

Economic Development Sub-Committee

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 24 November 2016
at 10am in the Edwards Room at County Hall**

Present:

Ms C Bowes	Mr J Timewell
Mr J Childs	Mrs C Walker
Mr B Iles (Vice-Chairman)	Mr A White
Mr B Spratt	Mr M Wilby

1. Apologies and Substitutions

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Mr S Clancy (Chairman) (Mr B Spratt substituting), Mr C Foulger (Mr M Wilby substituting) and Mr T Jermy.
- 1.2 Mr B Iles (Vice-Chairman) in the Chair.

2. Minutes

- 2.1 The minutes of the Sub-Committee meeting on 14 July 2016 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.
- 2.2 The minutes of the Special meeting held on 09 September 2016 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

3. Declarations of Interest

- 3.1 No interests were declared.

4. Items of Urgent Business

- 4.1 There were no items of urgent business.

5. Local Member Issues / Questions

- 5.1 There were no local member issues or questions.

6. Public Question Time

6.1 No public questions were received.

7. Update from Outside Bodies and Member Working Groups

7.1 Mr 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, for example with 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.

8. Cambridge Norwich Tech Corridor

8.1 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.

8.2.1 During discussion the following points were noted:

8.2.2 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.

8.2.3 A Member highlighted a potential to the economy of Norfolk of linking to the Motorsport economy of Oxford and suggested that the announcement of road links to Oxford in the autumn statement should therefore be promoted.

8.3 The Sub-Committee **APPROVED** signing the Memorandum of Understanding and joining the Cambridge-Norwich Partnership.

9. Norfolk Library Information Service (NLIS) support to business

9.1.1 The Sub-Committee received the 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.

- 9.1.2 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.
- 9.2 The Sub-Committee **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** to support the ongoing and additional work by the Business Library in partnership with the Economic Development Team.

10. Apprenticeships - update

- 10.1.1 The Sub-Committee received the report giving an update on progress against targets for the Apprenticeships Norfolk Network since 2013.
- 10.1.2 The Employment and Skills Manager reported that Norfolk lead the Eastern Region in uptake of apprenticeships.
- 10.1.3 The Apprenticeships Strategy Manager reported that 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.
- 10.2.1 During discussion the following points were noted:
- 10.2.2 It was indicated that industry and manufacturing apprenticeships had struggled due to difficulties experienced by the oil and gas industry.
- 10.2.3 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.
- 10.2.4 External sources of funding were being explored to replace the funding ending in June 2017. Current funding was given in 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.
- 10.2.5 Mrs Walker praised the work of the Norfolk County Council Apprenticeships service.
- 10.2.6 Seeking a tariff from employers had not been considered because of uncertainty in the market due to the funding changes.
- 10.2.7 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-apprentices would also be seen, taken on by some providers as a precursor to apprenticeships.
- 10.2.8 It was noted that a group of apprentices had recently visited County Hall, and another group of apprentices would attend the County Council meeting in January 2017.
- 10.2.9 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.

- 10.2.10 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.
- 10.2.11 £250,000 of funding would be needed to continue with the existing level of service.
- 10.2.12 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.
- 10.2.13 Mr 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 Timewell.
- 10.2.14 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.
- 10.3.1 The Sub-Committee **NOTED**:
- The strong performance in Apprenticeship 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 Apprenticeship 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.
- 10.3.2 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.

11. A47 Road Investment Strategy - update

- 11.1 The Sub-Committee received the report providing an update on A47 improvement schemes being developed by Highways England, and other projects being undertaken by Highways England.
- 11.2.1 During discussion the following points were noted:
- 11.2.2 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.

- 11.2.3 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.
- 11.2.4 Issues related to the roundabouts on the A12 to Yarmouth and traffic lights on Gapton Hall roundabout were discussed, having not been addressed despite being raised with Highways England. The Principal Infrastructure Growth Planner **agreed** to follow this up.
- 11.2.5 The infrastructure of the Thickthorn Junction was discussed, and the impact on this from house building in Wymondham.
- 11.3 The Sub-Committee **AGREED** to **NOTE**:
- The status 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”

12. Housing and infrastructure growth – timescales for key infrastructure improvements

- 12.1 The Sub-Committee received and **NOTED** the report requested at the meeting on the 14 July 2016 providing information on housing completions, jobs growth and the status of key infrastructure projects.
- 12.2 The Infrastructure & Economic Growth Manager **agreed** to find information for Mr Spratt regarding housing developments and closure of railway crossings at Great Moulton, Aslacton and Tivetshall; he agreed to circulate this information to Mr Spratt and to Members of the Sub-Committee.
- 12.3 The Sub-Committee **noted** that a further report would be brought on this item in 2017.

13. MIPIIM UK 2016: Feedback from event

- 13.1.1 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.
- 13.1.2 The Infrastructure & 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 & 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.

13.2 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 business. He also said that with planned growth improvements to the transport infrastructure were important.

14. Annual update on the France (Channel) England Programme

14.1 The Sub-Committee heard a presentation by the Programme Manager for Community and Environmental Services, providing an annual update on the France (Channel) England Programme:

- €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.

14.2 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.

14.3 The Chairman thanked the Programme Manager for Community and Environmental Services for the report and the team for their work on the France (Channel) England Programme.

15. Finance Monitoring

15.1 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.

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

15.3 The Sub-Committee **NOTED** the budgets for Economic Development and Strategy for 2016-17.

16. Performance management

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

16.2 The Sub-Committee **NOTED** that none of the 4 vital signs which fell within their remit had met the exception reporting criteria.

17. Forward Plan and decisions taken under delegated authority

17.1 The Sub-Committee received and **REVIEWED** the forward plan for the period January -March 2017.

17.2 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 risks related to ongoing funding.

The meeting closed at: 11:20 am

Chairman



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