



Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting Held on 17 December 2019
at 10:00 am in the Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich

Present:

Cllr Steve Morphew (Chair)
Cllr Alison Thomas (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Ed Connolly
Cllr Emma Corlett
Cllr Phillip Duigan
Cllr Chris Jones

Cllr Keith Kiddie
Cllr Ed Maxfield
Cllr Dan Roper

Substitute Members present:

Cllr Haydn Thirtle for Cllr Ron Hanton
Cllr Bev Spratt for Cllr Joe Mooney

Also present:

Chris Starkie	The New Anglia LEP Chief Executive Officer
Doug Field	The New Anglia LEP Chair
Cllr Andrew Proctor	Leader and Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy
Tom McCabe	Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services
Vince Muspratt	Assistant Director Growth and Development
Sebastian Gasse	Head of Education Participation, Infrastructure and Partnership Service
Simon George	Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services
Fiona McDiarmid	Executive Director Strategy and Governance
Jackie Bircham	Programme Director - Norwich Opportunity Area
Andrew Staines	Head of Strategy, Innovation and Performance
James Bullion	Executive Director of Adult Social Services
Cllr Lesley Grahame	Norwich City Council
Richard Bearman	Member of the public
Karen Haywood	Democratic Support and Scrutiny Manager
Tim Shaw	Committee Officer

1 Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Ron Hanton (Cllr Haydn Thirtle substituting), Cllr Joe Mooney (Cllr Bev Spratt substituting) and Cllr Roy Brame, Cllr Richard Price and Mr Giles Hankinson.

2A Minutes

- 2A.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2019 were declared as an accurate record and signed by the Chair subject to the impact on the Northern Area Highways budget being added at minute 9.10.

2B Vacancy for a Parent Governor Representative

- 2B.1 The Democratic Support and Scrutiny Manager was asked to report back to the next meeting on the steps that were being taken to fill the vacancy for a second Parent Governor representative on the Committee.

3. Declarations of Interest

- 3.1 The following "Other Interests" were declared in respect of Item 8 (New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership and Local Industrial Strategy):

- Cllr Ed Connolly, member of the Norfolk Rural Strategy Steering Group
- Cllr Emma Corlett, family member receives capital grant from LEP for equipment for their business in Suffolk.
- Cllr Haydn Thirtle, member of development steering committee for Centre 81 who have made two applications to the LEP.

- 3.2 The following "Other Interests" were declared in respect of Item 9 (Norwich Opportunity Area):

- Cllr Emma Corlett, member of Local Governing Body, Bignold Primary School.
- Cllr Chris Jones, governor of Future Education.
- Cllr Ed Maxfield, the charity that he works for is on the framework of providers for the Norwich Opportunity Area.

4 Urgent Business

- 4.1 No urgent business was discussed

5. Public Question Time: Question from Cllr Lesley Grahame, Norwich City Council

- 5.1 What enquiries has scrutiny made, if any, and if none what will it make, into what thinking and progress the LEP and Norfolk County Council have made towards nurturing zero-carbon industries and skills (such as in energy, public transport, sustainable agriculture) and diversifying away from those that add to our greenhouse gas emissions? Will Scrutiny Committee also make enquiries into when reducing emissions and climate impact will be added to the criteria for funding applications to the LEP, and to the headline goals of both the LEP and each council

Response by Chair:

This is the first meeting at which the Scrutiny Committee has scrutinised the New Anglia LEP and therefore we have not been in a position to make any previous enquiries as to the progress that the LEP have made in this area.

Climate Change has been accepted by the county council as crucially important so I would expect to see such questions forming part of any partnerships, schemes and strategies the County Council is involved in. They are certainly issues the committee will be raising at this meeting.

5.2 Supplementary Question from Cllr Lesley Grahame, Norwich City Council:

How does the LEP plan to work with the Scrutiny Committee on scrutiny issues?

Response by Chair:

This will be considered at item 8 on the agenda.

6. Local Member Issues/Questions

6.1 No local Member questions were received.

7. Call ins

7.1 The Committee noted that there were no call-ins for today's meeting.

8. New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership and Local Industrial Strategy

8.1 The annexed report (8) gave an overview on the purpose of the new Anglia LEP, membership and links with District Councils and Suffolk County Council. The report contained background information on LEP funding and links to local economic growth to help support scrutiny. The report also provided information on the Norfolk and Suffolk Local Industrial Strategy which was endorsed by Cabinet on 7 October 2019. In addition, the Committee received a short video about the New Anglia LEP Year in Review 2018-19.

8.2 The Chair welcomed to the meeting the New Anglia LEP Chief Executive Officer, Chris Starkie and the NALEP Chair, Doug Field who were in attendance to assist the Committee in scrutiny of the New Anglia LEP.

8.3 The issues that were considered by the Committee included the following:

- In reply to questions the speakers said that the LEP was willing to do all that it could to support the growth of quality apprenticeships and training opportunities in an affordable and sustainable way as part of its grant conditions.
- All funding awarded to the LEP had been allocated but not every capital scheme was being delivered on time.
- The financial balance sheet gave only a snap shot of the picture regarding the allocation of funding at a given point in time.
- It was suggested that the LEP should provide (by way of illustrated examples) more detailed information (set against the criteria in the Norfolk and Suffolk investment strategy) as to the reasons why funding applications might or might not be successful.
- The speakers said that the LEP worked with applicants for funding before and after they made their bids and provided feedback to those who were unsuccessful.
- The LEP was focused on improving digital skills and the digital economy

and targeted support at industries where there were gaps in the local economy and financial support could have the greatest impact.

- The LEP had a business-led Board of 18 members, the composition of which was set out in the report.
- There was considerable joint working between the County Council, Suffolk
- County Council and the LEP, such as on inward investment and sector promotion, where the offer was bigger than just one county.
- The speakers said that the LEP was developing strategic opportunities in sectors where Norfolk and Suffolk had competitive advantage.
- Key areas of activity were:
 - Clean Energy
 - Agri-Food.
 - Digital Creative
- In reply to questions about the Innovation Centre at King's Lynn the speakers said that all interested parties viewed this as a highly successful project. The financial risks to the LEP were adequately covered by the assurances received from the Borough Council who retained overall responsibility for due diligence in relation to the project.
- In reply to questions about the added value that the LEP brought to the local economy, the speakers said that all local authorities in Norfolk and Suffolk were given an opportunity to shape and endorse the Strategy and to agree the shared vision, the challenges and the sector opportunities.
- A Councillor then suggested that the LEP was targeted at large steel and concrete built projects and at large centralized employment opportunities and large development proposals rather than at smaller projects which might be of more benefit to the local economy.
- The speakers said that discussions were continually being held with Government departments on how the key elements of the LEP could help raise the profile of the local economy.
- The added value of the LEP was in the private/public sector partnership agreements and the additional investment that these agreements brought into the area. The LEP was not about replicating the role of local government.
- The Community Challenge Fund supported many small and medium sized businesses in Norfolk and Suffolk.
- As well as addressing the skills shortages in Norfolk and Suffolk, the LEP maximised the opportunities available to local people.
- The speakers added that the New Anglia LEP was one of the few LEP's working in the charity space.
- Councillors questioned what success looked like in terms of employment opportunities. In reply the speakers said that all the employers supported by the LEP were using LEP funding to provide permanent positions.
- Norwich City Council saw the importance of Fair Wage Employers and the LEP shared their view on this matter. While definitions of permanent employment positions differed by sector all jobs that the LEP supported were for a minimum of 6 months. Further details regarding definitions of permanent employment and the lengths of employment supported by the LEP could be provided when the Scrutiny Committee next considered this matter.
- The Assistant Director, Growth and Development said that he would produce a note for Councillors on the arrangements that were being made to replace European funding with funding from the UK Prosperity Fund.

- Councillors questioned the speakers regarding the role of the New Anglia LEP in supporting the care sector. In reply the speakers said that the level of support which the LEP could provide to the care sector was subject to national policy determinates.
- The Director of Adult Social Services said that he would produce a note for Councillors about his powers of regulation/intervention in promoting the local care sector (with reference to the Care Act).
- The speakers said that they would provide a note for Cllr Duigan on the level of support that the LEP provided to business in the Dereham area (for postal addresses NR19 and NR20).
- It was noted that the LEP employed a growth hub advisor who (on request) could attend Town/ Parish Council meetings to explain the role of the LEP.
- In reply to questions from the Chair about how they intended to address issues of climate change the speakers said that the LEP had commissioned a report on this issue which was due to be received from the UEA by the end of January 2020. The framework for how the LEP would respond on climate change was due to be agreed by the LEP Board in February 2020. An action plan would be published in Spring 2020. It should be possible for the Scrutiny Committee to comment on the content of the action plan in April/May 2020.
- It was pointed out that the LEP tourism strategy was also due to be published in the Spring and could be looked at by the Scrutiny Committee at the same time.
- The Chair suggested that the LEP should look to take a more active role in helping to solve the ongoing issues with the Greater Anglia rail service. The introduction of new trains was welcomed but underlying infrastructure problems remained to be resolved. It was important for the LEP to continue to take up with the Department of Transport, Network Rail and Greater Anglia the need for track improvements. It was also important for the LEP to press the case for improvements in bus services and in the experiences of bus travellers. In reply the speakers said that they would continue to address such issues as part of an integrated transport strategy.
- In reply to questions about whether the LEP had any concerns about their working relationship with the County Council the speakers said the relationships that the LEP had developed with all their partners was first class and that they did not have any concerns that they wished to raise with the Committee. The LEP did not recognise County boundaries and had developed a strong joint vision for the future.

8.4 **RESOLVED**

- 1. That the Committee invite the speakers from the New Anglia LEP to return in April/ May 2020 to provide Councillors with an update on Anglia LEP activities.**
- 2. That at the meeting in April/May 2020 the Committee be provided with the following additional information that was requested at today's meeting:**
 - **The LEP action plan on climate change and the tourism strategy, after they are published.**
 - **By way of illustrated examples (set against the criteria in the Norfolk and Suffolk investment strategy) the reasons why some applications for funding are successful while others are not.**

9. Norwich Opportunity Area

- 9.1 The annexed report (9) provided an update (at the Committee's request) on the Norwich Opportunity Area Programme.

The issues that were considered by the Committee included the following:

- The Committee was informed that the Norwich Opportunity Area had been launched by the Government to raise social mobility, providing every child and young person in the area with the chance to reach their full potential in life.
- The programme was focused on improving speech and language, supporting local schools, and giving young people the information and support they needed to move from education into work.
- Schools were working together to support each other and to reduce the number of fixed and permanent exclusions in Norwich. One of the key targets was that by 2021 the rate of exclusions would have reduced by two thirds from the rate in 2016/17.
- Another key target was aimed at raising attainment at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 and there were some early signs of success.
- In reply to questions it was pointed out that being in an Opportunity Area enabled schools to focus on the support needed for disadvantaged young people and to be able to share ideas with other OA areas as well as with schools in other areas of the county.
- In reply to further questions it was pointed out that the Norwich Opportunity Area supported a training programme for Early Years specialists across schools, nurseries and other early years settings. The training programme equipped staff to address early speech and language needs, and cascade training to all staff in that setting to offer a universal approach.
- Councillors were informed that the Partnership Board met on a termly basis and meetings were attended by a representative of the Regional Schools Commissioner and by representatives of the Department for Education who advised and supported the Partnership Board.
- Some Councillors spoke about how the programme's management at the DfE level, its effectiveness and 'value for money' had attracted criticism in some quarters. They said that they wanted to be assured that NOA decisions were not too heavily dominated by the DfE, and that the work of the NOA was sustainable because schools might not have the capacity to absorb the investment placed in them, although many commentators had said that opportunity areas would create a lasting legacy.
- Officers said that it was too early to answer questions from Councillors about whether there was a single local community voice on the success or otherwise of the NOA. The programme was a pilot project that would run for an additional year. It would need to be properly evaluated at the end of the pilot before it could be assessed as being a success or otherwise.
- However, the Opportunity Areas Programme was already having a positive impact in a wide range of areas from early years education to employment.
- In reply to questions about the relationship with the DfE officers said that the DfE worked differently with each opportunity area to respond to local priorities and needs because each area had its own challenges.
- At the request of the Committee, officers said that it would be possible for

reports presented to the Partnership Board to be made available to Councillors from the Norwich area and for Councillors who served on the Scrutiny Committee to receive a briefing note about early evaluation/feedback from the DfE in time for when they met with the regional Schools commissioner at their next meeting.

9.2 RESOLVED

Accordingly.

10 Plan to Develop Peer Challenge Recommendations into Action Plan

10.1 The Committee agreed that consideration of this item (10) should be deferred until a later date.

10.2 RESOLVED

That the Committee defer consideration of this item until after officers have raised with the Leader when the Corporate Peer Review will next be considered by Cabinet.

It was noted that the Scrutiny Committee was most likely to be in a position to consider the findings of the Corporate Peer Review and action plan in March 2020 but that this date should be confirmed when the Committee received its forward work programme in January 2020.

11. Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Plan

11.1 The Committee considered the forward work plan.

11.2 RESOLVED

That the Committee agree the forward work plan (as set out in the Appendix of a report received on this matter).

The meeting concluded at 13:30

Chair

Appendix A

Dear Councillors,

At the recent Scrutiny Committee on the County Council's work with New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership, a query arose about the UK's transition from the current EU funding regime to the proposed Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF).

The County Council has been an active member of the LGA Brexit Sounding Board and has contributed to a number of previous Government enquiries on the principles of a successor scheme to EU funding. Below is an extract of a submission the Council made to the LGA:

"The UK government should replace EU funding with a national successor scheme delivered and managed locally, which maintains the current global value and is index-linked.

The principles for such a scheme should be:

1) A scheme of the same value and index-linked

The current value of European funded grants available to Norfolk is more than £72m – and that figure excludes the millions of pounds of direct payments to farmers. These grants deliver economic growth by supporting businesses, research and development, skills, innovation, low carbon and the environment. We want to ensure Norfolk continues to receive its fair share of economic growth funding, and that the value of successor schemes is index linked.

2) Schemes of economic impact

Grant applications are currently assessed on their economic impact – the ability to deliver economic growth, create jobs and business growth, deliver skills or training, and commercialise innovative products. This is key in any new scheme, to justify the use of public funds.

3) Ability to prioritise funding locally

Funding should be focused on meeting local economic strategies for growth rather than diluting the impact locally through nationally-set priorities. We have evidence that involving the local community in setting priorities and developing local projects works best for our local areas. Funding should be focussed on research and economic growth, environment, skills and employability outcomes to build inclusive growth into the framework for delivery.

4) Decision-making delegated to local areas

After prioritisation of projects, local areas should also be able to make project selections at local area level. This would require local (County) allocations of funding under which we can make our funding awards.

5) Ability to collaborate transnationally, where relevant

One of the current advantages of EU funded schemes is the ability to impact on common challenges by working in partnership with other countries and areas. We want to retain this ability where it is relevant to Norfolk, for example challenges

faced in the seas, fisheries and waterways, environment, historic and natural assets.

6) Simplifying schemes

Simplification of rules and regulations needs to be centre-stage of a new funding regime. Complexity, state aid rules and compliance all add barriers to achieving the potential for economic growth. We have experienced different government departments contradicting each other on the application of scheme rules and significant variance in interpretation of regulations (e.g. application of state aid).

7) Joining similar schemes together

Complementary schemes, such as business advice and workforce training, should be overseen by one government department and delivered locally to ensure consistency. Replacement of the current myriad of schemes with fewer, broader schemes would also be welcome.”

We understand that there will be a Cabinet reshuffle at the end of January or the beginning of February, so we should know who will be leading on this work in the spring. We will update you as proposals and developments become clearer.

Kind regards,

Vince Muspratt, Director, Growth and Economic Development
CES
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County Hall

Appendix B


Roles and responsibilities of the Director of Adult Social Services

The statutory duties of the DASS were set out in May 2006 (Best Practice Guidance on the role of the Director of Social Services, Department of Health). As this best practice guidance does not fully reflect the current roles and responsibilities of the position and was not updated when the Care Act was introduced, ADASS produced an advice note to address this titled Directors of Adult Social Services: roles and responsibilities. The advice note identified that the DASS should ensure that effective systems are in place for discharging the following functions (including where a local authority has commissioned any services from another provider rather than delivering them itself):

- Prevention, information and advice
- Systems leadership and making sure the voice of social care social work and the social model is heard, particularly by working with NHS partners, the police, providers, voluntary organisations, the wider council and members of the community etc. to:
 - Shape care and health and wider public services in the area

- Promote the inclusion and rights of disabled and older people
- Leading and championing the voice of people needing social care by engagement with them, shaping, influencing and implementing policy
- Meeting essential needs for care and support
- Market shaping and continuity: commissioning effectively and ensure the availability and quality of services that people want in order to be in control of their lives.
- Safeguarding adults needing care and support:
 - From abuse or neglect
 - When doctors are considering compulsory treatment or admission to psychiatric hospital
 - When people lack capacity to decide and may be restricted of their liberty
- Financial and resources management - to manage within resources, including fair charging policies and to advocate for a fair share for adults needing care and support

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