



# MEETING OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

TUESDAY, 22 NOVEMBER 2005 2.30 PM

---

## PANEL MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor Mrs Rosemary Kaberry-Brown  
Councillor John Nicholson (Chairman)  
Councillor Stan Pease  
Councillor Ian Selby

Councillor Mrs Judy Smith  
Councillor Ian Stokes  
Councillor Jeff Thompson (Vice-Chairman)

## OFFICERS

Corporate Director, Community Services  
Corporate Director, Finance & Strategic  
Resources  
Head of Planning Policy & Economic  
Regeneration  
Management Accountant  
PR Manager  
Scrutiny Officer  
Scrutiny Support Officer

Brian Thompson (LCC - Highways)

3 Members of the Public

1 Member of the Local Press

## OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor Reg Lovelock M.B.E. (*Chairman:  
Resources DSP*)  
Councillor Mrs. Linda Neal (*Leader of the  
Council*)  
Councillor Stephen O'Hare  
Councillor Alan Parkin  
Councillor John Smith (*Economic Portfolio  
Holder*)  
Councillor Gerald Taylor  
Councillor Mike Taylor  
Councillor Graham Wheat  
Councillor Mrs. Mary Wheat  
Councillor John Wilks  
Councillor Mike Williams

---

## 44. COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Mr. Gilman from Stamford asked for permission to record the meeting. Using his discretion, the Chairman said that it would be inappropriate to record the meeting because Panel meetings are informal and produce action notes, rather than minutes.

The Scrutiny Officer read out the relevant paragraphs of the Council's constitution. Mr. Gilman accepted the ruling of the Chairman.

## 45. MEMBERSHIP

None.

## 46. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Joynson and Mrs. Woods.

**47. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None declared.

**48. ACTION NOTES**

Noted.

**49. FEEDBACK FROM THE EXECUTIVE**

There was nothing to report.

**50. TRAFFIC PROBLEMS IN GRANTHAM**

The Chairman welcomed Brian Thompson from Lincolnshire County Council's Highways Department to the meeting and thanked him for his attendance on short notice.

The Vice-Chairman had requested the item because of recent problems caused by the Brook Street/Premier Court gyratory system.

Members of the public and Councillors who were not Members of the DSP were invited to ask questions. Issues considered included the number of simultaneous road works, unnecessary traffic lights controlling the left hand turn onto Brook Street and the lack of advanced warning that the left hand turn would be closed, why the diverted route (via Belton Lane, Great Gonerby), was having work done simultaneously to work affecting Brook Street and consequences of the gyratory system for Barrowby Road.

Theoretically the plans for the gyratory system allowed sufficient room for lorries to manoeuvre, in practice, space was insufficient. Lorries were being forced to cut corners where pedestrians would be waiting to cross the road. Road works for Grantham had been planned until August 2007, mainly as a consequence of development; the magnitude necessitated several sets of works occurring simultaneously. It had been hoped that these works would interact. The County Council have few powers to control work schedules of utility companies. Advanced notice should have been given about the 'no right turn' but in the future the County Council would try to ensure the use of the Grantham Journal. There were few short-term solutions for Barrowby Road but Mr. Thompson stated that the County Council would look at signposting and road markings. It was suggested that the County Council should also examine signposting for the gyratory system from the Watergate approach. A Panel Member reported that road markings had not been amended to reflect the new system.

There was concern over the number of sets of traffic lights within Grantham. Mr. Thompson stated that the County Council were embarking on a traffic study of Grantham. Money had been set aside to address anything uncovered by the study over the next three years. A problem was also reported with the Harrowby Road/St. Catherine's Road/Sandon Road area. The problem was partly caused by inappropriate car parking, particularly outside the police station on St. Catherine's Road.

Panel Members were interested in County Council powers to regulate utility companies. Notice must be given for non-emergency work; the only regulatory powers they had was suggesting an alternative time frame for works. The Highways

Department meet with utilities companies on an eighteen-month basis, consequences are limited because the majority of works are externally contracted. Discussion ensued about the suitability of running works cables along farmland. This is unpopular with companies because it would mean that they would be subject to the landowner; working on the public highway afforded greater freedom. The Traffic Management Act could mean that there would be a charge for working on public highways; Lincolnshire County Council would also be subject to charges.

Some County Council works are done overnight but work undertaken would be more expensive, there would be safety implications for workers and night work would be inappropriate in residential areas. There would be no way to suggest utilities companies should work overnight.

Members considered a planning condition that had been imposed; this requested that the developer would be required to build a bridge from Penine Way to Gonerby Hill Foot when development reached a certain capacity. If the development is under capacity, it was suggested that alternative means be found for the bridge's construction. Any construction work done, unless by the County Council for highways reasons, could be subject to significant costs from the railways.

Mr. Thompson advised that he would respond individually to any questions he had not been able to answer during the meeting.

#### **51. CALL-IN: CAR PARKING CHARGES IN GRANTHAM AND STAMFORD**

*This item was accepted as urgent business following the request for call-in of Cabinet Decision CO79 made on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2005.*

The Scrutiny Officer advised the Panel that a request for call-in of Cabinet Decision CO79 had been received. The call-in request form had been signed by five members of the Council but the power to actually call-in a decision rested with the DSP. Upon hearing the reasons the request had been made, the Panel would be asked to consider whether to proceed. The Panel were reminded that they had previously considered the issue of car parking charges in Grantham and Stamford at a special meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2005. The Resources DSP's Budget Working Group had also considered the issue on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2005.

Those Members who had requested call-in stated why they had done this:

- Concern over the consequences for in-town trade and that the consultation quoted in the report did not stipulate whether traders had been involved. The Cabinet decision had placed no emphasis on the potential effects for the local economy;
- While safe, secure, suitable parking spaces were deemed essential; they should be run on a non-profit basis;
- The debate on car parking charges should cover the whole of the District, including Bourne and the Deepings;
- No specific reason had been given to justify the need for increased income from car parking; previous justifications had included the cost of CCTV provision;
- The greatest percentage of increased income would come from Stamford.

Having listened to the arguments put forward, Members of the Panel agreed to accept the call-in request. Members of the public and Councillors who were not members of

the Panel were given the opportunity to make comments on this item. Points raised included the recent increase in charges for Newark and the intention to increase them further within a year. A representative from the Stamford Chamber of Trade and Commerce represented their suggestion of off-peak and peak charges according to days of the week: charges should be lower from Monday to Thursday and higher on a Friday and Saturday, inline with the demand for spaces. This could potentially increase the number of visitors and maximise the use of parking spaces.

The Economic Portfolio Holder stated that the Cabinet's decision was within the parameters of the Council's agreed policy. Within the Midterm Financial Strategy, the Council proposed to maximise its assets. The intention of the amended charging regime was to maximise the use of parking spaces. The Cabinet Members present stated that a major review of car parking across the District was being undertaken, which would lead to a District-wide review of car parking charges.

Discussion ensued as to whether an increase in charges would be borne by local residents. It was felt that generally those affected by charging would be visitors to the towns. The majority of Panel members agreed that increased charges would not put tourists off visiting towns within the District.

The Chairman of the Resources DSP's Budget Working Group supported the original recommendations. A review of charges was incumbent upon the authority as part of the Comprehensive Performance Review.

There was continued concern from some Members over the large percentage increase in charges for Stamford. It was pointed out that in many towns, charges were considerably higher, even with the proposed increase. There was also discussion on the proportion of Council Tax subsidy achieved through parking charges. It was felt that the quality of parking facility and signage thereto, were of greater consideration than charges.

The Management Accountant stated that a period of on and off-peak charging had been trialled previously. People had found it confusing and it led to an increase in the number of excess charge notices.

Panel Members emphasised the importance of a review of charges across the District on completion of the study that was being carried out. They felt that the District Council's charging policy should be amended to reflect the results of the study.

#### **CONCLUSIONS:**

- 1. That Decision CO79 should not be referred back to Cabinet and the decision is therefore implemented;***
- 2. That the findings of the District-wide car parking review should be reflected in the Council's policy.***

#### **52. WELHAM STREET CAR PARK**

The Corporate Director of Community Services updated the Panel on the progress of the Welham Street multi-storey car park project. A traffic impact study had been carried out to ascertain whether any highway adaptations would be necessary; requirements were found to be minimal. The site would have to be checked for archaeological remains, the most appropriate time for this was deemed to be after outline planning permission had been granted. The request for outline planning permission had been submitted and would be heard by members of the Development

Control Committee on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2005. Tender specifications were being prepared and would be despatched on December 8<sup>th</sup> 2005 for return by January 9<sup>th</sup> 2006. It was hoped that sign-off and commencement would be achieved by the beginning/middle of April 2006. Christmas 2006 had been set as the target for completion.

The Panel were also advised that a tender, within budget had been received for the demolition of the former Kwik Save site and attached car park. Work would begin on-site on January 9<sup>th</sup> 2006 until 17<sup>th</sup> March 2006. The site would be demolished and then laid out flat to act as an open car park during development of Welham Street. While Welham Street multi-storey was being built, attempts would be made to sell East Street for future development in co-ordination with opening of Welham Street car park.

The Development Control Committee would consider any constraints on the aesthetics and elevation of the building; these would ensure that the construction is suitable for the area.

### **53. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK**

The Head of Planning Policy and Economic Regeneration summarised report PLA539 to the Economic DSP, which detailed all the work being undertaken.

#### Statement of Community Involvement

This document would demonstrate the ways that the Council would communicate in all future Local Development Framework (LDF) matters. The final Statement of Community Involvement had been advertised and submitted to the Secretary of State, which initiated a six-week consultation period. At the close of the consultation period, the Statement would be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate, who would decide whether investigation would be necessary.

#### Issues and Options

The issues and options consultation would constitute the first stage in the development of core principles. A document had been published and widely circulated. Consultation ended on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2005. Results would be compiled and preferred options would be brought forward in early 2006.

#### Annual Monitoring Report

This document would require annual production and would become increasingly relevant after the adoption of the LDF. It was intended that the Annual Monitoring Report would be presented for a Non-Key Decision within a fortnight, as a form of validation.

Members commended the work that had been done by the Planning Department on such a large-scale project.

### **54. REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS**

#### Public Information Pillars Working Group

The report from the PIPs Working Group had been circulated. Members were informed that the Healthy Environment DSP had endorsed its recommendations at their meeting on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2005.

Small Business Units Working Group

Notes had been circulated from the meeting of the Small Business Units Working Group held on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2005.

**55. BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

Noted. The Panel were advised that the 'red' figure was an estimate based on a number published annually.

**56. WORK PROGRAMME**

Noted. It had been suggested that the Panel should receive a presentation about Social Enterprise. A review of the outcomes of the Markets Working Group would be organised in the New Year. A copy of the Economic and Community Development Strategy was circulated at the meeting for Members' information.

**57. ANY OTHER BUSINESS, WHICH THE CHAIRMAN, BY REASONS OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES DECIDES IS URGENT.**

None.

**58. CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting was closed at 17:17.