



Norfolk County Council at your service

Environment, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Minutes of the Meeting held on 9 May 2012

Present:

Mr A Byrne (Chairman)

Mr A Adams

Dr A Boswell

Mr B Bremner

Mrs M Chapman-Allen

Michael Chenery of Horsbrugh

Mr P Duigan

Mr T East

Mr M Langwade

Dr M Strong

Mr T Tomkinson

Mr J Ward

Mr A White

Mr R Wright (Vice-Chairman)

Cabinet Members present:

Mr G Plant

Mrs A Steward

Planning and Transportation

Economic Development

Deputy Cabinet Member present:

Mr J Mooney

Mr B H A Spratt

Environment and Waste

Planning and Transportation

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr H Humphrey, Mr B Borrett and Mrs H Thompson, Mr N Dixon and Mr P Rice.

2 Election of Chairman

Mr A Byrne was elected Chairman of the Panel for the ensuing year.

(Mr A Byrne in the Chair)

3 Election of Vice-Chairman

Mr R Wright was elected Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year.

4 Minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2012

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2012 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

5 Declaration of Interests

Dr Strong declared a personal interest as she was a Senior Flood Warden in Wells.

6 Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

7 Public Question Time

Two questions were received from Mrs J Franklin. The questions and their responses can be found at Appendix A to these minutes.

8 Local Member Issues/Member Questions

There were no local Member issues or Member questions.

9 Three County Partnership – Energy Sector Market Visit to China

The Chairman welcomed representatives from Essex County Council and the International Trade Department who attended the meeting.

The Panel received a presentation from Ann Steward, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Peter Manning, Head of International Trade, Essex County Council on the recent visit to Jiangsu, China. A copy of the presentation is attached at Appendix C to these minutes.

During the presentation, the following points were noted:

- The Cabinet Member for Economic Development had participated in an Energy Sector Market visit to Jiangsu, China during March 2012, organised by Essex County Council. The visit had included Councillors and representatives from businesses in Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex, the aim of which was promote East Anglia to potential investors in the energy sector supply chain, particularly in renewable offshore wind energy.
- The partnership work with Essex and Suffolk County Councils was a two-year project to try to attract new inward investment from China. This work had built on the partnership already established in April 2011 when the three County Council Leaders signed a Memorandum of Understanding pledging to work together to provide the skills base that businesses in the energy sector would need to realise potential growth.
- The aim of the visit was to assist small businesses in our region by seeking opportunities to export their products and technology to China and also to explore cultural and educational opportunities in China and to encourage tourism in Norfolk through the many tourist attractions.

The Head of International Trade at Essex County Council thanked the Panel for the invitation to attend the meeting and during his presentation, the following points were noted:

- Meetings had been held with 11 Jiangsu and Shanghai offshore wind companies, which had enabled the group to promote inward investment opportunities.
- The East of England Offshore Wind Energy stand at the China International Import Expo in Jiangsu, had taken place over three days. During these three days over 900 brochures had been distributed, promoting inward investment opportunities in Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk. The East of England stand had been the only UK government representative at this expo.
- Essex County Council had contacts in Jiangsu and these contacts had been responsible for the promotion of the conference. Approximately 200 people from offshore wind businesses and trade associations had attended the conference.
- The Shanghai SMA Coordination Office was responsible for supporting Shanghai's 340,000 Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and agreements had been signed to promote business to business links between Shanghai and East of England SMEs.
- Many leads had been obtained on the visit and these would now be followed up. The feedback received from Chinese companies would be analysed so the inward investment promotion work could be refined and refocused.

The Cabinet Member thanked the team at Essex County Council for organising the trip - Ge Jing, Simon Maidment, Peter Manning who had attended the meeting. She also thanked Wei Lei, who was based in China.

Following questions from Panel members, the following points were noted:

- One of the most tangible benefits of the visit was the much higher profile for Norfolk tourism.
- Two Norfolk companies had been represented at the conference, namely Aker Solutions and the East of England Energy Group.
- The Cabinet Member agreed to feed back the cost of the Norfolk share of the visit to the Panel in writing.
- The promotional work carried out in China was just one element of the work done to try to attract investment in Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex. All other energy possibilities, including solar panels and wave energy, would be investigated in the future.

The Panel thanked the Cabinet Member and the representatives from Essex County Council and the International Trade Department for attending the meeting and for the excellent work that had been undertaken in building a strong partnership.

10 Cabinet Member Feedback on previous Overview and Scrutiny Panel comments.

The Panel received the annexed report (9) by the Cabinet Members for Planning and Transportation, Economic Development, Environment and Waste, and Community Protection, providing feedback on items discussed at Cabinet which had previously been discussed at an Environment Transport & Development (ETD) Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation drew the Panel's attention to the item on the Norfolk Concessionary Fares Scheme. He informed members that the Government were currently reviewing the formulae for the distribution of funds to see if there was a fairer method of allocation, particularly for rural parts of the country. The Cabinet Member had already written to, and met, the Transport Minister to request they re-look at the allocation of funding several times.

Following a member question, the Cabinet Member confirmed that the Council invested over half a million pounds and that Coasthopper was our most expensive service. Whilst recognising the contribution that Coasthopper makes to the county, the present funding model was not sustainable and other funders would be required if the same scale of service were to be continued in the future. The Cabinet member gave examples of where tourism businesses or other stakeholders along the route might wish to contribute towards the costs of running the service.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

11 Forward Work Programme: Scrutiny

The annexed report (10) by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development was received by the Panel. The report set out the forward work programme for scrutiny.

The Panel was asked to consider moving mobile phone coverage for rural and urban areas in Norfolk and digital radio to the ongoing/identified scrutiny items for possible future scrutiny section of the programme. The Business Support Officer stated that no date had yet been agreed for the switch over to digital radio and also that the topic would be brought back to the Panel for consideration once there was any further information available.

The Chairman of the Mobile Phone coverage for rural and urban areas in Norfolk and digital radio working group requested that the mobile phone

scrutiny topic should be kept on the programme with the Panel being updated as and when there was anything to report.

A suggestion was made that the Trading Standards service could look at whether there were any implications from mobile phone companies not informing customers about the actual mobile phone network coverage in their area. Some Members felt customers were not aware they have the right to ask what coverage was like in their area and that this should be highlighted to the public.

The Panel requested that the topic “Developing confident young consumers” was not pertinent to the Environment Transport and Development O&S Panel and should be moved under the remit of the Fire and Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

RESOLVED that

1. The Outline Scrutiny Programme as set out in Appendix A of the report, the scrutiny topics listed and the reporting dates, were agreed.
2. “Developing confident young consumers” should be reallocated to the Fire and Rescue O&S Panel for scrutiny.

12 The National Planning Policy Framework

The Panel received the annexed report (11) by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development, setting out the new guidance document. The aim of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) document was to deliver a much simpler, quicker and more certain planning system, to enable sustainable development and growth. However, the NPPF did not change the basis of the current planning system.

Following Member questions, the following points were noted:

- The Government had made it clear that any decisions about sustainable development and growth would be made by Local Authorities, guided principally by the adopted development plan and the NPPF.
- If Lotus did decide to move their business away from Norfolk, the Hethel Engineering Centre would remain a viable business, as it was currently fully let and there were companies waiting to move into the Centre.
- Whenever new guidance came into effect there would always be a transitional period for the guidance to become established, during which it was likely that some cases would be tested through the court system.
- A suggestion was made for officers to produce a definition of “sustainable development” so the Planning (Regulatory) Committee could use that as a reference guide. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation challenged this suggestion and argued that

Members should embrace the opportunity to determine what sustainable development meant, given particular local circumstances.

RESOLVED that

1. The publication of the NPPF be noted;
2. Norfolk County Council was well-placed to manage the changes that would result; and
3. the County Council should take full advantage of opportunities to deliver sustainable development.

13 Procurement of ETD Highways and Related Services from 2014

The Panel received the annexed report (13) by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development and the Head of Procurement, updating members on the progress with the reprocurement exercise to date.

The report was presented by the Assistant Director Highways and the Head of Procurement, during which the following points were noted:

- Cabinet had approved the approach to procurement in order to maintain tighter processes on how procurement was managed and to keep all costs to a minimum.
- The procurement process outlined in the report had been designed carefully and had been overseen by a cross-party member Board. The process now needed to be managed carefully.
- There was a need to ensure that bidders and potential bidders received equal access to all relevant information and were all treated equally in the procurement process.
- The whole procurement process would need to be transparent and clear on how tenders would be marked. The criteria for marking tenders would need to be set out before any tendering processes commenced.
- A concept viability day would take place, where potential bidders would be able to gain more detailed information on what would be required under the procurement process.
- Competitive dialogue to shortlist six potential providers down to three would follow the concept viability day. All three potential providers would then be invited to submit a tender. These tenders would then be evaluated, followed by a standstill period before fine tuning of the offer, after which contracts would be signed.
- The Official Journal of the European Union notice and pre-qualification criteria would be brought to Panel in the Autumn, after which Members would be asked to approve the contract award and then the evaluation of final submissions would be presented to Cabinet.

RESOLVED that

1. the content of the report and the key milestones within the procurement programme be noted.
2. A recommendation to Cabinet that decisions other than those detailed in 2.2 and 2.3 of the report be delegated to the Director of Environment, transport and Development in consultation with the cross-party Member Board and the Head of Procurement, would be made.

14 Recycling Centre Service – Commissioning

The annexed report (14) by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development was received by the Panel. The report informed the Panel that the contract for 19 of the main recycling centres would expire on 31 March 2014, and asked Members to recommend to Cabinet that a Service Level Agreement (SLA) contract with NEWS be entered into. Members were also invited to agree that a project board be established to oversee the development of delivery arrangements. The Project Board would provide regular scrutiny and direction of the service commissioning.

The following points were noted during the discussion:

- There were no current plans to make any changes to the opening times of any of the recycling centres as the current arrangements for the part-time recycling sites met the present budget savings requirements.
- The SLA with NEWS option would give opportunities and the flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances in the future.
- Members of the Panel agreed that a Project Board should be established and it was confirmed this Board would be politically balanced. Dr Strong would represent the Liberal Democrat Group on the Project Board, with other names to be confirmed.
- The recommendation that Cabinet should enter into a SLA contract with NEWS was proposed and seconded. The Panel agreed this recommendation.

RESOLVED to

1. Make a recommendation to Cabinet to enter into a SLA contract with NEWS, as outlined in the report, and to
2. Establish a Project Board to oversee the development of delivery arrangements under any future contract or SLA arrangements, which would be politically balanced, as outlined in the report.

15 Environment, Transport and Development Department Integrated Performance and Finance Monitoring Report 2011/12.

The annexed report (15) by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development was received by the Panel. The report provided an update of the progress made against the 2011-14 service plan actions, risks and finances for Environment, Transport and Development (ETD). There had been no significant changes since the last report to the Panel in April 2012.

The following points were noted during the discussion:

- Flood and water management had shown an underspend which was due to a six month delay in receiving consultation from the Government on sustainable urban drainage which had therefore delayed the legislation start date.
- The details that can be released of the sale of EPIC will be circulated as soon as it was legally possible.

RESOLVED that

The progress against ETD's service plan actions, risks and budget and whether any aspects should be identified for further scrutiny, as outlined in the report, be noted.

(The meeting closed at 12noon)

Chairman



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Appendix A

Item 7 – Public Question Time

Question 1 from Mrs J Franklin

I am concerned that local government contracts are being awarded directly to Norse, or its many subsidiaries, without going through the normal tendering process via the open market.

How can we be sure that as taxpayers this offers 'best value' commissioning of services?

Reply by Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste

As outlined in the report (section 4.2), Best Value for taxpayers would be ensured through an Open Book system of operation and regular benchmarking of services, together with an ability to cancel the SLA and take a procurement or any other approach at any later date. Given the pressure on all of the County Councils budgets there is a huge incentive to go for best value and this approach is designed to maximise just that for Norfolk council tax payers.

Question 2 from Mrs J Franklin

Thinking of sustainable development in view of the need to use water wisely and produce electricity in an environmentally friendly way.

Is it possible to incorporate the inclusion of grey water catchment systems and solar panels to be installed, on all new builds, as a statutory requirement to qualify for planning consent?

Reply by Cabinet Member Planning and Transportation

The inclusion of grey-water catchment systems and solar panels on all new-builds would be welcomed in principle by all planning authorities (where this would not cause adverse affects, such as in a Conservation Area), and supportive policies are included in Local Development Frameworks/Local Plans. However, it is not currently possible to require this through the planning system.

Appendix B

Actions arising at the Environment, Transport & Development Overview & Scrutiny Panel meeting 9 May 2012

Agenda Item Number	Report Title	Action	REPLY by: -
9	Three County Partnership – Energy Sector Market Visit to China	The Cabinet Member agreed to feed back the total cost of the Norfolk share of the visit to the Panel in writing.	Cabinet Member for Economic Development The total cost to Norfolk County Council, for Ann Steward to attend the Energy Sector Market Visit to Jiangsu in March 2012, was £1,577.62.
11	Forward Work Programme - Scrutiny	The Panel requested that the topic “Developing confident young consumers” was not pertinent to the Environment Transport and Development O&S Panel and should be moved under the remit of the Fire and Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Panel.	ETD Scrutiny Support Manager
14	Recycling Centre Service – Commissioning	Establish a Project Board to oversee the development of delivery arrangements under any future contract or SLA arrangements, which would be politically balanced, as outlined in the report.	ETD Scrutiny Support Manager Lib Dems nominated Dr Marie Strong to the Project Board.
15	Environment, Transport and Development Department Integrated Performance and Finance monitoring Report 2011/12.	The details that can be released of the sale of EPIC will be circulated as soon as it was legally possible.	Cabinet Member for Economic Development

Energy Sector Market Visit to Jiangsu, China

Presentation by:

**Cllr Ann Steward, Economic Development, Norfolk County Council &
Peter Manning, International Trade, Essex County Council**



Three Counties Partnership

Aims of the partnership include:

- Combining resources in a two-year project to attract new **inward investment** from China, for the region's Energy Sector supply chain.
- **Joint promotion** of the Norfolk, Suffolk & Essex energy sector 'offer'.
- Seek **export opportunities** for our businesses.
- Explore other joint China activities such as the promotion of **cultural and educational exchanges**.



3 Counties Partnership MoU was signed in February 2012

Jiangsu Province

- 78 million people
- 10% of China's GDP
- GDP = Switzerland
- 20% of China's Foreign Investment
- 12.6% GDP growth in 2010



A map of China with its provinces outlined in black. Jiangsu Province, located in the eastern part of the country, is highlighted in a solid red color. To the east of the province, four cities are marked with black dots and labeled: Nanjing, Kunshan, Wuxi, and Shanghai. The surrounding areas are colored in shades of yellow and green, representing other provinces and the sea.

Nanjing • Kunshan
Wuxi • Shanghai

Agenda for the trip

- Company visits
- Nanjing University
- Jiangsu Provincial Development and Reform Commission and the Jiangsu Energy Bureau – MoU signing
- Wuxi China Council for the Promotion of International Trade
- Kunshan Import Expo Exhibition
- East of England Energy Coast Promotional Seminar
- Meeting with Shanghai SME Coordination Office – MoU signing

Jiangsu Company Visits



Jiangsu Provincial Government



East of England Energy Coast



Seminar at the Kunshan Import/ Expo



East of England Promotion from the Private Sector



Shanghai SME Coordination Office



Shanghai Municipal Economic and Information Commission



Next Steps

- Follow up all the leads
- Prepare for the inward visit by at least 8 Jiangsu offshore wind businesses in June 18-19 2012
- Target more potential inward investors elsewhere in China

Energy Sector Market Visit to Jiangsu, China

