

Business and Property Committee

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 15 May 2018 at
10:00 am in the Edwards Room at County Hall**

Present:

Mr K Kiddie (Chairman)

Mr T Adams

Mr Michael Chenery of Horsbrugh

Mr F Eagle

Mr B Iles (Vice-Chairman)

Mr A Jamieson

Mr T Jermy

Mr M Kiddle-Morris

Mr C Smith

Mrs A Thomas

Mr J Timewell

Mrs K Vincent

Mrs C Walker

1. Apologies and Substitutions

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Ms C Bowes and Mr R Brame (substituted by Mr Michael Chenery of Horsbrugh and Mrs A Thomas respectively).

2. Minutes

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on the 14 March 2018 were **AGREED** as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman, **subject to an amendment at 2.1 to record an amendment to the January minutes; please see the minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2018, paragraph 10.2.9, and paragraph 2.1 of the minutes of 3 July 2018 to see the amendment made**

3. Members to Declare any Interests

- 3.1
- The Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services declared a non-pecuniary interest as a Non-Executive Director of Equinox Enterprises at Great Yarmouth Borough Council;
 - Mr Jamieson declared a non-pecuniary interest as a Director of Norse;
 - Mrs Vincent declared a non-pecuniary interest as a NCC Shareholder representative for Norse;
 - Mr Timewell declared a non-pecuniary interest as he was part of a company which rented property at Scottow Enterprise Park; and he was a director of a modular buildings company.
 - Mr Kiddie declared a non-pecuniary interest as a Director of Repton.

4. Urgent Business

- 4.1 There was no urgent business.

5. Public Questions

- 5.1 There had been no public questions submitted.

6. Member Questions

There had been one Member question submitted from Cllr Mick Castle which is at appendix 1 of these minutes.

7. Verbal update/feedback from Members of the Committee regarding Member Working Groups or bodies that they sit on.

- 7.1 The Chairman reported that he had attended the Board meeting at Hethel; been busy with Repton Board; been part of the appointment board for the County Farms tenancies; been to the Royal Norfolk agricultural Annual General Meeting and as the Armed Forces Champion met Lord Dannant for a briefing at Norwich Research Park where it was announced that £40 million would be invested into research.
- 7.2 The vice-Chairman reported that he had attended the Repton Board.
- 7.3 Mr Eagle reported that he had attended three meetings of the Agri-Tech Board.
- 7.4 Mrs Walker reported that she had been attending the meetings of the Yarmouth Town Centre Management Board where ideas to improve the town were going ahead.
- 7.5 At this point in the meeting, the Committee received an update on Apprenticeships from Cllr Stuart Clancy in his role of Apprenticeships Champion which is attached at appendix 2. Members asked if they could be provided with regular data which tracked progress, possibly by district and sector. There was also concern raised that the numbers of apprentices had halved and members questioned if any work was being carried out to encourage work experience which would then lead onto an apprenticeship. Officers confirmed that from the newly ignited apprenticeship network, the new website and more support being given to employers around the levy, numbers were on the rise again. More work needed to be undertaken with schools and parents to promote apprenticeships and encourage vocational opportunities.

8. Forward Plan and Delegated Decisions

- 8.1 The Committee received the annexed report (8) which set out the Forward Plan for the Committee and updated them on relevant decision taken under delegated powers by the relevant Executive Director or their team.
- 8.2 Members suggested receiving a presentation from Karen Knight of Norse Care about the potential exploitation of NCC's property portfolio at a future meeting. As part of this it was suggested to invite members of the Adult Social Care Committee as although it predominantly would be about property, it would consider the capacity of the care market.
- 8.3 The Committee;
 - **AGREED** to receive a presentation from Karen Knight at the July meeting.
 - **NOTED** the delegated decisions.

9. Annual Review of Business and Property Committee activities

- 9.1 The Committee received the annexed report (9) which set out the Committee's three year forward plan which set out its areas of responsibility which would be shaped by the ambition of the County Council's new strategy.
- 9.2 The Executive Director explained that it was vital to get the first development of Repton at Acle correct and this would take time but it would start in 2019.
- 9.3 It was confirmed that the Committee had added value and there were achievements made as a result. The Committee had given focus to County Farms which had been problematic in the past.
- 9.4 The appointment of the two non-executive directors for Repton were being finalised and would be published as soon as possible.
- 9.5 The Committee;
- **AGREED** Business and Property Plan as set out in Appendix 1
 - **NOTED** the Committee's contribution to, and responsibilities, for Norfolk Futures, NCC's transformation plan.
 - **AGREED** the performance measures against which the committee will report to Policy and Resources Committee for monitoring purposes, as set out in para 1.1.8 of the report.

10. Regeneration of Yarmouth Riverside and Town Centre

- 10.1 The Committee received the annexed report (10) which provided members with an overview of the development of Great Yarmouth Town Centre and Waterfront, and the County Council's role.
- 10.2 Although the report was welcomed and long overdue, residents of Great Yarmouth wanted to see improvements made quicker. Progress was however being made and were visible. It was explained to Members that in planning terms a planning strategy for 2025 was relatively quick and although it was a long term strategy, there would be objectives met before then. The Economic Development Manager confirmed that now plans for the third bridge crossing had been made more certain, plans for Hall Quay could now be started.
- 10.3 The Committee heard that the strategy was being developed in collaboration with Great Yarmouth Borough Council and they were grateful for all the input from NCC.
- 10.4 The Committee **NOTED**;
- The contents of the report

11. Economic Development – strategic context for Norfolk

- 11.1 The Committee received the annexed report (11) which set out the shorter term, five year, performance targets, to inform delivery plans and the mechanisms for monitoring delivery of the targets. The report also set out Norfolk's contribution to delivery of the Norfolk and Suffolk Energy Coast, including proposals for spending Economic Development's 2018-19 funding.

- 11.2 Members were keen to see Norwich become one of the top fastest growing cities but in order for it to happen, things had to be pushed forward and employment and housing etc. had to be pushed for harder.
- 11.3 The targets referred to on page 29/30 of the report had been set by the Local Enterprise Partnership in 2016 using a series of methodologies. There was no reason why those targets wouldn't be delivered.
- 11.4 The Economic Strategy and Commissioning Manager confirmed that they had come to the end of the contract with Visit Norfolk so the only money they received was a £10k marketing grant. Visit Norfolk used to receive £40k and the website was hosted for them.
- 11.5 Members felt it was essential to align the priorities with the funding bids submitted so that delivery was achieved. The specific priority places for Norwich and Greater Norwich were vague in the report but this would be covered by the Norwich Growth Board. It was difficult to specify which priorities would be preferable as it depended on opportunities and work which was being carried out by Leaders of the Councils.
- 11.6 The Strategy was designed around giving the best opportunities for local growth. There had been an evidence based study to support the strategy and then it was a decision of the Councils where the funds were invested.
- 11.7 The Committee felt that it was important to keep medium size developments on the radar as they were easy to achieve and would deliver economy growth alongside housing growth. Over the last 20 years, investment had been spread thin which had slightly inhibited growth. Higher value companies needed to move into the area which would create higher paid jobs meaning lower paid jobs would become available and more people could enter the labour market. However, it was important to remember where people lived and create business around those areas.
- 11.8 The Committee heard that as the funding decreased year on year, it was essential that money was found in order to deliver the strategies. They were predominantly funded by external funds.
- 11.9 The Committee agreed to receive a presentation from Nigel Best at a future meeting around grants for small businesses. This could also be an opportunity to update the Committee on the European Funding Bid.
- 11.10 The Committee;
- **NOTED** the proposals outlined in the report and gave feedback where appropriate.
 - **AGREED** to receive a small business grant presentation from Nigel Best at the September meeting.

12. Finance Monitoring

- 12.1. The Committee received the annexed report (12) which provided the Committee with information on the budget position for services reporting to Business and Property Committee for 2017-18. It provided information on the revenue budget outturn for 2017-18 and the revenue budget values for 2018-19. It also provided an update on the use of reserves and details on the capital programme.

12.2 The Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services highlighted that Scottow Enterprises had over achieved by contributing £374k rather than their projected figure of £200k. Members asked what had been the total investment into Scottow and the Executive Director agreed to bring a more detailed report to the next meeting.

12.3 The Committee **NOTED**;

- The 2017-18 revenue outturn position for this Committee, and the 2018-19 revenue budget values.
- The capital programme for this Committee
- The actual use of reserves in 2017-18 and the balance of reserves carried forward to 2018-19.

13. Appointments to Internal and External Bodies

13.1 The Committee received the annexed report (13) which set out the internal and outside appointments relevant to the Committee together with the current representative.

13.2 The Committee reviewed the memberships and **AGREED** to duly appoint members as set out in Appendix 3 of these minutes.

14. Disposal, acquisition and exploitation of Properties

14.1 The Committee received the annexed report (14) which outlined proposals for exploiting properties surplus to operational requirements, pro-actively releasing property assets with latent value where the operational needs could be met from elsewhere and strategically acquiring property to drive economic growth and wellbeing in the County.

14.2 The Head of Property confirmed that Local Members had been contacted for comments about potential disposal of property.

14.3 The Head of Property confirmed that under NCC's adopted policy if any community groups were interested in the land, it must be acquired at the open market value.

14.4 The Committee;

- **ENDORSED** the key principles forming the policy on the treatment of retained land and sites following the conversion of schools to academies.
- **Formally DECLARED** the land at Stibbard Road, Fulmondeston surplus to County Council requirements and instruct the Head of Property to dispose of the property. In the event of a disposal receipt exceeding delegated limits, the Head of Property in consultation with the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services and Chair of B&P Committee is authorised to accept the most advantageous offer and report the fact at a subsequent B&P Committee meeting.
- **AGREED** to the acquisition of a licence for 3 years for 16 dedicated and 14 hot desks at South Norfolk House, Cygnet Court, Long Stratton for a fee of £31,500 per annum (pa).
- **AGREED** to the leasing of the Queens Road Land, Norwich to Sentinel House Buildings Ltd for a 30-year term at £2000 pa.
- **Formally DECLARED** the land adjacent Ashleigh Infant School, Wymondham surplus to requirements and instruct the Head of Property to dispose of the property. In the event of a disposal receipt exceeding delegated limits, the Head of

Property in consultation with the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services and Chair of B&P Committee is authorised to accept the most advantageous offer and report the fact at a subsequent B&P Committee meeting.

15. Exclusion of the Public

- 15.1 The Committee **AGREED** to exclude the public from the meeting under section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 on the basis of the conclusions of the public interest tests.

16. County Farms Estate Management Update

- 16.1 The Committee received the annexed report (16) which provided an update on the County Farms estate since its last meeting.
- 16.2 The Committee **AGREED** the recommendations as set out in the report.

17. Acquisition of Farm Lane

- 17.1. The Committee received the annexed report (17) which presented the proposal for the purchase of land at Avenue Farm, Halvergate.
- 17.5 The Committee **AGREED**;
- To the purchase of 168.91 acres (68.36 ha) of farm Land at Avenue Farm, Halvergate.

The Meeting ended at 12.30pm.

**Mr Keith Kiddie, Chairman,
Business and Property Committee**



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MEMBER/PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO BUSINESS AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE : TUESDAY 15 MAY 2018

6. MEMBER QUESTIONS

6.1 Question from Cllr Mick Castle

Whilst acknowledging the County Council's vital role in recent years in terms of infrastructure improvements it remains a truism that no major housing developments have taken place on Yarmouth Riverside since the demise of both EEDA and the 1st East URC in 2010-11.

Would the Chairman support further Norfolk County Council involvement to break this impasse given the multiple land owners, low land values and the significantly higher costs for developers in brownfield sites, including treatment of contaminated land and flood amelioration measures?

NCC Officers by handling strategic land assembly, master planning and viability assurance aspects could unlock development of 1000+ homes in these key brownfield sites of the town

Response by Chairman of B&P Committee

The County Council already works closely with the Borough Council on a range of issues, including inward investment, promotion and regeneration issues. We have a long history of co-operation which included helping to set up 1st East.

The difficulties Cllr Castle mentions were initially identified by 1st East and they combine to make the riverside site a significant challenge and we will continue to support the Borough Council to help deliver the Area Action Plan for the Waterfront in any way we can. There are a number of discussions underway already with the Borough Council, looking at how we can best support the Borough Council overcome these issues. A report will be taken in due course to the Borough Councils Policy and resources Committee

We support all of our Districts in helping to develop their regeneration ambitions, particularly around housing. This ranges from enabling funding from third parties through to direct financial investment on schemes where appropriate and feasible.

The report illustrates the many major road infrastructure and public realm works we have undertaken, or are in the pipeline, as well as the Third River Crossing and the planned A47 improvements which will in combination help attract more private investment into Gt Yarmouth.

In addition, the report describes the ambitious plans that the Borough Council has developed for the Town Centre, which are already underway. These will also help to attract investment into other parts of the town, including the waterfront areas.

However, we would welcome specific proposals from Cllr Castle as to what else the County Council should be doing.

Apprenticeship Update from Cllr Stuart Clancy – Apprenticeship Ambassador

I chaired a meeting of the Apprenticeship Network on Tuesday 1st May 2018 for the AGM, which had a focus on reviewing the network. A group discussion took place which will lead to the development of an action plan looking at how partners can contribute better in delivering increased Apprenticeship take up going forward and address the difficult issues the recent reforms have created.

The new Apprenticeship Training Agency working with vulnerable and NEET young people through has started and we have 5 young people have started in the programme.

Working in Partnership with NEACO, advisers have been working with 16-18 year olds to help them into higher or degree level apprenticeships. A gap in supporting young people in school and employer engagement exists and the Apprenticeship team are working to secure external funds to support this valuable work.

The team are working with district councils and through social media to increase the visibility of apprenticeship with SME's across the County. This is the area that has been most affected by the reforms in the system.

Colleges have taken the changes in the system to change the way they recruit apprentices from what was an open ended approach i.e. when the person was ready, to a more structured term based process of recruitment in September and January. This is impacting on employers who really need a more flexible approach. The team are working with private sector providers to try and keep more flexibility in the system.

The recent focus of developing new standards has been exclusively on level 3 and higher. I will be writing to ministers this week to encourage them to maintain an equal focus on level 2 standards as these are so important for many of Norfolk's young people.

Current Challenges;

Decline in Apprenticeship starts for 16-18 year olds

Lack of engagement and funding in Apprenticeships for SME's/Non-Levy employers

Decline in intermediate apprenticeships (Level 2) due to frameworks being switched off and standards not being developed frequently at this level.

Business and Property Committee - Outside Bodies Appointments

2018/19 Appointments shown

1. Agri-Tech (Eastern) Programme Board (1)

Fabian Eagle

This body makes decisions on the eastern Agri-Tech Growth Initiative Programme Board about which projects to fund from this specific Regional Growth Funded scheme.

2. BID (Norwich Business Improvement District) (1)

Steve Morpew

The Norwich BID is run for local businesses by local businesses. It aims to make a clear positive impact on the vitality of the City centre and the business within it.

3. Norwich Airport Consultative Committee (1)

Shelagh Gurney, (Sub David Collis)

These meetings are a DfT requirement to enable aerodrome operators and communities in the vicinity of the airport to discuss operational and business matters affecting their interests.

4. Norwich Airport Board (Non-Executive Director) (1)

Cliff Jordan (Sub Alison Thomas)

5. Norfolk Rail Group (4)

Tony White
Brian Long
Tim East
Michael Chenery

To consider strategic rail policy issues and respond to such issues as they arise, and lobby and pursue rail policy objectives on a continuing basis between Norfolk Rail Policy Group meetings.

6. Norfolk Chamber of Commerce and Industry (1)

Alison Thomas

Norfolk Chamber of Commerce is an independent, not-for-profit Company that aims to support its membership be more successful and to improve the Norfolk economy.

7. Thetford Development Board (1)

Roy Brame

8. New Anglia Skills Board for Norfolk and Suffolk (1 plus 1 Substitute)

Stuart Clancy (Sub Colleen Walker)

A sub group of the LEP Board which is tasked with steering the implementation of the Greater Norwich/ Greater Ipswich City Deals and the Strategic Economic Plan. Membership consists of representatives of the Further Education sector and training providers with employers. Both Norfolk and Suffolk County councils are represented and can nominate a substitute.

9. Town Centre Company (Great Yarmouth) Ltd (1)

Mick Castle

The Partnership meets and discusses all relevant issues concerning the Town Centre.

10. Hethel Innovation Ltd (2)

Keith Kiddie
Colin Foulger

Runs Hethel Engineering Centre and provides innovation-led business support to businesses in Norfolk/East of England.

11. Great Yarmouth Port/Leisure Users Liaison Meeting (1)

Ron Hanton

12. Great Yarmouth Development Company - Area Board (1)

Colleen Walker

The Norfolk Development Company was established to promote economic development on behalf of the local authorities of Norfolk, with an initial emphasis on physical regeneration and development. The company provides a structure for joint ventures which enables new projects to be agreed and implemented more quickly. Individual companies can be established – the first to do so was the Great Yarmouth Development Company, a 50-50 partnership between the County Council and Great Yarmouth Borough Council. The agreement states the representative should be the lead member for Economic Development. Clarification is being sought as to the continuing need for representation on this body

13. Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association (1)

Keith Kiddie

The objectives of the Association are to promote, through the Royal Norfolk Show and other events, the image, understanding and prosperity of agriculture and the countryside.

14. Rural Strategy Steering Group (1)

Tom Garrod

Member Champions

Apprenticeships – Stuart Clancy

Rail – Michael Chenery