



To be submitted to the Council at its meeting on 17th December 2020

ECONOMY SCRUTINY PANEL

3rd November 2020

Present:

Councillor Furneaux (in the Chair)
Councillors Barfield, Cairns, Harness, Hasthorpe, Sheridan and Wilson

Officers in attendance:

- Marcus Asquith (Partnership Director - Engie)
- Claire Bradbury (Project Management Office Manager - Engie)
- Anne Campbell (Scrutiny and Committee Advisor)
- Luke Greaves (Head of Highways and Transport – Engie)
- Dr Stella Jackson (Grimsby Heritage Action Zone Project Manager – Engie)
- Damien Jaines-White (Acting Assistant Director Regeneration)
- Simon Jones (Chief Legal and Monitoring Officer)
- Guy Lonsdale (Deputy Section 151 Officer)
- Mark Nearney (Assistant Director Housing and Interim Assistant Director Highways, Transport and Planning)
- Anthony Snell (Senior Transport Officer - Engie)
- Dave Tipple (Relationship Manager)
- Clive Tritton (Interim Director of Economy and Growth)

Also in attendance:

- Councillor Fenty (Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Skills and Housing)
- Councillor Jackson (Leader of the Council and with overall responsibility for the Grimsby Town Deal)
- Councillor Procter (Portfolio Holder for Tourism, Heritage and Culture)
- Councillor S Swinburn (Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport)
- Richard de Cani (Consultant, Arup)
- Amy McAbendroth (Landscape Architect, Arup)

SPE.41 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence for this meeting.

SPE.42 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillor S Swinburn declared a personal interest in SPE.50 as he is an Immingham Town Councillor.

Councillor Wilson declared a personal interest in SPE.50 as he regularly cycled the route scheduled for improvement within the proposed scheme.

SPE.43 MINUTES

The panel noted that the minutes of the special meeting of this panel held on 11th August 2020 had not been formally approved by Council at its meeting on 17 September 2020.

Councillor Wilson had experienced difficulties accessing the minutes on-line and the Chair agreed that this be noted. Members were asked to agree the minutes of the meetings of the Economy Scrutiny Panel held on 11th August and 8th September 2020 as a correct record. This was proposed by Councillor Hasthorpe, seconded by Councillor Harness and agreed upon a show of hands. It was noted that Councillors Sheridan and Wilson asked for their abstentions to be recorded.

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Economy Scrutiny Panel held on 11th August and 8th September 2020 be agreed as a correct record.

SPE.44 QUESTION TIME

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

SPE.45 FORWARD PLAN

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

In response to questions from members, the Chair confirmed that Europarc Bus services would be considered at a special meeting of the panel to be held early in December 2020 and in respect of EU Exit Transition arrangements, it was understood this matter would be scrutinised by the Communities Scrutiny Panel. Scrutiny arrangements would be confirmed and advised to the councillor concerned.

RESOLVED – That the Forward Plan be noted.

SPE.46 TRACKING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF SCRUTINY

The panel considered a report from the Statutory Scrutiny Officer (Director for Communities) tracking the recommendations of the Economy Scrutiny Panel.

Regarding SPE.8, local plan, Mr Tritton further advised that the Government had now published its 'Planning for the Future' white paper setting out proposals for planning reforms which included recommendations for stringent changes to planning processes. Consequently, the authority would be re-evaluating the merits of a local plan review at this time. The panel would be kept up to date.

In response to a member's question on SPE.35, affordable housing, Mr Tritton advised that the authority was compiling its response to the consultation on the planning white paper. He added that current proposals would affect the rate of house building and, consequently, affordable housing. Any legislative or policy changes would, of course, be brought to this panel in due course.

In response to a member's query about the gypsy and traveller designated stopover site, progress to date and scrutiny arrangements would be confirmed and advised to the councillor concerned.

RESOLVED – That item reference SPE.34 be removed from tracking.

SPE.47 QUARTER 2 FINANCE MONITORING 2020/21

The panel received a report from the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources providing key information and analysis of the Council's position and performance at the end of quarter two of the 2020/21 financial year. Mr Lonsdale acknowledged this report was submitted to the panel with the permission of the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources, to allow the panel to fulfil its financial monitoring role in a timely manner. The report would be considered by Cabinet at its meeting to be held on 4th November, 2020. He highlighted issues relating to projected reduction in overspend, loss of income, Covid-19 related business grants, crisis accommodation, Government grants, corporate borrowing protocol, capital programme, the South Humber Industrial Investment Programme and anticipated challenges to future budgeting.

Members raised the following issues:

Regarding appropriate spending of Government Covid19 funding, Mr Lonsdale acknowledged that the current report did not allow for specific details to be presented. However, he was pleased to advise that reassurance would be better demonstrated in future reports with the inclusion of service specific breakdown of costs giving greater transparency. He gave detailed information regarding the business grants and committed to explore whether this level of detail could be provided to members before the quarter 3 report. Mr Jones went on to remind

members of the forthcoming scrutiny budget consultation sessions. The Leader added that all government grants had to be fully accounted for and monthly checks were made to make sure grants were awarded in accordance with the scheme's conditions.

RESOLVED – That the report be received.

SPE.48 TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION - RIVERHEAD SQUARE PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

The panel considered a report from the Leader of the Council.

In introducing the report, the Leader reminded the panel of its informal consideration of the draft brief on 13th October. He was delighted to present the final concept design for the Riverhead Square public realm improvement scheme, including the introduction of a space suitable for events, enhanced water quality with a better connection to the waterside, a potential new footbridge over the Riverhead, together with new seating and lighting. Mr Jaines-White and Ms McAbendroth presented detailed plans and drawings which would be available via the panel's webpage for public viewing. Cabinet would consider the report at its meeting on 4th November and, subject to agreement of phase 1, works were likely to commence in November 2020.

Members raised the following issues:

Regarding cycle hub and connectivity to the docks area, Ms McAbendroth advised that there were no designated cycleways shown in the current concept plans for the square. At the detailed design stage this would be explored in more detail, as would any signage requirements, for example in the paving or elsewhere. Due to the size of the area, it was envisaged that this could be a shared space with no formal designation for cycles or pedestrians. Mr Greaves explained that the highways and transportation service would be a statutory consultee at the final design stage and at that point cycleways around the square and links to other cycle networks would be incorporated in designs. Mr Jaines-White elaborated that the masterplan went into some detail about ease of movement around the town centre. £3.6m was set aside in the Grimsby Town Investment Plan to improve connectivity around the public realm and all options would be explored at the detailed design stage.

Members had some reservations about the proposed 10 metre canopy, including how it could give protection from weather, especially rain and wind. Mr Jaines-White thought the canopy offered a potential opportunity for a design competition. However, the ultimate design would depend very much on what was determined would be best for the space. Mr Greaves added that part of the design process would also take account of its whole life costs and that designs were fit for purpose with no long-term liabilities for the authority.

In response to members questions about ensuring that the area did not become a focus for antisocial behaviour, street drinking and drug taking, Mr Jaines-White advised that Humberside Police had been engaged in the initial stages of the work and this would continue into the detailed design stage. Mr Tritton added that investing in public realm was a means to improve pride in the area. This would bring more people to the town centre for a diverse range of positive activities. Investors have responded that investment in public realm is a way to encourage private investment and act as a catalyst for development. The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Skills and Housing reminded the panel that the authority was investing £1.1m in voice over CCTV system in the town centre. The Leader added that work would continue with partners to ensure that issues of antisocial behaviour were adequately addressed, this would include an examination of licensing policy.

Regarding the timeframe of the project. Mr Jaines-White explained that this was unknown due to the investment plan still being subject to approval. However, subject to that approval this would be the first scheme to progress.

Regarding wildlife, wildflowers, water quality and water safety, Mr Jaines-White explained that one of key elements of the master plan and investment plan was that Grimsby town centre capitalised on its waterfront asset. Ms McAbendroth added that there was evidence of great health and wellbeing advantages to be had from green planted open spaces for visitors, residents and everyone using the space not least from improved air quality. Work in the next stage would involve collaboration with ecologists and arboriculturists to make sure that the right balance of aquatic and other planting species was right for the space. Freshney Place Shopping Centre would also be involved in this aspect of the scheme.

The panel welcomed the plans.

RESOLVED – That the report and the panel’s comments be noted.

SPE.49 REGENERATION PARTNERSHIP IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN - UPDATE

The panel considered a report from the Interim Director of Economy and Growth presenting progress on the partnership improvement action plan.

Mr Tipple introduced the report as showing good progress on the action plan. He advised that the improvement plan continued to be monitored by the partnership operational board. Due to the pandemic there had been an extension of end dates to some projects.

In response to a question from a member regarding the management of the contract, Mr Tipple advised that this action had been taken up at a corporate level to ensure that the authority considered how all its

contracts were managed and monitored. This would be undertaken in the coming year.

RESOLVED – That the report be received.

SPE.50 GREATER LINCOLNSHIRE LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP (GLLEP) IMMINGHAM TO GRIMSBY CYCLE HIGHWAY PROJECT - FORMAL ACCEPTANCE OF FUNDING

The panel received a report from the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport. The portfolio holder advised that his report to Cabinet sought approval to accept £2.243m grant funding from the GLLEP to deliver an Immingham – Grimsby cycleway and was submitted to the panel for consideration and comment. Mr Nearney asked members to note that the decision to award funding was pending but the authority was confident that it would be awarded, given the project was “shovel ready” and met all criteria for the ‘getting building’ funding. A short presentation was made by Mr Greaves and Mr Snell.

Members raised the following issues:

In response to comments about dangerous sections of the route / current highway, Mr Nearney reassured the panel that this would be investigated and he would come back to the panel with findings. Mr Greaves added that any changes to the highway would be part of a robust independent road safety audit. Subject to passing this audit, any new layout would be reviewed after 12 months.

Regarding Kiln Lane and beyond, Members were keen that this too was an intrinsic element of a commuter cycle to work scheme between Grimsby and Immingham/Immingham Dock. Mr Nearney committed to take these ideas away and report back to members.

Regarding cyclists merging at Lockhill, Mr Greaves explained that prior to final design a comprehensive non-motorised user assessment, including traffic counts, would be undertaken to ascertain primary movements.

Regarding consideration of other routes (Gilbey Road / Cleveland Bridge), Mr Snell acknowledged that the Gilbey Road route was a primary route and it currently handled more cyclists than the A180. However, there was a demand for cycle routes from the Cleethorpes area (Victoria Street North/Cleethorpes Road) to mitigate near miss accidents in this area. Mr Greaves advised that the Gilbey Road route was intended to be the subject of future funding bids. Funds were available to fund events to promote cycle routes in the community and members were canvassed for appropriate audiences.

Mr Snell concluded the presentation by outlining the timescales and next steps. Formal acceptance of funding was anticipated in December 2020

along with commencement of the tender process. The Hobson Way and A180 Westgate schemes would be on site in February 2021 with completion in April and May, 2021 respectively. The A1173 should be on site in July 2021 and completed in October 2021.

Members were pleased to see the proposals and looked forward to safer cycling in the areas concerned. The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport thanked the officers for presenting the report and the panel for its comments and suggestions.

RESOLVED – That the report and the panel’s comments be noted.

SPE.51 QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDER

There were no questions for Portfolio Holders for this meeting.

SPE.52 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 8.35 p.m.