the opportunity to ask questions first before information was released more widely. The council was working with the communications team on an update, and Councillor Freeston was keen to provide a public update but had agreed to wait until scrutiny members had been briefed.

RESOLVED – That the Corporation Road Bridge update be noted.

SPTIH.28 HOME CHOICE Lincs ALLOCATIONS POLICY

The panel considered a report from the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Infrastructure and Transport on the adoption of the Home Choice Lincs (HCL) Housing Allocations Policy.

One Councillor requested clarification on the reasonable commute exception for employment connections to prevent abuse of the policy intent. Ms Chadwick explained that decisions about what constituted a reasonable commuting distance would normally be guided by recommendations from the Jobcentre. Relevant guidance exists to help assess whether a journey to work was reasonable, and officers could provide further details and clarification on how this would be applied in practice. The Councillor thought the policy wording needs to be clearer. As written, it appears that meeting the employment criteria alone could qualify someone for housing. This needs to be clarified in the frequently asked questions to avoid misunderstanding.

A Councillor said the website's FAQ section should be regularly updated, with new questions and answers added as issues emerge, to ensure residents can access up-to-date information and guidance.

A Councillor raised concerns over priority moves for existing tenants in upper-floor flats who become ill. Officers clarified that housing associations (e.g., LHP) hold direct management transfer responsibilities to address changing needs. The panel discussed the 12-month bidding suspension rule for applicants who turn down suitable housing, noting exceptions exist for changed circumstances or homelessness suitability appeals.

RESOLVED –

- 1) That the updated version of the FAQ be shared with the panel when completed.
- 2) That the recommendations within the report be supported.

SPTIH.29 NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE PERMIT SCHEME AND SECTION 81 (NEW ROADS AND STREETWORKS ACT 1991) DUTIES.

The panel considered a report from the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Infrastructure and Transport that provides information relating to the North East Lincolnshire Permit Scheme (NELPS) and the duties that the Council has in relation to Section 81 and the New Roads and Streetworks Act 1991.

The panel debated whether the council should actively permit data to escalate systemic utility failures to Ofwat or Anglian Water. While officers cited resource limitations, the panel thought it was a process they needed to undertake. Therefore, Councillor Wilson proposed to investigate whether we can systematically track recurring water utility problems and provide evidence that elected members can use to challenge utility companies and raise issues with the relevant decision-makers. Councillor Russell seconded this proposal.

One member noted that they were reluctant to support the proposal due to the resource implications for the council and concerns about expanding the council's role beyond its core responsibilities. They argued that lobbying utility companies would be more appropriately led by the local MP, who was better placed to influence utilities and their national organisations.

With no more speakers, the panel voted on the proposal. The proposal was carried.

RESOLVED –

- 1) That the North East Lincolnshire Permit Scheme (NELPS) and the duties that the Council has in relation to Section 81 and the New Roads and Streetworks Act 1991 report be noted.
- 2) That the Assistant Director for Infrastructure facilitate Officers to investigate whether we can systematically track recurring water utility problems and provide evidence that elected members can use to challenge utility companies and raise issues with the relevant decision-makers.

SPTIH.30 CARR LANE ALLOTMENTS WATER SUPPLY

The panel considered a report that summarised the issues relating to water provision at Carr Lane Allotments, the options considered and the

measures being implemented to support the continued use and sustainability of the site.

A Councillor criticised the report for defending previous decisions rather than seeking compromise. Ms Sands highlighted that active weekly support was provided to 12 plot holders with mobility issues, while Ms Borgstrom advised that backlog capital funding was fully committed and that any excavation work carried significant contamination risks. Councillor Taylor said he was open to considering the standpipe proposal, subject to officer advice on costs and risks.

The Panel sought clarification on a number of issues, including the following:

- The use of harvesting rainwater
- The help Scheme provided to Allotment Holders
- Financial implications
- Risk of the site being excavated.

Officers present responded.

The panel remained concerned with the actions the report stated going forward. Councillor Wilson therefore recommended to the Portfolio Holder that:

Standpipes be installed along Claremont Road with the ability to service each allotment lane.

Councillor Mill seconded this. The proposal was put to a vote and was supported unanimously.

RECOMMENDED TO THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR FINANCE, RESOURCES AND ASSETS –

That Standpipes be installed along Claremont Road with the ability to service each allotment lane.

SPTIH.31 QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDER

There were no questions for the portfolio holder.

SPTIH.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 8.53 pm.