

Business and Property Committee

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 14 March 2018 at
10:00 am in the Edwards Room at County Hall**

Present:

Mr K Kiddie (Chairman)

Mr S Aquarone

Ms C Bowes

Mr R Brame

Mr D Douglas

Mr J Fisher

Mr B Iles (Vice-Chairman)

Mr A Jamieson

Mr M Kiddle-Morris

Mr C Smith

Mr J Timewell

Mrs K Vincent

Mrs C Walker

1. Apologies and Substitutions

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Mr Fabian Eagle (Mr J Fisher substituting).

2. Minutes

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on the 18 January 2018 were **AGREED** as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

3. Members to Declare any Interests

- 3.1
- The Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services declared a non-pecuniary interest as a Non-Executive Director of Equinox Enterprises at Great Yarmouth Borough Council;
 - Mr Jamieson declared a non-pecuniary interest as a Director of Norse;
 - Mrs Vincent declared a non-pecuniary interest as a NCC Shareholder Representative for Norse;
 - Mr Timewell declared a non-pecuniary interest as he was part of a company which rented property at Scottow Enterprise Park; and he was a director of a modular buildings company.

4. Urgent Business

- 4.1 There was no urgent business.

5. Public Questions

- 5.1 There had been no public questions submitted.

6. Member Questions

There had been no Member questions submitted.

7. Verbal update/feedback from Members of the Committee regarding Member Working Groups or bodies that they sit on.

- 7.1 The Chairman reported that he had attended an Economic Development meeting with local food producers which was to enhance the links with them.
- 7.2 The Chairman was also the Armed Forces champion and reported that there would be a covenant this Summer in Norwich, and further information would be available at a later date.

8. Forward Plan and Delegated Decisions

- 8.1 The Committee reviewed and **NOTED** the forward plan and delegated decisions taken by officers.
- 8.2 It was clarified that the benefit quoted on page 32 of the report was a per annum benefit as opposed to a one-off benefit.

9. Committee Plan 2018/2021

- 9.1 The Committee received the annexed report (9) which set out the Committee's three year forward plan which set out its areas of responsibility would be shaped by the ambition of the County Council's new strategy.
- 9.2 Members asked Officers to be more specific in the four key areas and suggested adding infrastructure into the main areas even though infrastructure was heavily mentioned elsewhere in the plan.
- 9.3 Members noted that £73million of funding was from European funding and questioned if Brexit would have an impact on this. The current programmes were due to run until 2020. The Government was due to launch the consultation of the replacement for the European funds but it had been delayed until the Autumn at the earliest.
- 9.4 Members suggested that the plan could be bolder about what the Committee wanted to achieve and it needed more detailed discussion regarding housing and economic development, potentially in the form of task and finish groups. Repton had been devised to achieve the housing objectives but they would only play a small part and would adhere to statutory requirements. It would also be necessary for bids to support the infrastructure for the housing developments.
- 9.5 Some Members wanted more clarity on what the long term simple vision was for economic development and what the Council were aiming for in 10 years' time. The work being carried out needed to be of benefit to the whole community and the committee wanted to know what was being done in this area and therefore suggested regular reports to Committee, along with options of how to achieve the vision.
- 9.6 The Committee asked to see an oversight of the property portfolio and asked for report: which contained percentage of let of property, projected income from rental, arrears, and capital receipts etc. Officers agreed that this could be shown to Committee and

would be brought to a future meeting for Scottow, Hethel, County Farms and any Commercial property.

- 9.7 The plan could be moved on and developed as the Committee evolved.
- 9.8 Members asked for progress reports of performance against the plan on a page on a regular basis so that performance was based against measurable targets. Metrics for housing and economic development were particularly requested. The Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services confirmed that as part of the Norfolk and Suffolk plan, metrics were available and could be shown to Committee as and when requested.
- 9.9 Members requested a report to a future Committee meeting on the Norfolk/Suffolk Economic Strategy and NCC's contribution to it.
- 9.10 The Committee;
- **AGREED** Business and Property Plan as set out in Appendix 1
 - **NOTED** the Committee's contribution to, and responsibilities, for Norfolk Futures, NCC's transformation plan.
 - **AGREED** the performance measures against which the committee will report to Policy and Resources Committee for monitoring purposes, as set out in para 1.1.8 of the report.

10. Finance Monitoring

- 10.1 The Committee received the annexed report (10) which provided information on the budget position for services relating to the Committee. It provided information on the revenue budget including any forecast over or underspends and any identified budget risks. It also provided an update on the forecast use of reserves and details of the capital programme.
- 10.2 Attention was brought to the fact that Scottow Enterprises had let 92% and Hethel Engineering 98%. The Committee sent their compliments to the management and noted that it was testament to the staff.
- 10.3 The Committee **NOTED**;
- The forecast outturn position for the Business and Property Committee
 - The capital programme for this Committee
 - The current planned use of the reserves and the forecast balance of reserves as at the end of March 2018.

11. Performance Management

- 11.1 The Committee received the annexed report (11) which provided information on the five vital signs indicators under the remit of the Committee.
- 11.2 Members questioned if the 5 vital signs indicators mentioned on page 73 of the report were enough to monitor performance fully. Officers agreed to work to see if there were other data sources that could be used and would bring back to a future meeting.
- 11.4 The Committee **NOTED** the performance data, information and analysis presented in the report and **AGREED** that the recommended list of actions identified were appropriate.

12. Risk Management

- 12.1. The Committee received the annexed report (12) which provided the Committee with the latest departmental level property risks as at March 2018, following the latest review conducted in February 2018.
- 12.2 The risks still outlined in amber were clarified as being those with mitigations still being worked through such as building houses but not having received funding for them.
- 12.3 Officers confirmed they were bidding for funding when it became available but assured the Committee that if funding was not granted, there were other streams available which could be bidden for.
- 12.4 The Committee asked for a report on carbon reduction and it was **AGREED** that this would be put on the forward plan for a future agenda.
- 12.5 The Committee **NOTED**;
 - The risk reported by exception (in paragraph 2.2 and Appendix A), and the other departmental risk relating to Property (in Appendix D).
 - That the recommended mitigating actions identified in Appendix A were appropriate

13. Repton Property Developments

- 13.1 The Committee received the annexed report (13) which informed the Committee that the point had been reached in the setting up of Repton Property developments Limited, to complete the formal procedures to establish the governance for the company, adopting suitable articles of association and formally register the Directors appointed by the Council.
- 13.2 The Committee were assured that if there were to be urgent decisions made, this could be done through the delegated process.
- 13.4 The Committee **AGREED** to:
 - **RECOMMEND** to Policy and Resourced that they adopt the proposed articles of association, delegations, and reserved matters and the special resolution as detailed in the appendices.
 - **RECOMMEND** to Policy and Resources Committee that they nominate to Full Council David Dukes as the replacement County Council Officer Director.

At this point in the meeting, the Vice-Chair took the Chair.

14. Disposal, acquisition and exploitation of Properties

- 14.1 The Committee received the annexed report (14) which outlined proposals for exploiting properties surplus to operational requirements, pro-actively releasing property assets with latent value where the operational needs could be met from elsewhere and strategically acquiring property to drive economic growth and wellbeing in the County.
- 14.3 The Committee had received a letter from County Councillor Humphrey advising that the Parish Council's which surrounded that area wished to purchase the land for £10k.

14.3 The Committee;

- **REVIEWED** the previous decision to declare Emneth Canal, High Road to Collette Bridge (2027/015) surplus and **AGREED** that the site is surplus and instructed the Head of Property to dispose of the property at best consideration. In the event of a disposal receipt exceeding delegated limits the Head of Property in consultation with the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services and Chair of Business and Property Committee is authorised to accept the most advantageous offer and report the fact at a subsequent Business and Property Committee meeting.
- **AGREED** that Part of Union Farm Land, Fakenham Road, Gressenhall was surplus to County Council requirements and instructed the Head of Property to dispose of the property by way of sale of the freehold. In the event of a disposal receipt exceeding delegated limits the Head of Property in consultation with the Executive Director of Finance & Commercial Services and Chair of B&P Committee is authorised to accept the most advantageous offer and report the fact at a subsequent B&P Committee meeting.
- **AGREED** to the sale of their freehold interest in the Hethel Engineering Centre for £3,000,000 and assign the leasehold interest in the site to Hethel Innovation Ltd.

The Chair re-took the Chair.

15. County Farms Estate Management Update

- 15.1 The Committee received the annexed report (15) which provided an update on the County Farms estate since its last meeting, including such matters as the reletting cycle that currently underway, proposed capital improvements to the Estate, the next Farmers Market and rent collection update.
- 15.2 The Committee heard that Officers were reviewing the submissions for rental of the available County Farms with a view to invite successful submissions to interview. It was agreed that as both of the Labour members on the Committee were unable to make the interview dates, a substitute Labour Member would be arranged.
- 15.3 The Committee **NOTED** the management update.

16.1 Exclusion of the Public

- 16.1. The Committee **AGREED** to exclude the public for item 17; Exempt Minutes

17. Exempt Minutes

- 17.1 The exempt minutes were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

The Meeting ended at 11.37am.

**Mr Keith Kiddie, Chairman,
Business and Property Committee**



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