



To be submitted to the Council at its meeting on 16th December 2021

ECONOMY SCRUTINY PANEL SPECIAL

26th October 2021 at 6.30 p.m.

Present:

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

Officers in attendance:

- Wendy Fisher (Capital and Assets Programme Manager)
- Jonathan Ford (Accessibility Officer, Equans)
- Maggie Johnson (Head of Economy and Funding)
- Simon Jones (Assistant Director of Law, Governance and Assets)
- Ian King (Equans)
- Mark Nearney (Assistant Director of Housing, Planning and Highways)
- Paul Thorpe (Operations Director, Equans)
- Dave Tipple (Relationship Manager)
- Clive Tritton (Strategic Regeneration Advisor)
- Paul Windley (Democratic and Scrutiny Team Manager)

Also in attendance:

- Councillor Jackson (Leader of the Council)
- Councillor Procter (Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Housing and Tourism)
- Councillor S. Swinburn (Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport)
- Councillor Patrick

There was one member of the public and one press representative present.

SPE.32 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

SPE.33 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillor Dawkins declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in item SPE.45 as his spouse is employed by Equans.

SPE.34 MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting of the Economy Scrutiny Panel held on 31st August 2021 be agreed as an accurate record.

SPE.35 QUESTION TIME

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

SPE.36 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.

The panel were reminded that there would be a joint meeting of the Economy; Communities; and Tourism and Visitor Economy scrutiny panels on 9th November 2021 to consider a number of environmental plans that were due to be submitted to Cabinet in December 2021.

RESOLVED – That the Forward Plan be noted.

SPE.37 TRACKING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF SCRUTINY

The panel noted that there were no matters outstanding in terms of its previous recommendations.

SPE.38 COUNCIL PLAN

The panel received the Council Plan, as referred by Cabinet on 8th September 2021, seeking engagement and feedback prior to Full Council adoption.

The panel referred to the vital signs identified in the plan as barometers for success and enquired how often they would be looked at, what would be the measures of success and what were the baseline figures.

Mr Tritton agreed to provide a written response to the panel.

The panel enquired whether the milestones contained in the plan were achievable.

Mr Tritton commented on the amount of work going in to delivery of plans, highlighting the Towns Fund projects and the Humber Freeport,

but felt the biggest challenge would be resources. However, he was confident that the programme would be delivered.

Councillor Jackson, Leader of the Council, emphasised that much of the regeneration work involved partners and the private sector, with the council having an enabling role.

It was suggested that reference be made within the plan to the importance of the 'Food Town' brand. This was acknowledged.

RESOLVED –

1. That the draft Council Plan and this panel's comments be noted.
2. That a written response on performance management of the vital signs within the remit of the Economy Scrutiny Panel be provided to all members of this panel.

SPE.39 LOCAL PLAN REVIEW

The panel considered a report from the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport setting out the background to a recommendation to recommence work on the local plan review in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021, and publication of a revised Local Development Scheme. This report was considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 6th October 2021 and was submitted to this panel for further consideration.

The panel raised the following matters:

- Would a previous commitment to hold a cross-party working group as part of the review be followed through? It was noted that the review would need to follow the same process as that for the current Local Plan and the working group would be something that the council would look to do.
- Why were the costs of the review so high? It was noted that a legislative process had to be followed which would incur costs regarding technical documentation, consultations and, significantly, as a result of the examination process due to inspector costs.
- The reasons for the housing supply deficit identified in the report. It was noted that higher than anticipated levels of demolition had impacted on the supply.

RESOLVED – That the report now submitted be noted.

SPE.40 TOWNS FUND PROGRAMME – ST JAMES HOUSE

The panel considered a report from the Leader of the Council on the St James House project which formed part of the Towns Fund programme. This report was submitted to this panel for pre-decision scrutiny ahead of consideration by Cabinet.

The panel welcomed the report but sought assurance over clawback should the project not proceed or the property be sold on in the future. The panel also sought clarification over timescales for the proposed units to be operational.

Officers present responded, noting that E-Factor had committed significant funding to the project and had been very successful with letting spaces elsewhere in the Borough. It was expected that work would commence on the building in 2022 and it was hoped that the units would become operational as soon as possible.

RESOLVED – That the report now submitted be noted.

SPE.41 TOWNS FUND PROGRAMME – ACTIVATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FUND

The panel considered a report from the Leader of the Council seeking approval to submit a summary business case for the Activation and Community Engagement Fund to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. This report was considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 6th October 2021 and was now submitted to this panel for further consideration.

The panel welcomed the report and the assistance being provided to community organisations. The Chair asked that the matter be brought back to this panel if there was a low uptake for the grants.

RESOLVED – That the report now submitted, and this panel's comments, be noted.

SPE.42 HUMBER FREEPORT

The panel considered a briefing paper that provided an update on the development of the Humber Freeport.

In response to comments made by panel members, Mr Tritton clarified how retained business rates would be pooled and circulated. He anticipated that, as a result of business rate recycling, there should be opportunities to bid for further projects over the next 5-10 years.

RESOLVED – That the briefing paper be noted.

SPE.43 DISPOSAL OF SITES SUITABLE FOR DEVELOPMENT ACROSS NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE

The panel considered a briefing paper on the above. This paper was submitted to this panel for pre-decision scrutiny ahead of eventual decision by Cabinet.

In response to queries from panel members, Ms Fisher provided clarification on the type of sites being considered and gave an assurance that ward councillors would be consulted as part of the process.

RESOLVED – That the briefing paper be noted.

SPE.44 REVIEW OF SUBSIDISED BUS SERVICES

The panel considered a report from the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport on the options for the future delivery of all subsidised bus services. This report was submitted to this panel for pre-decision scrutiny ahead of consideration by Cabinet.

The panel raised concerns regarding the costing of the options presented in the report and whether there was sufficient information to support value for money being obtained.

Councillor Dawkins felt that either of the first three options could be supported but questions remained unanswered as to why the services should be subsidised. He moved that a 12 month extension to the existing contract for subsidised bus services be sought in order to allow a detailed review of the subsidised services to ensure that value for money was being achieved. This was seconded by Councillor Smith. The panel discussed the implications of this proposal and, upon a vote, agreed to make this recommendation to Cabinet.

RESOLVED – That the report now submitted be noted.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET - That a 12 month extension to the existing contract for subsidised bus services be sought in order to allow a detailed review of the subsidised services to ensure that value for money was being achieved.

SPE.45 REGENERATION PARTNERSHIP IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN – UPDATE

The panel considered a report setting out progress to date with the Regeneration Partnership Improvement Action Plan.

At HT21 (CO² emissions), there was an enquiry as to where this information was reported. It was agreed to confirm this to panel members via a written response.

At CM02 (contract management arrangements), an update was requested on progress. It was noted that this had now been included as part of the new operating model being developed by the council but there was no timeline at present. It was agreed to track progress via this panel's tracking report.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report now submitted be noted.
2. That a written response be provided to members of this panel on the reporting of data relating to HT21 (annual report on CO2 emissions from transport within the Borough).
3. That progress against CM02 (contract management arrangements) be reported via this panel's tracking report.

SPE.46 QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDER

There were no members' questions to the portfolio holders.

SPE.47 CALLING-IN OF DECISIONS

There were no formal requests from members to call in decisions taken at recent meetings.

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 7.45 p.m.