

Business and Property Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 15 January 2019 at 10:03 am in the Edwards room at County Hall

Present:

Mr B Stone (Chairman)

Mr T Adams

Mr R Brame

Mr D Collis

Mr F Eagle

Mr A Jamieson

Mr T Jermy

Mr M Kiddle-Morris

Mr I Mackie

Mr C Smith (Vice-Chairman)

Mr J Timewell

Mrs K Vincent

1. Apologies

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Mrs C Bowes and Mrs C Walker (Mr D Collis substituting)

2. Minutes

- 2.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on the 6 November 2018 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

2.2 Matters Arising from the minutes

- Appendix A, apprenticeships update from Cllr Clancy: the local area for each allocation was queried and progress with use of funding. The Employment and Skills Manager reported that £10,000 funding was allocated to the Local Enterprise Partnership area across Norfolk and Suffolk and was on track to be spent.

3. Declarations of Interest

- 3.1 Mr A Jamieson declared a non-pecuniary interest as non-executive director of Norse Group
- 3.2 Mrs K Vincent declared a non-pecuniary interest as Chair of the Norse Shareholder Committee

4. Urgent Business

- 4.1 No urgent business was discussed

5. Public Questions

- 5.1 No public questions were received

6. Local Member Questions

- 6.1 No Member questions were received

7. Update from Members regarding Internal and External bodies they sit on

- 7.1 An update on apprenticeships was circulated from Cllr Clancy and discussed:
- Apprenticeship starts had dropped nationally in 2017-18 but less so in Norfolk
 - Cllr Clancy updated Members on changes related to use of the apprenticeship levy
 - The Apprenticeships Norfolk website was now working
 - Morgan Sindell were due to work with Norfolk County Council on provision of construction apprenticeships
 - National apprentice week was starting on the 1 March 2019; a celebration would be held on 8 March 2019
 - Officers would work with contractors during procurement for the Great Yarmouth Third River Crossing to target local apprentices and apprenticeship providers
 - There was no new apprenticeship data since July 2018; problems with the Apprenticeship Norfolk website were likely to have affected apprenticeship take up
 - A sector-based approach was taken to target over 25s into apprenticeships

8. Greater Thetford Development Partnership Board

- 8.1 The Committee considered the appointment of a second representative to the Board of the Greater Thetford Development Partnership in addition to existing Member Cllr Roy Brame.
- 8.2 The Committee **APPOINTED** Cllr Martin Wilby as additional Member on the Greater Thetford Development Partnership Board

9. Forward Plan

- 9.1 The Committee reviewed the report showing the Committee's forward plan and delegated decisions taken by Officers
- 9.2.1 Plans to look at disposals moving forward with the new governance structure of Council were discussed; Member delegations would be likely to continue into the new system
- 9.2.2 A discussion was held over changing the wording of the recommendation related to delegated decisions; the Committee **agreed** to change this from "note" to "affirm"
- 9.3
1. **REVIEWED** the Forward Plan at Appendix A.
 2. **AFFIRMED** the delegated decisions.

10. Economic Development contribution to the Norfolk & Suffolk Economic Strategy

- 10.1 The Committee received the report showing how we Norfolk were making a fundamental contribution to the Norfolk & Suffolk Economic Strategy, which was adopted in October 2017.
- 10.2 During discussion the following points were noted:
- The Officer responded to Member questions about funding for economic development by clarifying that resources were sought from external funding bids
 - A Member question queried the value added by the Council; the Officer replied that this was shown by influencing access to EU (European Union), Local Enterprise Partnership and Government funding, and interventions in apprenticeships and the workforce to support development of the local economy
 - The Officer added that Hethel Engineering, which had been developed by Norfolk County Council's economic development team, contributed to the County's

engineering sector

- A Member was disappointed that Brexit was not mentioned in the report despite the County's reliance on EU funding
- A Member queried progress on the bid for funds to develop infrastructure improvements; three bids were being worked on and the second phase of the Broadland Growth Triangle bid would begin in March 2019
- Members queried funding availability after Brexit; the Officer discussed the Shared Prosperity Fund proposed by Government to replace EU funds; the Council had passed comments on to Government and were developing projects which would bring the biggest impact to Norfolk when it came into effect
- Tourism was queried as a sector for increased investment; the Officer noted that tourism was a key sector for Norfolk but did not provide high value jobs. The ICT and digital and wind and clean energy sectors were growing sectors which would provide high value jobs and companies for the County

10.3 The Committee **AGREED** the Council's contribution to the delivery of the Norfolk & Suffolk Economic Strategy

11. Inward Investment Activity

11.1 The Committee considered the report giving an update on Norfolk County Council's approach to attracting & retaining investment and giving an overview of recent activity, the County's performance in attracting Foreign Direct Investment and Invest East.

11.2 During discussion the following points were noted:

- Officers reported that staff were in place at Invest East and the first cohort of businesses had been selected
- The Committee watched 2 videos about food and drink producers who attended the Horecava event in the Netherlands in January 2019; most of the producers who attended had signed distribution deals in the Netherlands from this event
- Officers reported that EU funded Invest East had procured a means to capture all visits by agencies, to see how each company was growing and monitor data; this system would also allow monitoring of threats and successes
- The cost for Officers to attend Horecava was taken from external funding
- The Council was increasing their involvement in the Sync the City event
- Opportunities for new investment were queried; the Officer replied that the biggest opportunity for investment was offshore renewables
- Overall investment in 2019-20 would be lower

11.3 The Committee:

- 1) **ENDORSED** the approach being taken by the Economic Development Team and the identified priorities in the report, and
- 2) **SUGGESTED** any areas for further consideration.

12. Skills Update

12.1 The Committee considered the report providing an overview of projects currently underway, together with some emerging plans designed to ensure that Norfolk was capitalising on new opportunities for the benefit of business and individuals

12.2 During discussion the following points were noted

- The energy sector bid discussed in the report had now been submitted
- Quality of links with the Department of Work and Pensions was queried; the Officer confirmed they were a strategic partner of the Council; meetings had been held to

discuss referral routes and they were involved in development of strategy

- Officers confirmed that deadlines to spend funding before Brexit had not changed
- A Member queried progress on spending funding for LIFT (Local Investment in Future Talent) before Brexit. The Officer confirmed that the number of people on the project had increased and the department was on track to spend all the money

12.3 The Committee

- 1) **AGREED** the direction of travel for NCC in supporting current skills projects and initiatives
- 2) **AGREED** future plans and considered what else could be developed

13. Strategic and Financial Planning 2019-20 to 2021-22 & Revenue Budget 2019-20

13.1 The Committee considered the report setting out information to enable them to take a considered view of all the relevant issues in order to agree budget proposals for 2019-20 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2021-22 and make recommendations on these to the Policy and Resources Committee.

13.2 During discussion the following points were noted:

- All disposals would be brought through appropriate member processes following the change in Council Governance arrangements
- Approximately £4-5m a year was raised through asset disposals spread across the corporate and County Farms estates; the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services agreed to share a more detailed figure with Members after the meeting
- Officers acknowledged that some of the planned property savings may not be met in 2019-20, in which case money would be added back to the reserves fund
- The impact on carparking from increased staff based at County Hall was discussed
- Cost to communities of disposing of assets was noted; the ultimate decision on whether to dispose of an asset was made by Members
- The Chairman reassured Committee that assets would not be considered for sale without appraising all other options
- The contribution of the sale of assets to the Council's budget was noted

13.3 With 12 votes for and 1 against, the Committee:

- 1) **CONSIDERED** the content of this report and the continuing progress of change and transformation of Business and Property services
- 2) **CONSIDERED** and **AGREED** the service-specific budgeting issues for 2019-20 as set out in section 5 of the report
- 3) Considered and commented on the Committee's specific budget proposals for 2019-20 to 2021-22
- 4) **CONSIDERED** the findings of equality and rural impact assessments, and in doing so, **NOTED** the Council's duty under the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to the need to:
 - Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act
 - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
 - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- 5) **CONSIDERED** the advice of the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services, and recommend to Policy and Resources Committee that the Council's budget includes an inflationary increase of 2.99% in council tax in 2019-20, within the council tax referendum limit of 3.00% for the year;

- 6) **AGREED** and **RECOMMENDED** to Policy and Resources Committee the draft Committee Revenue Budget as set out in Appendix 1 of the report including all of the savings for 2019-20 to 2021-22 as set out

For consideration by Policy and Resources Committee on 28 January 2019, to enable Policy and Resources Committee to recommend a sound, whole-Council budget to Full Council on 11 February 2019

- 7) **AGREED** and **RECOMMENDED** the Capital Programme and schemes relevant to this Committee as set out in Appendix 2 of the report to Policy and Resources Committee for consideration on 28 January 2019, to enable Policy and Resources Committee to recommend a Capital Programme to Full Council on 11 February 2019

14. Finance Monitoring

- 14.1 The Committee received the report providing the Committee with information on the revenue budget position for services reporting to Business & Property Committee for 2018 -19, information on the use of reserves and the capital programme.
- 14.2 Officers introduced the report:
- All reserves were due to be used in 2018-19
 - The Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services agreed to circulate to Members the date that the decision was taken to use all reserves
 - At the end of the financial year, unspent money would be put back into reserves
- 14.3 The following points were discussed and noted:
- The underspend for economic development was queried; the Officer clarified that most of this underspend related to Scottow Enterprise Park. Any underspend on external grants was on the department's balance sheet and carried over to the following year; the overspend shown in the report would contribute to the Council's overall position
 - To reduce reliance on reserves, Officers would continue with progress in income generation and work to look at exit strategy; getting out of buildings early created a disproportional increase in the budget
- 14.4 The Committee
- a) The 2018 – 19 revenue position for this Committee
 - b) The 2018 – 19 to 2020 - 21 capital programme for this Committee
 - c) The 2018 - 19 reserves position for this Committee

15. Performance Management

- 15.1 The Committee received the report based upon the revised Performance Management System, which was implemented as of 1 April 2016
- 15.2 The Committee **REVIEWED** and **COMMENTED** on the performance data, information and analysis presented in the body of the report and **DETERMINED** that the recommended actions identified were appropriate

16. Risk Management

- 16.1 The Committee received the report providing the Committee with the latest departmental level risks falling under the remit of the Committee as at January 2019,

following the latest review conducted in December 2018

- 16.2 The Risk Management Officer introduced the report:
- The score for risk RM021, "*Failure of Estate Management*", had changed from 6 to 4, reflecting progress with mitigating the risk; the prospects score of this risk had improved from amber to green with the implementation of the IT system as the only significant mitigation left to implement.
 - Mitigations for RM001, "*Infrastructure is not delivered at the required rate to support existing needs and the planned growth of Norfolk*", had been updated to reflect the latest infrastructure objectives; pooled business rates bids had been successful for 7 key transport projects including the Norwich Western Link and work underway for Transforming Cities
- 16.3 The following points were noted and discussed:
- The target date for RM001 was queried; the Risk Management Officer clarified that March 2019, was chosen as a suitable point to review progress at the end of the financial year; beyond March 2019, either a key date in 2019-20 would be added to the risk register as a new target date to reflect a significant point in the programme of infrastructure work, or a further target date of March 2020 would be set
- 16.4 The Committee **AGREED**
- a) the reconciliation report in Appendix A of the report, which is designed to detail any significant changes to the Committee's corporate and department level risks
 - b) details of the current risks for this Committee to consider, managed on the corporate and departmental risk registers as reported in Appendix B of the report
 - c) The list of possible actions, suggested prompts and challenges presented for information in Appendix C of the report
 - d) The background information to put the risk scoring into context, shown in Appendix D of the report

17. Repton Property Developments Ltd Update

- 17.1 The Committee discussed the report supporting Norfolk County Council priorities by focussing on key objectives of the Council's Asset Management Plan to pro-actively exploit the latent value of the property portfolio & release capital resources for other purposes.
- 17.2 Mr D Collis gave feedback that the work on the new school site in the West of Kings Lynn by Lovell had been excellent and asked the Chairman to pass this on
- 17.3 Business and Property Committee **NOTED** the appointment of Lovell Partnerships Ltd as development services provider for Repton Property Developments Ltd.

18. Disposal, Acquisition and Exploitation of Properties

- 18.1 The Committee considered the proposals in the report to support Norfolk County Council priorities by exploiting properties surplus to operational requirements, pro-actively releasing property assets with latent value where operational needs could be met from elsewhere and strategically acquiring property to drive economic growth and wellbeing in the County.
- 18.2 The following points were discussed and noted:
- The Chairman confirmed that proposals and comments put forward by local Members would be taken into consideration when agreeing recommendations

- Some Members felt that suggestions or comments of local members should be included in the report
- The Head of Property agreed to find out how sale of the highway holdings would affect the Hemsby land public conveniences
- The site at North Lynn, Lawrence Road, had been vacant for several years; community housing had an interest in acquiring the site; the Head of Property suggested giving them time to come up with a proposal. The Chairman **proposed** giving community housing until the end of March 2019 to draw up a costed proposal for the site
- As a local member of the North Lynn Lawrence road site Mr D Collis recommended that allowing the community this delay would be beneficial
- There had been a lot of interest in Carrow Bridge House because of publicity around it; the importance of retaining the historical aspect of the site was noted
- Highways did not need to retain the site for bridge repairs

18.3 The Committee:

- (i) **AUTHORISED** the Head of Property to dispose of the northern land parcel (and if Children Services do not require it dispose of the southern land parcel), London Road Attleborough. In the event of disposal receipts 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 offers and report the fact at a subsequent B&P Committee meeting.
- (ii) **AGREED** to the acquisition of a licence for the erection of a notice board on land owned by Mr & Mrs Pegg adjacent to the entrance to the St Mary's Priory Site, Off Cromer Road, Beeston Regis for an annual fee of £1.
- (iii) **AGREED** to the acquisition of a licence for part of the ground floor of Benjamin Court, Roughton Road, Cromer for use by Adult Support Services on an annual licence fee of £148,477.49.
- (iv) Formally **DECLARED** the Baron's Close Land, Fakenham surplus to County Council requirements and **INSTRUCTED** the Head of Property to dispose of the property. 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.
- (v) Formally **DECLARED** the 15 former highway landholdings as listed in Appendix 1 surplus to Council requirements and **INSTRUCTED** the Head of Property to dispose of the land parcels. In the event of a disposal receipt for each land parcel exceeds 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 offers and report the fact at a subsequent B&P Committee meeting.
- (vi) Formally **DECLARED** the Land rear of Great Crow Farm, Blakeney Road, Hindringham surplus to County Council requirements and **INSTRUCTED** the Head of Property to dispose of the property to the adjacent owner for £25,000 (exclusive of any VAT that may be payable).
- (vii) **AGREED** to the acquisition of 1.6 hectares (3.95 Acres) of land north of the Broadland Northway, Horsham St Faith and Newton St Faith for a new recycling centre and 0.6 hectares (1.5 acres) for a new access road and **DELEGATED** the completion of the negotiations and final decision to acquire both sites to the Head of Property in consultation with the Executive Director of Finance & Commercial Services and Chair of B&P Committee and report the fact at a subsequent B&P Committee meeting
- (viii) Formally **DECLARED** Land at Baldock Drive, Kings Lynn surplus to County Council requirements and **INSTRUCTED** the Head of Property to dispose of the

property. 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.

- (ix) **AGREED** to allow the local community housing organisations until the end of March 2019 to draw up a costed proposal for the Redundant site, North Lynn, Lawrence Road King's Lynn
- (x) Formally **DECLARED** Land at Back Lane, North Elmham surplus to County Council requirements and **INSTRUCTED** the Head of Property to dispose of the property. 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
- (xi) Formally **DECLARED** Kings Head Barns and adjacent land, Dereham Road, North Elmham surplus to County Council requirements and **INSTRUCTED** the Head of Property to dispose of the property. 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
- (xii) Formally **DECLARED** Carrow Bridge House, Norwich surplus to Council requirements and **INSTRUCTED** the Head of Property to dispose of the property. 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
- (xiii) Formally **DECLARED** the Allthorpe Road Land, Redenhall with Harleston surplus to County Council requirements and **INSTRUCTED** the Head of Property to dispose of the property. 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
- (xiv) Formally **DECLARED** Land West at Burlingham Road, South Walsham surplus to County Council requirements and **INSTRUCTED** the Head of Property to dispose of the property. 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

19. Exclusion of the Public

- 19.1 The committee **AGREED** to exclude the public from the meeting under section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 for consideration of items 20 and 21 on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by Paragraphs 1, 3 and 3.5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act, and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information

20. County Farms Estate Management Update

- 20.1 The Committee considered the report by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services

20.2 The Committee agreed the recommendations as set out in the report

21. Exempt Minutes

21.2 The exempt minutes of the meeting on the 6 November 2018 were **AGREED** as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman

The Meeting ended at: 12.17

**Mr Barry Stone, Chairman,
Business and Property Committee**



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Apprenticeship Briefing for Cllr Clancy for B & P meeting 15/1/19

I will keep this brief as there is an item on the agenda today that provides detail on various skills initiatives both current and planned demonstrating the role apprenticeships play as part of wider skills agenda, supporting entry to employment, in-work progression and higher-level skills.

The latest **apprenticeship data** has recently been released for the period August 2017 – July 2018 the detail of which will be brought to members at the March meeting of this committee as it was not received in time to bring a report to this committee. However, the headline figures show that whilst the number of starts for Norfolk had fallen by 12.99% nationally starts were down by 24% so we are recovering at a faster rate than many areas which is good for Norfolk. Further good news is that we have only seen a small drop of less than 2% in the numbers of 16-18 year olds starting apprenticeships. Our challenges lie in the starts for 19-24 year olds and 25+ particularly at level 2 and 3 further analysis and details of the interventions to address these will be provided in March.

Apprenticeships Norfolk are running the first “Norfolk Apprentice of the Year” competition to showcase apprentices working throughout Norfolk and what an excellent contribution you make to businesses you work with. This is linked with National Apprenticeship week 2019 the theme of which will be ‘Blaze a trail’.

The theme speaks to all audiences at every stage of their apprenticeship journey...

- Blazing a Trail in my career
- Blazing a Trail in my business
- Blazing a Trail in my community
- Blazing a Trail in the economy

They will be set a series of tasks to complete to not only show their personal qualities in a range of activities but also helping to enhance confidence and promote apprenticeships within the county. We hope that by participating in this competition it encourage apprentices achieve more than they thought possible in their career.

This event is all about identifying and showcasing the tremendous breadth and depth of emerging talent Apprentices have to offer within Norfolk. If members know of any businesses that currently have apprentices or individuals who are undertaking an apprenticeship and might be interested to take part them do please put them in contact with the team who will be able to provide further information and support them through the process.

Members will be pleased to know that the **Apprenticeship Norfolk Network website** is up and running again, officers are working hard with providers, schools and employers to get them re-register on the site and to advertise their vacancies. We plan to increase usage of the site by promoting all of our activities, updates and good news stories asap.

Cllr Clancy