



To be submitted to the Council at its meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2021

## **ECONOMY SCRUTINY PANEL**

**9<sup>th</sup> June 2021 at 6.30 p.m.**

### **Present:**

Councillor Furneaux (in the Chair)  
Councillors Callison, Dawkins, Harness, Sheridan, Smith and Westcott (substitute for Cairns)

### **Officers in attendance:**

- Anne Campbell (Scrutiny and Committee Advisor)
- Damien Jaines-White (Assistant Director Regeneration)
- Simon Jones (Assistant Director Law, Governance and Assets [Monitoring Officer])

### **Also in attendance:**

- Councillor Jackson, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Greater Grimsby Town Deal
- Councillor Procter, Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Housing and Tourism
- Councillor S. Swinburn, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport

### **SPE.1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND DEPUTY CHAIRMAN**

It was noted that at the Annual General Meeting of the Council held on 27<sup>th</sup> May, 2021, Councillor Furneaux had been appointed the Chair and Councillor Harness the Deputy Chair of the Economy Scrutiny Panel for the ensuing Municipal Year.

### **SPE.2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

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

### **SPE.3        DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

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

### **SPE.4        TOWN INVESTMENT PLAN PROJECTS**

The panel received a report from the Leader of the Council outlining information on revisions made to project proposals within the Town Investment Plan.

Councillor Jackson described the revisions made, which were at the request of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) following a grant offer of £20.9m from the Towns Fund programme. The original funding request had been for £25m, therefore a reprioritising exercise was required to decide which would be Grimsby's final Towns Fund projects. This information was a requirement of the Heads of Terms that the Greater Grimsby Board and the Council had with MHCLG and was required by 25th June 2021. Councillor Jackson commended the work of officers involved in the submission and in response to the tight deadlines imposed.

Mr Jaines-White went on to explain the projects within the Town Investment Plan and how they would contribute to the Council's 'Stronger Economy' and 'Stronger Communities' priorities, as the plan was fully aligned to the Local Plan and the Grimsby Town Centre Masterplan (2020). The investment would deliver the first phase of key priorities of the masterplan and add value to other key town centre priorities such as the Future High Street scheme, St James Square regeneration and the Onside Garth Lane development. Members noted this item would be considered by Cabinet at its meeting to be held on 16<sup>th</sup> June, 2021 and was submitted to this panel for pre-decision scrutiny.

The panel welcomed the funding sources referred to in the report and raised the following issues:-

In response to a member's question, the Leader confirmed that the Garth Lane development did not include plans for student accommodation. The focus would be on residential housing with the aim to increase footfall outside of normal 'office hours'.

Mr Jaines-White confirmed that any grant money would be visible in the council's budget and associated accounts. This would allow proper audit and monitoring.

Regarding St James' House, the Leader advised that the proposed works were intended to pump-prime the site for future private development, with the aim of bringing the site back into appropriate use. Further information would be shared with members just as soon as he was able.

In response to comments about anti-social behaviour (ASB) in and around the town centre, the Leader acknowledged and shared these concerns. He strongly believed that if the area was made more attractive and popular, this would address some aspects of ASB. He confirmed that the council's CCTV system was in the process of major investment and upgrade. In addition, he was in serious discussions with Humberside Police with a view to how ASB could be eliminated in the town centre. This was in addition to the council's powers in relation to ASB. The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport added that discussions were ongoing regarding the reintroduction of police community support officers and he confirmed he had met with Humberside Police regarding ASB around the bus station.

The Panel provided challenge on the deliverability of schemes given current problems in construction industries, including shortages of materials and subsequent price increases. Mr Jaines-White advised the team were aware of these issues and, should costs begin to escalate, there would be opportunities to adjust or consider options within the scheme.

In response to members questions, Mr Jaines-White confirmed there had been no feedback on how the allotted sums had been determined. It did appear that the -10% awarded was in line with other bids across the country. The Leader shared members' disappointment that the full amount had not been awarded and reminded the panel that the project would still rely on private sector support.

Regarding the mix of housing on offer in the town centre scheme, the Leader confirmed that the exact mix was to be determined and was subject to the preparation of a full business case and the planning process. However, he was confident that aspirational waterfront housing could be achieved to invigorate the town centre.

The Chair thanked officers and members for their contributions and looked forward to seeing more detail on the various projects as they developed.

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

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 7.30 p.m.