

ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT

NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE 2022 - 2023

1. Introduction

Welcome to the annual scrutiny report, which highlights the key scrutiny activities and developments in North East Lincolnshire Council during the 2022/23 Municipal Year. The report provides a summary of the work undertaken by scrutiny in 2022-23 and outlines future work programmes.

During the past year, the five scrutiny panels have been involved in a broad range of work; including providing challenge on key decisions in advance of consideration by Cabinet, monitoring service improvements, holding fact-finding workshops, carrying out visits and working with partners on key areas affecting the residents of North East Lincolnshire.

Scrutiny has continued its involvement in the budget setting process with all Members invited to attend both informal and formal sessions to comment on proposals prior to final decisions being made by full Council. It has also been encouraging to see wider member involvement in scrutiny during the past year with non-panel members attending meetings to ask questions and comment on behalf of their constituents.

The outcome of the review of the Council's scrutiny arrangements was reported to the AGM of the Council in May 2022 with all but one of its recommendations approved. During the year those recommendations have all been implemented and signed off by the Executive and Scrutiny Liaison Board, including the provision of training for Chairs and all scrutiny members, as well as a focus on managing agendas and work programmes. This work will continue with the aim of making scrutiny as effective as possible given its key role within the Council's governance arrangements to support effective delivery of the council's priorities and provide challenge, as appropriate, to make sure that the basis for decisions being taken by the Council are robust. Key areas of focus during the coming year are expected to include targeted workshops linked to the children's services improvement work, skills, progress with bringing empty homes back into use, health inequalities, the continued development of the Cleethorpes Masterplan and monitoring of 'vital signs' performance indicators contained with the Council Plan.

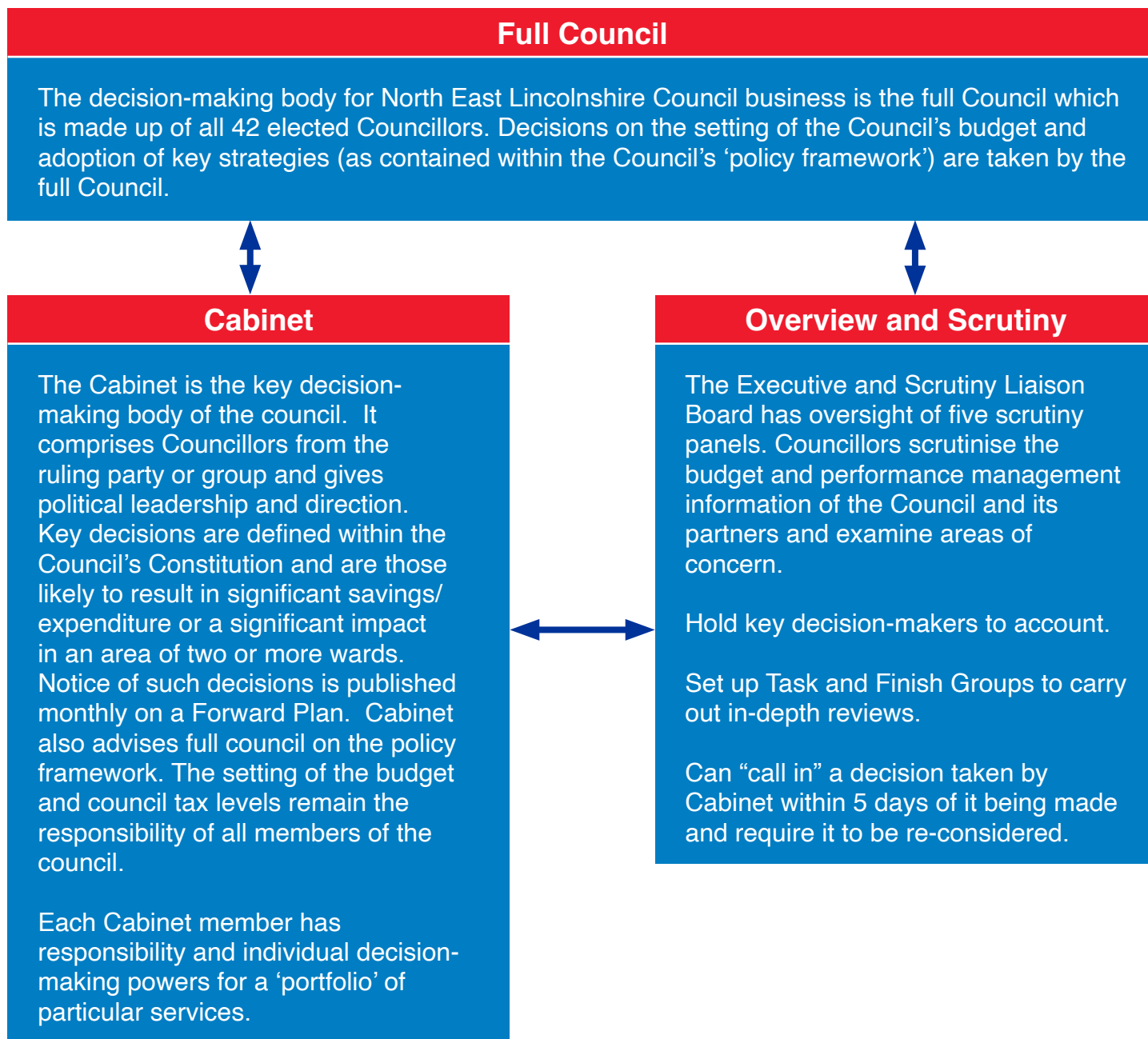
In February 2023 the Council had a Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge. It observed "there is a positive approach to scrutiny and the Leader of the Council shows commitment to it and recognises its value, as do the Scrutiny Chairs". It also asserted the importance for "Councillors to continue to invest in their own learning to ensure they are fulfilling their roles and have an appreciation of what good looks like both internally and in other councils". Officers will work with the Chairs and panel members to ensure that they are fully supported to effectively contribute to and carry out their scrutiny roles.

*Helen Isaacs, Statutory Scrutiny Officer
Assistant Chief Executive
May 2023*

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2. Scrutiny in North East Lincolnshire



Please note that decisions regarding certain functions are determined by 'regulatory' committees of the council such as the Planning Committee and the Licensing and Community Protection Committee. Such decisions do not fall under the remit of Scrutiny. There is co-ordination between Scrutiny and the Audit and Governance Committee on matters of mutual concern.

Overview

Scrutiny is a process that enables Councillors who are not Members of the Council's decision-making process to review and scrutinise matters affecting local people.

The role of Elected Members performing the overview and scrutiny function is to:

- Review and report on issues that affect the economic, environmental and social well-being of local people.
- Act as a check and balance to the Council's decision makers, examining and reviewing decisions and holding the Executive to account.
- Consider the work of public bodies operating outside the Council but which affect local residents, for example, local health services.
- Contribute to the development of future policies and strategies that will help improve services for local people.
- Involve local people in council decision making:
- Scrutiny is carried out using a range of methods, including panel meetings, working groups and select committees, but in all cases the process is non-political and Members from all groups participate.

Our Panels

Our panels and Chairs this year were:

Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel – Councillor Paul Silvester

Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel – Councillor Henry Hudson

Economy Scrutiny Panel – Councillor Oliver Freeston

Communities Scrutiny Panel – Councillor Hayden Dawkins

Tourism and the Visitor Economy Scrutiny Panel – Councillor Keith Brookes

Thanks are noted to Councillors, on all panels, for their contribution to the work of scrutiny over the last Municipal year.

Review of Scrutiny Arrangements

A review of the Council's scrutiny arrangements was undertaken in March 2022 and the outcome reported to the AGM of the Council in May 2022. This resulted in all but one of its recommendations being agreed for implementation. This included actions around how panel meetings and work programmes are managed (including guidance on the rules of debate for panel meetings), and the provision of further training with regard to chairing of meetings. In house training was subsequently provided for panel Chairs and Deputy Chairs, for all members in terms of general scrutiny and the outcome of this review, and specifically for Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel members around the 'journey of the child' and corporate parenting responsibilities. Progress with implementation of the recommendations was reported to the Executive and Scrutiny Liaison Board and the board signed them off as all being completed.

3. Scrutiny



Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel

During the municipal year 2022/23 the panel have focused much of its work on monitoring the progress being made in improving the delivery of children's services following the outcome of an Ofsted inspection in October 2021. This has been achieved through a variety of measures. The panel now receive regular progress updates on the improvement plan and in particular have started to monitor progress against a range of performance metrics and indicators, allowing the panel to gain assurance that the relevant improvements were being made as part of their scrutiny role. The panel have also requested that comparison figures with our demographic neighbours be included in future reports. The panel remained concerned around the number of referrals into early help and the time taken to see improvements. Members gained assurance that both the number of contacts converting into referrals and children coming into care had now reduced. The panel acknowledged this was a long improvement journey which would take two to three years to notice significant changes. Meanwhile, in June 2022, the panel undertook training on the journey of the child, a key priority within the improvement plan. The training ensured panel members were fully briefed on national expectations for a good children's service response, and outcomes for children and families. To further support their work, the panel have requested a visit to the council's Integrated Front Door services. The panel have also recently attended Lincolnshire County Council offices to observe a scrutiny meeting enabling them to share best practice.

"First and foremost may I take this opportunity to thank members and officers for their continued support, professional input and their valuable contributions to the work programme of the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel. Throughout the year our work programme has been heavily influenced by the Children's Services improvement journey and I believe the panel have been very effective in scrutinising the response, through challenging and holding officers to account. This has been an ongoing responsibility and has supported the green shoots of recovery we are now witnessing."

Councillor
Paul Silvester
Chair



Perhaps most importantly, the panel have been meeting informally with the Children's Commissioner to gain advice and guidance around the council's response to the Ofsted inspection and the improvement journey moving forward. The Children's Commissioner has now suggested a number of workshops to be undertaken in the next municipal year to focus on high priority areas. One of the suggested areas of interest for the panel was around monitoring finances and resources within children's services.

The panel continued to monitor performance through the Council Plan Performance and Financial Monitoring quarterly reports. This year, the panel's main concerns have been around the overspend within children's services and the number of children placed out of area. A number of factors were driving this demand in the system, including the heavy reliance on agency staffing for social workers. As a result, the panel undertook a joint workshop with the Corporate Parenting Board to focus on the recruitment and retention of social workers. This provided a better understanding of the work being undertaken to reduce agency staffing. The Chair of the panel considered the workshop had been valuable and positive for both the panel and the Corporate Parenting Board.

The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services was invited to respond to a question from an elected member on the recruitment of international social workers. Concerns were raised around recruitment of social workers from underdeveloped countries where the need for social workers was probably far greater than ours. The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services assured the panel that the council's process for recruiting international social workers was undertaken in line with the Department of Health and Social Care's code of practice for international recruitment of health and social care personnel in England.

The panel has overall had a busy year in terms of its work programme and agendas, working on a broad range of issues. Some of the other key highlights this year included: -

- An update on Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) which focused on a SEND revisit from Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission. The update also detailed implications of the SEND Green Paper. Members believed there was a major cross over with the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel when it came to the whole family approach (early help and prevention) to try and contribute to reducing SEND numbers. Members have suggested a joint workshop with the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel to look at the whole family approach which contributed to the early help and prevention agenda. Work was now underway for this to take place early in the new municipal year.
- Another area of interest to the panel has been progress with elective home education, members have highlighted how numbers of children and young people being electively home educated had dramatically increased. The panel gained assurance around ongoing work that was taking place with families and schools to ascertain why parents were opting to home educate.
- The panel have also received a report on progress with school exclusions with members querying whether a truancy service was still in place and raising concerns that numbers in secondary education had risen. The panel were satisfied that officers were working with headteachers to try and reduce exclusions, and that recent changes in exclusion guidance had now prompted an additional working party to review mechanisms used.
- The panel were consulted on the Review of 16 Plus Education Transport Policy which sought to consider an alternative way of delivering this service provision. The panel made a recommendation to Cabinet that as part of the post 16 SEND transport review, that where applicable, a full cost recovery approach be looked at, based on an individual assessment being done where necessary.

Another key area for the panel this year has been children's mental health following the Covid-19 pandemic. Members sought and received reassurance around how the council were progressing with children's mental health post pandemic. The panel highlighted the importance of digital inclusion for more vulnerable families and were assured that there would be a wider digital review across the Council's Integrated Care System (ICS).

Members were pleased with the recent outcome of a HMIP inspection of North East Lincolnshire Youth Justice Service. The panel were particularly interested in anti-social behaviour and were assured around the process for referrals through neighbourhood policing teams and the Youth Offending Service. The panel requested an update in a years' time via a briefing paper.

A presentation from the Chair of the Safeguarding Children's Board was delivered to the panel on safeguarding children's arrangements in North East Lincolnshire. The key areas of focus included Safeguarding Children's Partnership (SCP) priorities, local arrangements, and continued work to develop and embed SCP functions. The panel requested an update on progress in the new Municipal Year.

Other areas that have been scrutinised this year included:

- Children's Social Care Statutory Complaints and Compliments for 2021/22.
- Reports referred to scrutiny by cabinet:-
 - UK Shared Prosperity Fund (Multiply)
 - Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- The national review of children with disability and complex health needs placed in residential setting.
- The Annual Children in Need Census Analysis

In addition to priority outcomes within the panel's terms of reference, the following topics have been suggested for consideration for next year's scrutiny work programme:

- Targeted workshops in relation to children's social care improvement
- Progress report on 'Multiply' UK Shared Prosperity Fund
- Update on developments with the safeguarding children's arrangements in North East Lincolnshire including the Safeguarding Children's Partnership Annual Report – 2022/23.
- Progress with North East Lincolnshire Youth Justice Services.
- Youth Voice and Influence
- Joint work with the Economy Scrutiny Panel to consider the Skills Strategy and Action Plan.
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Update - Joint Workshop with Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny panel to look at whole family approach which contributes to the early help and prevention agenda.



Communities Scrutiny Panel

The panel began the municipal year focusing on the Homes for Ukraine/Asylum Dispersal which included an update on the government's homes for Ukraine Scheme and National Full Asylum Dispersal Scheme that would become temporarily mandatory for all councils. The panel heard how there was a variety of different wrap around support provided for refugee families and in particular support given, where required, from children's services. The panel were assured that officers were working closely with other local councils who supported families and shared intelligence, information and support that was available that the council could tap into. The panel were also asked to feed back any suggestions on how the local communities could help and support new arrivals.

The panel welcomed consideration of the Rough Sleepers Initiative 2022-23, which aimed to reduce the numbers of rough sleepers and prevent those with complex needs from becoming homeless. Members heard that following a funding proposal submitted in February 2022, the council had been awarded funding for the next three years to continue the interventions already in place over the previous 12 months and introduce additional interventions specifically to reduce the numbers of people new to rough sleeping. The panel welcomed the three-year funding and supported the recommendations laid out in the report ahead of submission to Cabinet on 20th July 2022.

The Crime and Disorder Committee met to consider a report on findings of the Community Safety Partnership's (CSP's) Joint Strategic Intelligence Assessment, including performance data and emerging threats. Members explored the work was being undertaken to prevent drug dealing across

"I would firstly like to I take this opportunity to thank members and officers for their continued support. It's safe to say I could not have done it without your help and guidance. This year the panel has scrutinised many key decisions, and the debates have been constructive and, most importantly, for the good of the borough. I myself would not be happy just to pass things through unless I had been able to quiz our officers and partners, a feeling I am sure mirrored by the other panel members. This was my first year as chair of the panel, and I have to say I thoroughly enjoyed the position."

Councillor
Hayden Dawkins
Chair



the borough. Superintendent French attended the meeting and reassured members this was a priority for the police and that money had been invested in a facility where reporting concerns could be done confidentially. The panel was assured that more police officers had been recruited in frontline police roles and the police were particularly committed to Operation Galaxy which responded to local concerns around drug dealing.

The panel has continued to receive presentations throughout the municipal year, including a presentation on Digital Inclusion focusing on understanding and addressing the digital barriers for business and voluntary and community groups. Members welcomed the presentation and explored the challenges around targeting the older population, acknowledging that going completely digital would not work for everyone. Also, a brief presentation was provided on Modern Slavery focusing on some recent social media campaigns and communications that had taken place. Members again welcomed the presentation noting that social media was a great platform to use. The panel expressed an interest in further refresher training on Modern Slavery.

Another area of interest for the panel had been around the Bereavement Services project. The panel attended a site visit to Grimsby Crematorium buildings in November 2022 to visit the new facilities which included new committal areas, a new small chapel, a pet cemetery and 'Reflections' tea rooms and meeting room. Members were interested in affordable funerals and heard of the different options available including cremation, woodland burial, and traditional burial.

As part of the EU exit preparation, and introduction of import checks on EU products, the panel had previously asked for more information about the new Border Control Post facility operated by Port Health as part of the council's Regulation and Enforcement Services. The panel provided feedback on the report and sought clarification on a number of matters and undertook a site visit to the new Border Control Post at Grimsby Seafood Village.

Another key area within the work programme this year was progress of the council's Public Space CCTV upgrade project. The panel were particularly interested in the tannoy system and future proofing and being able to link cameras into the control centre. The panel also explored technological developments and investment for staffing within the control room. The panel took the opportunity to visit the new CCTV control room, where they were able to see the new systems in place.

Previously, the panel had received a report on the renewal of the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) for anti-social behaviour and control matters undertaken and this was followed up with an anti-social behaviour PSPO workshop to explore matters in more depth. More specifically, members asked for further information around the Journey, Enrichment, Fulfilment, Friendship (JEFF) Project to come back to Scrutiny. A briefing paper was circulated to members to explain the project in more detail.

The panel received an update on progress with the Green Futures Annual Report, focussing on the Waste Management Strategy. Members welcomed the excellent progress made on waste collection and recycling which was a great achievement for the waste department. Members were also interested in what work was being done with our renewable industry sector and what funding opportunities were available to make public buildings more energy efficient. The importance of trees across our borough also remained an area of interest to the panel, with members enquiring about tree planting. The panel gained assurance from the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport that it was the council's aspiration to encourage more tree planting in the area.

In view of the panel's previous concerns around enforcement issues across the borough, the Enforcement Review report provided an important opportunity for the panel to scrutinise the current enforcement arrangements. Members were particularly interested in whether any improvements had been made since the Enforcement Scrutiny Working Group had taken place, and whether public perception had improved. The panel gained assurance that improvements had been made to how teams were developing and continued improvements to communications. The panel also heard how improvements were being made to the customer experience and a new Customer Relationship Management System was now being implemented. The panel heard how further work was underway with Days of Action across the borough and members requested specific cases come back to the panel for information. The panel welcomed progress around parking enforcement near schools and that funding had been received for additional number plate recognition cameras. However, the panel was concerned about staffing levels within parking enforcement and a recommendation was made to Cabinet to increase the number of Civil Enforcement Officers across the borough.

On a final note, this year had concluded with a joint meeting with Tourism and Visitor Economy Panel to consider the introduction of a new Resort PSPO. The panel scrutinised the proposed restrictions and prohibitions and supported all prohibitions with the exception of metal detecting and made a recommendation to Cabinet to that effect. Members also asked for regular updates at scrutiny to monitor progress with the PSPOs.

In addition, the panel considered reports on:

- Quarterly financial monitoring
- Update on Multi Agency Days of Action
- Principles of the Draft Tree Strategy
- Prevent and Protect
- Review of Play Areas

The following work remains of interest to the panel and will be carried forward into next year's scrutiny work programme:

- Probation Services
- Play Areas



Economy Scrutiny Panel

This year the panel's pre-decision scrutiny of the local plan, bus service improvement partnership (BSIP), gypsy and traveller negotiated stopping places, design proposals for Freshney Place and Riverhead Square has influenced the policies and decisions made by the council and other organisations involved in delivering public services.

The municipal year started with a special meeting in June to give pre-cabinet scrutiny of three bids in round two of the Government's levelling up programme. Successful bids would support town centre and high street regeneration, local transport projects and cultural and heritage assets. Members scrutinised the proposals, the bidding criteria and alternative options. Members not on the panel attended to speak. In January 2023 the council learned it did not receive all the funding it had hoped for, although £18.4m was awarded to support the Cleethorpes Masterplan.

Pre-decision scrutiny of the Cabinet report on gypsy and traveller negotiated stopping agreements (in July) resulted in recommendations in support of proposals subject to the situation being reviewed in six months (rather than the proposed 12) via a report to the panel. Cabinet's decision was called-in. Hence, in September 2022, members debated and voted again, finally releasing cabinet's decision. In January, following a period where no such agreements had been necessary, members requested that a further update be brought to them in September 2023.

A new Government funding bid, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, prompted much interest from the panel. Prior to Cabinet's consideration in July, the panel challenged on evaluation of impact and ensuring links to the authority's skills framework. In November members learned that the council had been successful with an award of £6.2m. Members challenged on strategies to reach 'hard to reach' learners; the project's impact on local qualifications and worklessness; supporting people in work and out of work; survey communication and responses; and the membership and governance of the partnership group.

"The panel has had a successful and constructive year with many recommendations to Cabinet influencing Council policy. Some of this work will continue into next year, especially conversations with external providers to ensure that local taxpayers are getting value for money. Thanks and gratitude must go all who have contributed this year, embracing difficult questions and challenges."



Councillor
Oliver Freeston
Chair

Design proposals for Freshney Place came before the panel in September prior to Cabinet decision. Members commented on the new market hall space, the loss of the market hall car park, potential drainage issues, and the cinema's external design and appearance.

An opportunity for the panel to engage and scrutinise the process leading to a review of the borough's local plan came to the panel in November. Members were most concerned about consultation; with the public and other stakeholders but also with elected members. Pressed by the panel, the Leader of the Council has committed to explore various methods of consultation including a scrutiny workshop. Members also want to see how local plan consultation responses are evaluated including how this influence or impact would be evidenced.

The panel continues its influence on the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). The plan aims to improve the quality of bus services and increase bus passenger numbers through an enhanced bus quality partnership involving local authorities and bus operators. It has considered pre-Cabinet reports and followed up on requested actions. Members have queried the funding of a 'bus bridge', and representation, governance and transparency of the partnership. In January 2023, the panel also considered a pre-Cabinet report on the bus network review and resolved to continue working towards making recommendations for improvement to decision makers.

Routine monitoring of delivery of the housing action plan prompted the panel to seek more detailed information, via a briefing note in November, on new homes performance in the borough. Queries included the sharp increase in completions and the rationale for this, unanticipated demolitions in Immingham, affordable housing on the former 'Western Secondary School' site and the possibility of using new homes bonus to bring empty homes back into use. Members also sought assurances that five year supply of land calculations would ensure a spread of new homes across the borough and avoid over-intensification of new sites. The panel requested a briefing note providing an update on empty homes, received at the January meeting, which triggered questions on contracted targets and the new homes bonus scheme.

Last year the panel contributed to consultations and proposals for regeneration of Riverhead Square. In November this year, members were disappointed to hear that several elements of the design and members' suggestions would not be able to be included due largely to inflation/increasing costs. Members talked at length and with passion about their hopes and fears for the Riverhead Square. In summary, the Chair reiterated that the panel generally supported the scheme of works but ultimately there were concerns about what would be achievable given the limitations now in place. Future developments with the scheme will be brought to the panel.

Emanating from the panel's work programme a requested report on Freshney Place Market Hall brought members up to date with current operations and plans for the future of Top Town Market. Matters discussed included events and promotions, national and local trends, engagement with market stall holders, best practice, Future High Street Funding, occupancy rates and trends, rents, initiatives to help traders 'in hardship' and comparisons with large outdoor 'destination' markets. The panel's comments and considerations were noted and options for the new market hall would be brought back at an appropriate time with the possibility of a working group to consider any complex and/or detailed policy matters.

The panel's annual scrutiny of the Local Transport Plan took place in February 2023. Members asked questions about bus shelters, Peaks Parkway underpass and delays to repairing accidental damage.

Members had previously been consulted on the plan and were pleased to see their influence in the report.

Also in February, a report bringing together key policies ensuring 'our green future' was given pre-decision scrutiny by the panel. The council's carbon roadmap and natural assets plan garnered further questions on electric vehicle charging. Members scrutinised progress of plans and will continue to receive regular updates on progress and development of the council's ambition to be carbon neutral by the revised date of 2030.

At the same time, in private session, the panel had a thorough look at the Council's assets and future approach to disposal. Prior to Cabinet consideration, members sought clarification on public consultation, engagement of ward councillors as part of the disposal process and retention of leases for appropriate assets. Members were also concerned about at risk heritage assets in private ownership and enquired about legal responsibilities, costs to emergency and other services, managing Grade II listed properties, the impact on adjoining properties, options for owners, and potential outcomes and uses for the buildings.

The panel continues its scrutiny of the Council's strategic partnership with Equans (formerly Engie). This is achieved throughout the year via regular reporting to the panel on agreed performance indicators. Members provided challenge on a variety of topics including on empty homes, which resulted in a recommendation to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport to increase the target for empty homes returned to use from 40 to 60.

Quarterly finance monitoring reports have prompted a number of questions from the panel, including additional costs relating to the Town Deal, the Corporation Bridge works, the impact of increased borrowing charges, potential rent reviews, increasing energy costs, potential re-profiling of the capital programme, and the sale of assets.

A new council plan, approved by Council in February 2022, brought associated quarterly monitoring reports to all scrutiny panels. This panel welcomed the performance information but called for consistency and clarity with regard to the presentation of data.

In addition to priority outcomes within the panel's terms of reference, the following topics have been suggested for consideration for next year's scrutiny work programme:

- Monitoring performance relating to the delivery of the council plan and the economic strategy
- Evaluation of the impact of the Grimsby Master Plan and its individual projects and schemes.
- Bus Service Improvement Partnership (BSIP) and improvement plans
- South Humber Industrial Investment Programme (SHIIP) - timely updates on progress
- Empty homes
- Gypsy and traveller negotiated stopover site
- Implementation of freeport proposals
- 'Our Green Futures' - monitoring performance relating to the delivery of Energy Carbon Roadmap and Natural Assets Plan



Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel

The panel continues to welcome partners to its meetings to discuss health and adult social care improvements. Representatives from the East Midlands Ambulance Service provided a detailed update on the service. Colleagues from Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust were also in attendance to talk about the handover process at the Diana Princess of Wales hospital and the impact this had on patients and the flow through the hospital. The members appreciated that the issues raised needed a review of the whole system from end to end and a briefing paper was requested on the patient journey from calling 999 through to the discharge process. Partners were also invited to attend a future panel meeting to follow up on the concerns raised by the panel.

In 2019, the panel was informed of the service change to Oncology and Haematology services and the Northern Lincolnshire and Goole Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust was invited back to the panel to provide an update on the current situation and future plans for patients residing in northern Lincolnshire. Members scrutinised at the length the reasons for the decision and queried what more could be done to ensure that services remained locally. However, it was appreciated that there was more work to be done around recruitment to key posts. The panel was reassured that the very best service was being given to the residents if they were required to travel.

Over the past couple of years, the panel have been consulted on adult social care charging and provided valued input. This led to further consultation with the panel on a revised approach to respite charging, proposed for adoption from the 2023-24 financial year. Members noted the context of increased pressures on household income and supported the recommendations to be presented to Cabinet.

“It has been a busy year for the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel and our focus has been on understanding the fast pace of change to services by our healthcare providers and the Integrated Care Board. As a panel we have maintained our focus on the health and wellbeing of our residents through scrutinising partners and providers to ensure that they are providing timely, efficient, and effective health services.”

Councillor
Henry Hudson
Chair



to the Government's publication of the 'Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care Fund 2022 to 2023' guidance. The panel welcomed the report and agreed for the final submission of the market sustainability plan to come to scrutiny for consideration before its submission in February 2023.

The management of disabled facilities grant had concerned the panel. Members were keen to monitor progress on spend, delays and process because they wanted residents to be able to live independent lives with the adaptations they required within a reasonable timescale. Officers had worked hard on a change in approach with regard to managing disabled facilities grants and this was presented to the panel. Members broadly welcomed the new approach and looked forward to further updates so that they could be reassured that residents were receiving adaptation within the timescales set out in the guidance.

With the changes to the Health and Care Act in 2022 and the introduction of the Integrated Care Boards, the panel continued to receive updates on progress with integrating care at place, including the national context for integrated care, the key functions of place based partnerships, the proposed governance arrangements and anticipated opportunities.

Councillor Sandford attended the panel to provide a presentation on the awareness of hearing loss. He, and a resident who also suffered from hearing loss, highlighted the issues facing them on a daily basis and the desire for more services locally to support people with hearing impediments. The panel fully supported the recommendations highlighted in the presentation.

During the final panel meeting of the municipal year members welcomed the opportunity to consider and feedback into the NEL carers strategy for 2023-26 as part of the consultation process. The panel were concerned over the number of carers who were classed as unidentified for a number of reasons and members made suggestions on how, through the strategy, we could encourage this cohort to be recognised, via media campaigns for example. Overall, the panel felt the strategy was a comprehensive document on the way forward for carers across the borough.

In addition, the panel considered the following reports:

- Quarterly financial monitoring reports
- Council Plan quarterly performance reports
- Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report
- Adult Services Annual Complaints Report
- Director of Public Health Report 2022

In addition to priority outcomes within the panel's terms of reference, the following topics have been suggested for consideration for next year's scrutiny work programme:

- Impact of health inequalities on local residents
- Availability of dental services
- Mental Health Services for 16-18 years (joint work with Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny panel)
- Adult Social Care Regulation Framework – Review of the Self-Assessment (new for 2023/24)



Tourism and Visitor Economy Scrutiny Panel

The main focus for the Tourism and Visitor Economy Panel has been on influencing policy through consultation, pre decision scrutiny and making recommendations to decision makers.

Members of the panel attended an informal workshop as part of the process for the development of the authority's Sport and Physical Activity Strategy. The strategy will be completed in collaboration with local stakeholders including health and wellbeing services, the leisure sector, education services, the voluntary and community sector, and cross Council departments. Consultation with the public and this panel will precede Cabinet's decision.

At its September meeting, recommendations were made to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport supporting and proposing a pilot motor caravan scheme. Leading up to the resolution, members queried a number of matters but agreed in principle to recommend a 12 month trial period.

In September 2022 an update on the tourism dashboard summarising data and statistics for 2021 tourism season prompted debate and challenge on the provision of public toilets within the resort of Cleethorpes. Consequently, at its next meeting, the panel received an update on this matter and Members expressed concern about the current lack of public toilets and the absence of any plans to increase the number ahead of the forthcoming Summer season.

Cleethorpes' Blue Flag was the topic of a question to the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and the Visitor Economy in November. The portfolio holder explained the application process and why it was important to have good quality water when submitting an application. The council's work with Anglian Water and the Environment Agency was highlighted in his response.

The panel considered a proposed application for grant funding to the Lawn Tennis Association, aimed at improving the condition of tennis courts across the borough. The panel scrutinised security measures, access, the procurement process, likely operators and locations. Members heard that the funding could not be used to provide new facilities.

"Many of the panel's recommendations were important to enable Cabinet to make its decisions. My thanks go to fellow councillors and council staff for the work put into the panel during its year."

Councillor
Keith Brookes
Chair



Delivery on the Cultural Development Fund commenced in January 2020 and the panel received the detail around the immensely positive impact of the fund throughout the borough. The panel was extremely pleased with work undertaken and with the creativity and ambition demonstrated by 14 major creative programming activities and events. These events brought together local, national and international players in the creative sector. To date, over 120 creatives have been supported, citing increased confidence in applying for funding as a major impact. The panel hoped its positive feedback would allow continuation of the programme, subject to funds being available.

Also, in January, the panel had its first look at the provisional events calendar for 2023. Member pressed on encouraging overnight visitors, celebrating local anniversaries, visitor guides, monthly newsletters and visitor surveys.

The panel received a detailed report including plans, drawings and photographs, which gave members a complete picture of the Cleethorpes Townscape Heritage Programme, focused on the restoration of buildings in Alexandra Road, Cleethorpes. Members sought clarification on the different types of grants available under this project. Members were pleased to hear that officers continued to look at other areas in North East Lincolnshire which may benefit from similar projects.

At its March meeting, the panel received a requested update about the Discover North East Lincolnshire (DiscoverNEL) Tourism Campaign for 2023, funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. This detailed how the campaign, along with other activities, supports local tourism, retail and hospitality businesses. The report demonstrated the value of marketing and promotional activities in helping to deliver our Tourism Action Plan. Members feedback was sought, and debate centred around evaluation and influence of visitor feedback, alternatives to on-line surveys, potential for income from advertising space in public buildings (including toilets), and potential for local businesses to be included in regional national marketing campaigns.

In addition to this, the panel have received a number of reports and updates including:

- Creativity Strategy
- Grant Street car park
- Quarterly financial monitoring reports
- Quarterly council plan performance monitoring reports
- Cleethorpes library
- Day chalets
- Resort Manager annual report
- RNLI new development – update

To round off a busy year, the panel joined with the Communities Scrutiny Panel to consider the introduction of a new resort public space protection order (PSPO). Members scrutinised proposed restrictions and prohibitions and supported all prohibitions with the exception of metal detecting and made a recommendation to Cabinet to that effect. The impact and outcomes of the PSPO will be regularly monitored by the Communities Scrutiny Panel.

In addition to priority outcomes within the panel's terms of reference, the following topics have been suggested for consideration for next year's scrutiny work programme:

- Council Land Use Policy
- Blue Flag status
- Grimsby Fishing Heritage Centre Collection update (including historic vessels)
- Cleethorpes Masterplan – major 'levelling up' projects
- Sports and Leisure Strategy
- Sport and Playing pitch strategy
- Proposals to build on the Heritage Action Zone
- Proposals to build on Grimsby Creates
- Library review
- Events programme (year round)
- Cleethorpes Habitat Management Plan

4. Get involved in scrutiny

One of the key roles of scrutiny is to work on behalf of residents to address the issues that are causing concern to people who live and work in the borough. We are using this report to tell you what we have done and we want you to tell us what you think we should be doing next. Please use the contact details at the end of this report if you would like us to focus on a particular issue in future.

All agendas and minutes of scrutiny panels as well as reports from scrutiny working groups are available by following the links on our website – nelincs.gov.uk

This report is also an opportunity to say thank you to everyone who has contributed to the scrutiny process over the past twelve months. To be able to function effectively, scrutiny relies on the invaluable knowledge and expertise of witnesses. Last year a wide range of individuals and organisations assisted us in our work, including:

- Service users
- EQUANS
- Humberside Police
- East Midland Ambulance Service
- NHS Foundation Trust

But we are not content to leave it there...

Members of the public are:

- Welcome to attend scheduled scrutiny panel meetings to observe local scrutiny in action. To find out what is being discussed and what to expect please have a look at the website or contact the scrutiny team.
- Encouraged to make suggestions for future scrutiny reviews by contacting your local councillor or the scrutiny team. You can do this by email, post or telephone.
- Able to approach councillors with your views on specific issues so that these can be added into the debate on the scrutiny panels
- Able to speak on specific issues, with the prior permission of the panel chair.

Scrutiny cannot promise to form the same conclusions as you do but your comments will be acknowledged and considered.

Sometimes we receive correspondence that raise issues outside of scrutiny or the council's remit – should this happen we will forward your comments to the relevant service or partner organisation and ask them to provide you with a response.

If you would like further information about scrutiny,
please use the contact details below:

Scrutiny and Democratic Services
North East Lincolnshire Council
Municipal Offices
Town Hall Square
GRIMSBY
DN31 1HU

Tel: 01472 324121

Email: democracy@nelincs.gov.uk

Website: <https://www.nelincs.gov.uk/your-council/decision-making/scrutiny/>