

# Business and Property Committee

Item No.....

<b>Report title:</b>	<b>Annual Review of Business and Property Committee activities</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>15 May 2018</b>
<b>Responsible Chief Officer:</b>	<b>Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services</b>
<b>Strategic impact</b> The Business and Property Committee has a substantial remit that is central to driving economic growth and wellbeing within the County. It provides the immediate benefit of being able to consider property related decisions in the context of the wider financial, economic and service requirements in the county.	

## Executive summary

This report sets out some of the achievements of the Business and Property Committee since it was established last year.

### Recommendation:

**Business and Property Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and the achievements made.**

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Business and Property Committee commenced 20 June 2017 and is responsible for promoting economic development and regeneration and associated activities. It also has responsibility for developing and monitoring property and asset management. Furthermore, it incorporates a focus on four broad areas: infrastructure, enterprise, skills and securing/managing external funds. It also has responsibility for the oversight and development of County Farms, a recognition of their importance in the rural economy.
- 1.2 This report records and celebrates some of the achievements of the Committee since its inception.

## 2.0 Key achievements

- 2.1 Oversaw the **establishment of Repton Property Developments Ltd** with the aim of delivering much needed housing, capital receipts and revenue income. It is anticipated the company will see the first transfer of land later this summer and building commence in 2019.
- 2.2 Developed and recommended the adoption of up to date **objectives and policies for the County Farms estate**.

- 2.3 The successful **purchase of Bank House Farm** that has added an important asset to support the objectives of the County Farms estate.
- 2.4 Supported the joint project with Norwich City Council to draw up **proposals to realise the significant opportunities the Norwich Airport Industrial Estate** has to offer in term of increased asset value, growth in non-domestic rates and employment growth.
- 2.5 Through the asset management plan oversaw the **successful bids to the government's One Public Estate Programme** that has realised an additional £370,000 revenue funding to support partnership projects with district councils, police and the NHS. Furthermore, a bid to the government's Land Release fund realised a total capital grant of £1,440,000 (£980K for Norwich City, £300K for Breckland and £160K for Broadland) to support housing development.
- 2.6 Reviewed and **declared surplus to County Council use 33 properties with a further 12 sites from the County Farms estate** also being declared surplus. These all form part of the disposal programme which includes the key sites of King Street Stores in Norwich and the Officer's Mess at Scottow Enterprise Park, both of which are currently being marketed. The Committee has also agreed to the sale of the County Council's half of the Hethell Engineering Centre to Hethell Innovation Ltd. During 2017/18 the Council achieved £1,309,202 of capital receipts which was used to support the capital programme.
- 2.7 Reviewed and agreed the **strategic direction for Scottow Enterprise Park (SEP)**, and the key areas of focus for further development over the next 18-24 months. This will build on the highly successful approach that has enabled 492 jobs on site, 11 tenants and 26 start-up businesses. SEP was also short-listed for two National Awards.
- 2.8 Overseen the **establishment of a new Apprenticeship Training Agency (ATA)** on a trial basis. The ATA forms part of a package of work and new products being developed to refocus recruitment to 16 to 18-year olds, support more vulnerable individuals into Apprenticeships and address the recruitment issues faced in the service sectors where Apprenticeship vacancies often go unfilled.
- 2.9 Supported the bid to the European Social Fund to establish an **Integrated Health and Employment Service for Norfolk**. The project seeks to address issues faced in recruitment and retention in the health and social care environment, including through training, creating more influential leaders and supporting individuals to develop their careers. If the bid is successful, the project will start delivery in June 2018.
- 2.10 Continued to press the **economic case for major infrastructure improvements**. Over the last 12 months, construction on the Norwich Northern Distributor Route has completed and the road fully opened for use. The County Council has secured Government funding for the Great Yarmouth

3<sup>rd</sup> River Crossing project, and work to progress the Norwich Western Link, Long Stratton Bypass and other key improvements continues.

- 2.11 The County Farms estate realises an **annual rent income of over £2.1m** and at the end of the last financial year (2017/18) there were no rent arrears outstanding.
- 2.12 The Committee adopted its committee plan in March 2018 which includes a property savings target of £975,000 for 2018/19. To date **£230,000 has been achieved this financial year** by careful redefining of the Service Level Agreement with its key supplier NPS (£170,000 from estates services and £60,000 from facilities management and statutory servicing).
- 2.13 In project terms a key project on the County Hall campus was completed and involved the relocation of the training suite from the Annex into the south wing. A project to bring back in to use the 5 former dwellings at Netherwood Green is about to commence to provide modern accommodation for Adult Services. Moving forward preparation work is ongoing in relation to projects to improve IT resilience and refurbish the north wing and basement areas.
- 2.14 Away from the campus a project to refurbish the Vauxhall Centre to provide 78 car parking spaces is nearing completion. This will be commercially let to provide an income. Also, the new replacement fire station at Downham Market was opened in the Autumn of 2017.

### **3.0 Financial Implications**

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications flowing directly from Members noting this report.

### **4.0 Issues, risks and innovation**

- 4.1 There are no other relevant implications to be considered by Members.

### **Officer Contact**

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