



Business and Property Committee

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 06 November 2018 at
10:00 am in the Edwards room, County Hall**

Present:

Mr B Stone (Chairman)

Mr T Adams

Ms C Bowes

Mr R Brame

Mr F Eagle

Mr A Jamieson

Mr T Jermy

Mr M Kiddle-Morris

Mr I Mackie

Mr B Spratt

Mr J Timewell

Mrs K Vincent

Mrs C Walker

1. Apologies

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Vice Chairman Mr C Smith (Mr B Spratt substituting)

2. Minutes

- 2.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on the 9 October 2018 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

3. Declarations of Interest

- 3.1 The following interests were declared:
- The Director of Finance and Commercial Services declared a “pecuniary interest” as a non-executive director of Equinox Enterprises
 - Mr Jamieson declared a “non-pecuniary interest” as a non-executive director of the Norse Group
 - Mrs Vincent declared a “non-pecuniary interest” as Chair of Norse Shareholder Committee
 - Mr Timewell declared a “non-pecuniary interest” as director of a company owning property on Scottow enterprise park

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 about Internal and External bodies they sit on

- 7.1 No verbal updates were given from Members

7.2 An update on Apprenticeships was circulated; see appendix A.

8. Member Briefings and site Visits

8.1 Mr Mackie had attended a County farms visit and welcomed the different activities undertaken at the various farms. He reminded the Committee that the annual County Farms tenants meeting would be held in November at Easton college

8.2 The Chairman had attended an EE Energy group reception at the House of Commons with Peter Holdis, MP for Waveney; the meeting focussed on business which could be generated from the wind energy sector and the 30 years' worth of business from oil and gas. There was no discussion about Brexit.

9. Forward Plan and delegated decisions

9.1 The Committee:

1. **REVIEWED** the Forward Plan at Appendix A of the report.
2. **NOTED** the delegated decisions taken by Officers

10. Finance Monitoring Report

10.1 The Committee received the report with information on the revenue budget position for services reporting to Business & Property Committee for 2018 -19.

10.1.2 The Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services reported that:

- There was an overachievement against County Farms surplus and Scottow Enterprise Park
- All corporate property management reserve would need to be used in order to come in on budget
- Half the capital budgeted for had so far been spent

10.2 During discussion & in response to Member questions, the following points were noted:

- The Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services **agreed** to bring a summary of the financial position of Hethel and a separate report on Scottow Enterprise Park to a future meeting
- Corporate property management reserves had been used because it had not been possible to 'get out' of all buildings as planned, and not as much money as expected had been raised during the year
- Totals shown in paragraphs were different to those in the table of the report; the figures in the paragraphs related to the total cost of capital projects which had been split over a number of years while the tables only related to 2017-18 expenditure; the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services **agreed** to circulate detail on this to Members
- The overspend of £100,000 was due to coming out of vantage house

10.3 The Committee **AGREED**

- 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

11. Rural Issues Update

11.1 The Committee discussed the report providing an update on rural economic development, key funding programmes managed or brokered by Norfolk County Council, and an overview of key current strategic developments and initiatives with implications for rural businesses and communities in Norfolk.

11.2 During discussion & in response to Member questions, the following points were noted:

- Feedback had been received that the process for applying for EU funding was complicated; complexity of the process was acknowledged however facilitation staff were available to support businesses to apply. Officers continued to lobby for a simplified process.
- It was more difficult to generate LEADER projects in the Brecks due to its rurality and size however there were more applications than the team could fund at that time
- Concerns were raised that funding may go to companies skilled at bid writing rather than where it was needed; the role of facilitation staff to help companies less skilled in bid writing was noted
- The Programme Development Manager **agreed** to provide statistics on successful bids and businesses, such as company size and type
- Officers were lobbying ministers to set out concerns about the 2-year + period with no EU funding for small businesses once LEADER funding ended in March 2019; Officers were setting out a bid for a delegated grant scheme for small businesses to operate on their behalf
- There was no indication on the types of funding that would be available post 2020 so continuing to lobby for small delegated grant schemes was important
- A discussion was held about animal welfare post Brexit
- Funding for farmers was discussed; the Government had set out a transition arrangement of 7 years when existing payments to farmers would be phased out and new priorities set out by Government phased in; meetings had been held with businesses and farmers and Officers had responded to Government on their behalf and on behalf of Norfolk County Council
- The impact of Brexit on the agricultural and environmental plan was unknown
- The Department for Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) had recently allowed a commitment of funding until the end of 2020 in line with other funding; despite this, Norfolk County Council would have spent all funding by March 2019 as it had been encouraged to do. A letter had been sent from the Leader of the Council to Government asking for transition funding
- Each LEADER Local Action Group (LAG) had its own funding allocation, however the 5 groups within Norfolk were prepared to move money between them if any remained unspent
- There had been lobbying through Defra and the LEADER exchange group for a funding transfer option; at the time this was restricted to within LAG groups such as the Norfolk and North Suffolk LAGs but Officers remained in contact with Defra should there be a change of approach
- Officers confirmed that there were 3 more appraisal staff to support during the short term increased workload of increased applications, funded through the LEADER programme
- An application had been submitted to try to extend the Local Investment in Future Talent (LIFT) programme and a response was being awaited

11.3 The Committee:

- i. **Agreed** the approach outlined in the document for collaborative working and influencing to support rural businesses and communities.

- ii. **Supported** the approach outlined to respond to relevant Government consultations in collaboration with the Rural Strategy Steering Group.
- iii. **Endorsed** our approach to lobbying for transition and future funding

12. Disposal and Acquisition and exploitation of Properties

- 12.1 The Committee discussed and considered the proposals outlined in the report aimed at supporting Norfolk County Council priorities by exploiting properties surplus to operational requirements, pro-actively releasing property assets with latent value where the operational needs can be met from elsewhere and strategically acquiring property to drive economic growth and wellbeing in the County. Two sites had been brought forward with North Norfolk for housing as they were in areas difficult for local people to access housing.
- 12.2 During discussion & in response to Member questions, the following points were noted:
- A list of all acquisitions and proposals, including planned ones, was **requested**
- 12.3 The Committee:
- (i) Formally **AGREED** to the leasing of the roof area of Northgate Community Primary School, Great Yarmouth to Solar for Schools CBS Limited for a term of 25 years at a rent of a peppercorn per year (if demanded).
 - (ii) Formally **DECLARED** the Land at Church Lane, Potter Heigham surplus to County Council requirements and **INSTRUCT** the Head of Property to dispose of the property to an affordable housing developer (Housing Associations and other registered social landlords). 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 was **AUTHORISED** to accept the most beneficial offer and report the fact at a subsequent B&P Committee meeting.
 - (iii) Formally **DECLARED** the Land at Market Lane, Salthouse surplus to County Council requirements and **INSTRUCTED** the Head of Property to dispose of the property to an affordable housing developer (Housing Associations and other registered social landlords). 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 was **AUTHORISED** to accept the most beneficial offer and report the fact at a subsequent B&P Committee meeting.
 - (iv) **AGREED** to the transfer of the Land abutting Barnby Road, Scottow Enterprise Park at nil consideration to Coltishall Barnby Residents Company Ltd
or
In the event of a substantive objection the land to be transferred to Buxton with Lamas Parish Council.

13. Exclusion of the Public

- 13.1 The Committee **AGREED** to exclude the public for discussion of items 14, 15 and 16 on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by under paragraph Paragraphs 3 and 3.5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972.

14. Norwich Airport Industrial Estate

- 14.1 The Committee considered and discussed the report by the Executive Director of

Finance and Commercial Services

14.2 The Committee **AGREED** the recommendations as set out in the report

15. County Farms Update

15.1 The Committee considered and discussed the report by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services

15.2 The Committee **AGREED** the recommendations as set out in the report

16. Repton Property Developments Ltd – Verbal Update

16.1 A verbal update was given by the Head of Property.

16.2 The Committee **AGREED** the recommendations as set out in the report

17. Exempt Minutes

17.1 The Exempt minutes of the meeting held on the 9 October 2018 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

The Meeting ended at: 11.06

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



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Briefing from Cllr. Stuart Clancy for Business and Property Committee meeting 06/11/18

Updates

Government Reforms - Budget

The government will introduce a package of reforms to strengthen the role of employers in the apprenticeship programme, so they can develop the skills they need to succeed.'

As part of this:

- ✓ Enabling levy paying employers to transfer up to 25% of their funds to pay for apprenticeship training in their supply chains
- ✓ Halving the co-investment rate for apprenticeship training to 5%
- ✓ Increasing capacity for the Institute for Apprenticeships and National Apprenticeship Service in 2019-20, to identify gaps in the training provider market and increase the number of employer-designed apprenticeship standards available to employers. All new apprentices will start on these new, higher-quality courses from September 2020
- ✓ Working with a range of employers and providers to consider how they are responding to the apprenticeship levy across different sectors and regions in England, as well as the future strengthened role of apprenticeships in the post-2020 skills landscape

The minimum wage for apprentices will also increase to £3.90 in April 2019 an increase of 5.4%, the largest increase since 2015.

Regional Activity

Employer Ambassador Network

The National Apprenticeship Service is rejuvenating the local ambassador networks with an initial funding allocation of £10k per local area to spent before March 2019, there is the potential to extend this funding to a 3-year period.

The 4 areas of focus in the business plan are:

- Events and activities
- Highlighting apprenticeships
- Widening access to apprenticeships
- Employer engagement/tackling skills gaps

Colleagues within the apprenticeship team are working with the LEP to develop creative ideas around the use of this funding.

Young Apprenticeship Ambassador Network

A Regional Young Apprenticeship Ambassador Network has been established for 18 - 26-year olds to encourage them to promote apprenticeships in schools, network with other apprenticeships (professionally and socially) and attend key events.

East of England Regional Apprenticeships Awards - Success for Apprenticeships Norfolk Network Members

3 members of the Apprenticeships Norfolk Network picked up awards recently at the regional apprenticeship awards organised by the National Apprenticeships Service.

- The award for macro employer of the year went to Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital NHS Trust
- Bepak Europe Limited picking up the award for Large Employer of the year
- NNUH also won the award for recruitment excellence which is given to recognise an organisation's commitment to diversity in the workplace.
- PLANDESCIL Limited, an employer working with City College Norwich who are also members of the network were also highly commended in the small employer of the year category.
- Aleksandra Burzec, an apprentice from Home Group in Norfolk won the rising star of the year award, Joshua Wrath from Victory Housing and Sonny Meijer from Ford and Slater, Kings Lynn were both highly commended.

The National Future of Apprenticeships Conference 2019

NCC and TrAC have been asked to present nationally on the ATA project, detailing;

- A sustainable ATA model delivering apprenticeship outcomes for vulnerable young people with a built-in support package for host employers
- Smoothing the transition into skilled employment, managing host employer expectations and bridging the gap between pre-employment programmes and the world of work
- Delivering a solution to reduce the cost of supporting long term unemployed people through the public purse
- Creating a way for businesses including levy payers to demonstrate business focused CSR
- We have had a number of enquiries from other local authorities looking to us to learn from our experiences in this work

These examples demonstrate that NCC is proactive, creative and positive about apprenticeship and is working hard to ensure that we maximise the opportunities for Norfolk businesses and residents to reap the benefits of engaging in the apprenticeship agenda.

Integrated Health and Employment Service

Members will recall that a paper came to this committee in 2017 regarding the Integrated Health and Employment Service, a project designed to support local residents who are furthest from the labour market closer to work and into work. It will deliver a significant innovation in the way stakeholders approach employability projects and will target those who face significant barriers to entering the labour market. The project is in the final stages of approval with the Department of Work and Pensions and we hope to have a final decision early in the new year with the project ready to launch in the summer. A further paper will be presented to members at that time.

Jan Feeney

Employment & Skills Manager