



To be submitted to the Council at its meeting on 29th September 2022

SPECIAL ECONOMY SCRUTINY PANEL

13th June 2022 at 6.30 p.m.

Present:

Councillor Freeston (in the Chair)

Councillors Callison, Lindley, Reynolds, Smith, Wheatley and Wilson.

Officers in attendance:

- Anne Campbell (Scrutiny and Committee Advisor)
- Damien Jaines-White (Assistant Director Regeneration)
- Simon Jones (Assistant Director Law, Governance and Assets)
- Mark Nearney (Assistant Director Housing, Highways, Transportation and Planning)
- Jason Papprell (Partnership Director EQUANS)
- Paul Thorpe (Operations Director, EQUANS)
- Sharon Wroot (Executive Director Environment, Economy and Resources – Section 151 Officer)

Also in attendance:

- Councillor Jackson (Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder Economy, Net Zero, Skills and Housing)
- Councillor Shreeve (Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care)
- Councillor Harness (Portfolio Holder Finance, Resources and Assets)
- Councillor Patrick
- Councillor Holland

There were two members of the public present.

SPE.1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

It was noted that at the Annual General Meeting of the Council held on 26th May, 2022, Councillor Freeston had been appointed the Chair and Councillor Dawkins 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 Dawkins.

Councillor S Swinburn, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport also sent apologies.

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 LEVELLING UP FUND

The panel considered a report from the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Economy, Net Zero, Skills and Housing on proposals for the submission of bids for round two of the Levelling Up Fund. Members noted this item would be considered by Cabinet at a special meeting to be held on 22nd June, 2022 and was submitted to the Economy Scrutiny Panel for pre-decision scrutiny.

With the permission of the Chair, Councillor Holland attended to speak to the panel. At the beginning of the meeting the Chair had indicated that discussion of the purchase of Freshney Place shopping centre, although linked to the Levelling Up Fund bid, was not on the agenda for discussion at this meeting. Councillor Holland indicated that he would like to make reference to this but he was over-ruled by the Chair.

Councillor Holland stated that a successful bid would be a fantastic opportunity for regeneration in the borough and hoped for success in the three bids and the projects they would fund. He was, however, concerned about the council's resources and ability to deliver three successful bids given the tight time frame. He also raised the following matters; whether feedback from a previous unsuccessful bid was informing the current bidding process, the reputational risk of failure and the risk of inadequate levels of funding being awarded to meet the ambition of the bids.

Panel members raised a number of issues:

- On the potential for a joint bid with North Lincolnshire Council, Ms Wroot advised that, following engagement with North East Lincolnshire's two constituency Members of Parliament and North Lincolnshire Council, there were no suitable projects to support a successful joint bid with our neighbouring authority.
- In response to questions about A180 and the potential for this to be the subject of the transportation bid, Mr Thorpe advised the transportation bid must meet certain criteria including; being a high impact scheme to reduce carbon emissions, bus priority, improve air quality, cut congestion, support economic growth and

improve the safety, security and overall experience of transport users. The proposal for the improvements to strategic bridge infrastructure (A180) and development of a transportation hub in Grimsby town centre would better meet the criteria for this fund. This bid included potential additional projects, with partners, around the electrification of buses.

- Mr Nearney confirmed that the extent of the transportation programme would depend upon the amount of funding awarded. Specifically, this would impact on the number of buses and the number of routes involved. In any case, significant match funding would be required from partners. Although at this stage it was not possible to estimate that element.
- The Leader advised that the strategic ambitions in the Grimsby master plan and the bid to create a public transport hub and support electrification of buses linked more closely to the Government's green agenda aspirations, making a successful bid more likely.
- The Leader advised that there were no current plans to develop a 'park and ride' scheme in North East Lincolnshire.
- Ms Wroot confirmed schemes could and would be reduced, phased or redesigned should successful bids be awarded less than the requested amount. Mr Jaines-White added that a Government official had assured the authority it was proceeding in the right direction. The council had learned a lot since and from the previous (unsuccessful) levelling up funding bid.
- Members welcomed the proposals for a transportation hub creating closer links with road, bus and rail networks in Grimsby town centre.
- Mr Jaines-White advised that the largest ever public response to a Council consultation in North East Lincolnshire had followed the consultation process on the Grimsby town centre master plan. The strategic ambitions, future plans and the proposed bids remained in line with the consultation outcomes.
- A panel member suggested pursuit of the electrification of buses which he felt could result in lower fares contributing towards increased footfall in the town centre.

Whilst members had different ideas on the detail of the proposals, there was consensus around the three bid submissions.

All panel members were supportive of the proposals and agreed that the recommendations, as laid out in the report, be submitted to Cabinet for approval. In closing, the Chair echoed the positive comments of the panel members and looked forward to the panel's involvement in future projects emerging from successful bids.

RESOLVED – That the panel's comments be noted.

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.00 p.m.