

Environment, Development and Transport Committee

Item No.

Report title:	Update from Economic Development Sub Committee
Date of meeting:	27 January 2017
Responsible Chief Officer:	Tom McCabe – Executive Director, Community and Environmental Services
Strategic impact <p>The Chair of the Environment, Development and Transport Committee (EDT) requested an update for each meeting on the issues and actions from the Economic Development Sub Committee (EDSC). This report summarises those of the 24 November 2016 EDSC meeting.</p>	

Executive summary

At their November 2016 meeting, the key issues EDSC discussed were:

- Update from the County Farms Advisory Board
- Cambridge Norwich Tech Corridor
- Norfolk Library Information Service support to business
- Apprenticeships
- A47 Road Investment Strategy update
- Housing and infrastructure growth
- MIPIM UK 2016: Feedback from event
- Update from the France (Channel) England Programme
- Finance monitoring
- Performance Management
- EDSC Sub Committee

Recommendations:

Members to note the update and actions from the November 2016 Economic Development Sub-Committee

1. Proposal

- 1.1. The topics discussed by Members at the previous Economic Development Sub-Committee are outlined below.

2. Evidence

2.1 Update from the County Farms Advisory Board

Mr B Spratt gave an update to the Sub-Committee on the recent meeting of the County Farms Advisory Board:

- The Advisory Board and Farmers hoped to improve communications between County Farms and Norfolk County Council to support moving forward efficiently with, for example, addressing farm repairs,

- There had been a reasonable harvest this year,
- It was felt that farm rents should be reviewed,
- It was felt that County Farm property assets should be looked into more closely, for example, the strong-holdings around Wisbech, Acle and Blofield,
- Tenant farmers had reported they were supportive of the Advisory Board and were keen for the identified improvements to be made as quickly as possible.

2.2 **Cambridge Norwich Tech Corridor**

The Sub-Committee received the report introduced by the Economic Development Manager discussing the Cambridge Norwich Tech Corridor and the local authorities and LEPs (Local Enterprise Partnerships) that had come together in partnership to raise the profile of the Corridor and attract business investment. During the discussion the following points were noted:

- The level of interest in Hethel Engineering Centre, one of the key assets along the Technology Corridor was queried; the Economic Development Manager confirmed that the centre was performing well, with over 90% occupancy. Tenant companies tended to be more knowledge or technology based and therefore not as directly reliant on the dualling as other businesses. Instead the centre is seen as a key focus for attracting investment.
- A member highlighted a potential to the economy of Norfolk of linking to the motorsport economy of Oxford and suggested that the announcement of the road links to Oxford in the autumn statements should therefore be promoted.

The subcommittee approved the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding and joining the Cambridge Norwich Tech Corridor partnership.

2.3 **Norfolk Library Information Service support to business**

The Sub-Committee received a report discussing projects being looked into by the Business Library in partnership with the Economic Development and Strategy Group to develop its current services and provide more targeted support.

The Economic Development Manager reported that business support is an important service provided through the library. By working in partnership with the New Anglia Growth Hub, it has been possible to ensure added value to the Norfolk business support landscape and avoid duplication.

2.4 **Apprenticeships Update**

The Sub-Committee received a report giving an update on progress against targets for the Apprenticeships Norfolk Network since 2013. The Employment and Skills Manager reported that Norfolk lead the Eastern Region in the uptake of apprenticeships but despite the County's strong performance it was important to highlight that the level of service was likely to be at risk from June 2017 following funding ending at the end of March 2017. During the discussion the following points were noted:

- It was indicated that industry and manufacturing apprenticeships had struggled due to difficulties experienced by the oil and gas industry
- The Apprenticeships Strategy Manager clarified that the number of young people interested in apprenticeships in the industry and manufacturing sector had in fact increased; it was not possible to break down the data further to explore trends related to specific industries and manufacturing types within this and other sectors

- External sources of funding were being explored to replace the funding ending in June 2017. Current funding was given to 2012; it had been used carefully in order to last as long as possible, therefore the endpoint of the funding was known to be accurate.
- Mrs C Walker praised the work of the Norfolk County Council Apprenticeships Service
- Seeking a tariff from employers had not been considered because of uncertainty in the market due to funding changes
- It had been noted that the apprenticeships training framework did not meet the needs of the renewable energy sector, this would change with the reforms due to be brought in by the Government to make apprenticeships more employer led. Pre-apprenticeships would also be seen, taken on by some providers as a pre-cursor to apprenticeships.
- It was noted that Great Yarmouth, Thetford and King's Lynn would not benefit from the social mobility scheme indicated on page 37 of the report. The Employment and Skills Manager reported that Officers were looking to use match funding in order to use funding more broadly across the County
- The acting Assistant Director of Economic Development and Strategy clarified that since it would be necessary to confirm how funding would be provided from June 2017 onwards before current funding ceased, a further report to review Apprenticeships funding would be brought to the Sub-Committee by March 2017
- £250,000 of funding would be needed to continue with the existing level of service
- The number of health and social care apprenticeships was increasing annually with plans in place to increase this further. Conversations were underway with the Norwich Research Park who were looking at taking on higher level apprenticeships.
- Mr B Spratt proposed that the Chairman discuss with the Executive Director of Finance whether the Committee would have the capacity to fund the full £250,000 required to continue the work of Apprenticeships Norfolk, seconded by Mr J Timewell.
- The acting Assistant Director of Economic Development and Strategy felt it was important to first explore the external funding opportunities available before proposing any amount of funding by Norfolk County Council.

The Sub-Committee noted:

- The strong performance in Apprenticeships starts over the previous 3 years since 2013
- That the Norfolk County Council Apprenticeships Norfolk Fund funding to support marketing and other activities apprenticeships would end in March 2017
- That the Norfolk County Council Apprenticeships Norfolk Fund funding to provide face to face support promoting apprenticeships would end in June 2017
- That alternative sources of funding were being explored to continue these activities
- That a further report detailing options for future service delivery would be brought to the committee

The Sub-Committee agreed that the Chairman discuss with the Executive Director of Finance whether the Committee would have the capacity to fund the full £250,000 required to continue the work of Apprenticeships Norfolk.

2.5 **A47 Road Investment Strategy Update**

The Sub-Committee received a report providing an update on A47 improvement schemes being developed by Highways England, and other projects being undertaken by Highways England. During the discussion the following points were noted:

- The impact of increased timescales on the cost of schemes was queried. The Principal Infrastructure Growth Planner discussed environmental surveys which would need to be repeated if work was not completed within a short period of time, incurring a cost
- Members expressed frustrations over the timescales of existing and future Road Investment Strategy (RIS) schemes. The Principal Infrastructure Growth Planner encouraged Members to continue to express concerns over the timescales and agreed to continue to lobby for these to be sped up, however recognised that statutory procedures may inhibit this. The Principal Infrastructure Growth Planner agreed to write to the Minister of Transport to request for some of the schemes to be brought forward.
- Issues related to the roundabouts on the A12 to Yarmouth and traffic lights to Garton Hall roundabout were discussed, having not been addressed despite being raised with Highways England. The Principal Infrastructure Growth Planner agreed to follow this up.
- The infrastructure of the Thickthorn Junction was discussed, and the impact on this from house building in Wymondham.

The Sub-Committee agreed to note:

- The stats and timeline for RIS1
- The likely timeline for RIS2 decisions and actively engage with the A47 Alliance to ensure successful approval of our priority schemes “as a matter of urgency”.

2.6 **Housing and Infrastructure Growth**

The Sub-Committee received and noted the report requested at the meeting on 14th July 2016 providing information on housing completions, jobs growth and the status of key infrastructure projects.

The Infrastructure and Economic Growth Manager agreed to find information for Mr B Spratt regarding housing developments and closure of railway crossings at Great Moulton, Aslacton and Tivetshall; he agreed to circulate this information to Mr B Spratt and to the Members of the Sub-Committee.

The Sub-Committee noted that a further report would be brought on this item in 2017.

2.7 **MIPIIM UK 2016: Feedback from event**

The Sub-Committee received and noted the report providing feedback from attendance of the County Council’s inward investment team at MIPIIM UK 2016 along with the Greater Norwich Growth Board, New Anglia Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the private sector to promote development opportunities in Norfolk and raise Norfolk and Norwich’s profile to a national and international audience of property investors.

The Infrastructure and Economic Growth Manager introduced the report:

- A copy of the investment brochure created to promote investment opportunities in Norfolk at the MIPIIM UK event was made available to view;
- The Infrastructure and Economic Growth Manager discussed the process of brand creation and showed the prospectus promoting key features of

- the region;
- Business people from the private sector had helped to promote Norwich and Norfolk at the event;
- The first visit from an investment lead had been arranged.

A concern was raised over the road network in Norwich and the impact of roadworks in the City. The Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services clarified that there were no planned roadworks in Norwich over Christmas. He discussed the positives of increased footfall in the City to the retail sector and wider businesses. He also said that planned growth improvements to the transport infrastructure were important.

2.8 **Update on the France (Channel) England Programme**

The Sub-Committee heard a presentation by the Programme Manager for the France (Channel) England Programme, providing an annual update, namely:

- €105m was allocated to Priority 1, €102m to Priority 2 and €63m to Priority 3;
- The selection committee were due to meet at the end of November to decide the stage 2 projects;
- Intelligent Community Energy (ICE) had nine partners, one of which was in Norfolk, the UEA (University of East Anglia);
- ICE was targeted to the needs of isolated areas such as islands
- The ICE programme had developed a system to develop energy based on a mix of renewable energy sources;
- Further information was given about other projects under development.

The acting Assistant Director of Economic Development and Strategy reported that monthly meetings were held with the Government Department for Exiting the European Union to look at key issues from a Norfolk perspective; it had been confirmed that projects agreed before leaving the European Union would have their funding guaranteed while Norfolk County Council was part of the Commission.

The Chairman thanked the Programme Manager for the France (Channel) England Programme for the report and the team for this work on the programme.

2.9 **Finance Monitoring**

The Sub-Committee received the report providing the financial position for the service as at the end of September 2016, period 6 for the 2016-17 financial year, covering the revenue budget, capital programme and balance of reserves.

The Finance Business Partner for Community and Environmental Services agreed to clarify the full figures of the agreed investment for Scottow.

The Sub-Committee noted the budgets for Economic Development and Strategy for 2016-17.

2.10 **Performance Management**

The Sub-Committee received the report based on the revised performance management system and the Committee's four vital signs indicators.

The Sub-Committee notes that none of the four vital signs which fell within their remit had met the exception reporting criteria.

2.11 **Forward Plan**

The Sub-Committee received and reviewed the forward plan for the period January-March 2017.

It was noted that a further report would be brought to the Sub-Committee by March 2017 to review Apprenticeships Norfolk funding, in light of the risk related to ongoing funding.

3. Issues, risks and innovation

3.1. None as a result of this report.

4. Background

4.1. This report has been produced at the request of the EDT Chair.

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper or want to see copies of any assessments, eg equality impact assessment, please get in touch with:

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