

## **Economic Development and Cultural Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 12 November 2009**

### **Present:**

Mr R Rockcliffe (Chairman)	Ms J A Murphy
Mr M C Langwade (Vice Chairman)	Mr G Nobbs
Mr J Dobson	Mr G Plant
Mr P Duigan	Dr M Strong
Mr R Hanton	Mrs A Thomas
Mr M Hemsley	Ms H Thompson
Mr G R Jones	Mr T Tomkinson
Mr J Joyce	

### **Cabinet Members Present:**

Mr D Murphy	Cultural Services
Mr A Steward	Economic Development

### **Deputy Cabinet Member Present:**

Mr B J E Collins	Economic Development
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## **1 Apologies and Substitutions**

1.1 Apologies were received from Mr M Carttiss (Ms A Thomas substituting), Mr S Clancy, Mr S Dunn, and Dr F Williamson (Mr J Joyce substituting).

## **2 Minutes**

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2009 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## **3 Declarations of Interest**

3.1 Mr Rockcliffe declared a personal interest in item 11 as a member of the Nar Ouse Steering Group.

3.2 Mrs Murphy, Mr Langwade and Mr Dobson declared personal interests in item 11 as members of the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk.

3.3 Dr Strong declared an interest in item 9 as a volunteer of the Credit Union Bank .

## **4 Matters of Urgent Business**

4.1 There were no matters of urgent business.

## **5 Public Question Time**

5.1 There were no public questions.

## **6 Local Member Issues/Member Questions**

6.1 **The local member for Wensum division asked the following question:**

6.2 "Residents have reported to me that there are long queues for the domestic electricity monitoring devices that are available for loan from the Norwich library - one resident was told the waiting list was 30. Due to their popularity and benefit to residents to keep their bills low during hard times, will the Council provide more devices, and, will they be made available at libraries across the County?"

6.3 **The Chairman gave the following response:**

6.4 The Carbon Reduction Trust gave Norfolk Library and Information Service 12 monitors which were put into stock at the Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library although they can be reserved and borrowed through any library in the County. A snapshot of activity this week showed that 8 were on their way to, or at, other libraries for requests.

Library Staff had noted that there was a waiting list developing and the CRT donated 5 more devices which were added to stock a couple of weeks ago. There are currently 28 reservations, so with 17 items, that's less than 2 reservations per item.

However, the monitors can be an extremely useful way of helping people to understand their energy consumption and moving on to reducing it. I am therefore pleased to say that further monitors will shortly be added to library service stock so that there will be at least 2 in stock at each library, and there will also be devices available for mobile library users to borrow.

These monitors will be funded through the County Council's Carbon and Energy Reduction Fund.

6.5 A query was raised regarding the borrowing time for the devices. The Head of Library and Information Service responded that the items could be borrowed for the standard three week period.

## **7 Cabinet Member Feedback**

7.1 The Cabinet Member for Cultural Services reported that the 2012 website – Norfolk Celebrating Talent – had been launched, and the new Rising Stars had been announced.

7.2 The Cabinet Member for Economic Development had no comments, having only been recently appointed to the position.

## Items for Overview

### 8 Economic Development Integrated Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring Report

8.1 The annexed report (8) was presented by the Economic Policy and Performance Manager.

8.2 The following comments were made in response to questions from the Panel:

- In relation to the Thetford Enterprise Park (TEP), the key issues for the County Council were the installation of a new roundabout, a major part of the £2 – 2.5m total investment to be made by Breckland Council and Crown Estates anticipated over the next year. Any money spent to date related to the design and planning process. The County Council's contribution was an integral aspect of the matched funding required.
- It was anticipated that the TEP would bring 1,000 jobs to the park, including new investment by businesses into Norfolk and those relocating within the local area.
- In relation to EPIC, it was noted that TV production had been hit by the recession and that EPIC had been involved in the World Class Norfolk campaign. The level of involvement EPIC had in the World Class Norfolk TV commercial would be reported to members by email.
- The Head of Economic Development agreed to send a detailed briefing relating to the Genome Analysis Centre including jobs created and progress to date.
- The funding for village halls was administered by the Rural Community Council and was key for matched funding from other sources being granted to halls.
- Negotiations with the landowner over a key strategic site in Great Yarmouth had led to an agreeable valuation. There were still some issues to manage, including the need to assess any revenue implications. This issue was close to conclusion.
- It was noted that the second round bid for the Future Jobs Fund would seek to identify jobs in parts of the County that were under-represented last time. The opportunity for this job creation funding had been widely publicised to partners, including districts, however coverage of the county would depend on where organisations could create jobs.

8.3 The Panel **noted** the contents of the report and **agreed** that the March 2010 meeting of the Panel would take place at EPIC.

### 9 Cultural Services Performance, Risk and Budget Out-turn Report 2008/9

9.1 The annexed report (9) was presented by the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and the Economic Policy and Performance Manager.

9.2 The following comments were made in response to questions from the Panel:

- Council tax and grant levels were briefly discussed and comments noted, although these were outside of the remit of the Panel.
- It was noted that the Economic Development Unit had almost no staff turnover therefore it was unlikely that there would be savings from staff vacancies.
- Decisions had not been made about services available if grant funding was not allocated in 2010/11. Strategies were being determined in line with funding.

9.3 The Panel **noted** the contents of the report and made the above comments to inform the Cabinet Members' feedback.

## 10 Local Economic Assessment (LEA)

10.1 The annexed report (10) was presented by the Economic Policy and Performance Manager.

10.2 The following comments were made in response to questions from the Panel:

- It was noted that there was a statutory duty to carry out a LEA, therefore the recommendation was changed to read 'Acknowledge the new duty...'
- The LEA was explained as an assessment of Norfolk's characteristics using statistics and perceptions. This would inform strategies, action plans and investment priorities for Norfolk as a whole. It was acknowledged that the wording of future reports should be more readable, with government terms explained.
- Government had estimated that it would cost around £80,000 to carry out the LEA, and concerns were raised about how much could be done with a limited budget. It was noted that much of the required work involved reviewing data that already existed and that the additional funding promised was a reasonable amount to plug any gaps in knowledge with more tailored research.
- It was also noted that the LEA could be seen as an opportunity because it obliged regional and national organisations to take account of the economic challenges reported by local areas in their assessments, and to take a more 'bottom-up' approach to their planning in the East of England.
- A brief overview of the Regional Implementation Plan and the Single Regional Strategy was given, highlighting that they would replace the East of England Plan and the Regional Spatial Plan. The East of England Regional Assembly would be dissolving in April 2010.

10.3 The Panel **noted** the contents of the report and **acknowledged** the statutory requirement to carry out a Local Economic Assessment.

## 11 Nar Ouse Regeneration Area – Proposed Variation

11.1 The annexed report (11) was presented by the Business Development Manager.

11.2 The following comments were made in response to questions from the Panel:

- The buildings created would be of a high standard. Although the County Council had no direct influence over this, the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk had influence over the types of businesses occupying the site.
- It was unlikely that the College of West Anglia would now relocate to the site as previously planned, however there was the possibility of a partnership between the proposed Academy and the College.

11.3 The Panel **agreed** to recommend to Cabinet that support for the Nar Ouse Regeneration Scheme is sustained.

## **12 Cultural Services Performance and Budget Monitoring**

12.1 The annexed report (12) was presented by the Finance and Business Support Manager.

12.2 The following comments were made in response to questions from the Panel:

- The lighting of the Norwich Castle galleries was under review. The outside lift had been subject to severe vandalism which had resulted in it being out of order on numerous occasions.
- Approximately £300,000 had been invested in providing opportunities for 16-18 year old learners, which had resulted in an increase in the number of young people from this age bracket receiving services. Most of these were NEET (not in employment, education or training). The Head of Adult Education agreed to provide further information relating to this.
- Although the Norfolk Record Office's Archive Education and Outreach Service had exceeded target, there were no budget implications relating to this.
- It was noted that there had been an improvement at the Millennium Library since the recommendations of the library report were adopted.
- The target for school visits to museums had not been met because schools were finding it increasingly difficult to take children out of school on field trips such as visits to museums.
- The positive news relating to the 16 – 18 year old education target was highlighted, and it was noted that the proposed reduction in subsidies for student transport may affect this if implemented.

12.3 The Panel **noted** the contents of the report.

## **13 Service and Budget Planning 2010-13**

13.1 The annexed report (13) was presented by the Cabinet Member for Cultural Services and the Finance and Business Support Manager.

- 13.2 It was noted that since producing the report, some contracts relating to utilities had shown a 30% reduction in costs.
- 13.3 The following comments were made in response to questions from the Panel:
- Concern was raised about the £97,000 used from reserves for utilities for the Norfolk Record Office. It was noted that reserves could sustain this for a year, but savings would have to be found for future years.
  - It was clarified that sport came into the remit of the Cabinet Member for Cultural Services, however the budget for sport (except through Adult Education) came within Children's Services.
  - Efficiency savings were discussed, with concern raised that very few savings could be found from an area that had already identified as many as possible.
- 13.4 The Panel **noted** the contents of the report and made the above comments to inform the Cabinet Members' feedback.

## Items for Scrutiny

### 14. Forward Work Programme

- 14.1 The annexed report (14) was presented by the Policy Officer.
- 14.2 It was **agreed** that a scrutiny working group of five members would focus on broadband provision in Norfolk as the first item. Membership would be determined by the Overarching Group.

### 15. Business and the Climate Change Agenda

- 15.1 The annexed report (15) was presented by the Business Development Manager.
- 15.2 The following comments were made in response to questions from the Panel:
- The work at Gressenhall relating to the green agenda was highlighted as a good example for the rest of the council.
  - In relation to the environmental business advice, it was clarified that the designated officer monitors the implementation of advice after it has been delivered, and was working with occupiers of industrial units to improve energy efficiency. A link was also being made with young people.
  - The 'Green Build' event at Felbrigg was highlighted as an initiative that the council could be involved in, or produce similar events.
- 15.3 The Panel **agreed** to support the ongoing work surrounding the green agenda.

### 16. The Contribution of Culture to the Economy in Norfolk.

- 16.1 The annexed report (16) was presented by the Director of Corporate Resources and

Cultural Services.

16.2 The following comments were made in response to questions from the Panel:

- Figures relating to those moving from non-vocational courses to vocational courses would be circulated.
- It was noted that owners of interesting or unusual properties should be encouraged to register to use their property / area for location filming. It was clarified that there was a set formula used to calculate the financial benefits to the local economy derived from filming on location, and that this was a good source of income. It was noted that due to the weak pound the UK provided a relatively cost effective option for film makers.
- Risks associated with EPIC were raised as a concern. These would be more fully reported at the next meeting.
- It was noted that the branding of tourist areas should be given consideration to ensure they are maximised.

16.3 The Panel **noted** the report and **requested** a report of EPIC's risks, business plans and finances would be brought to the next meeting.

The meeting concluded at 12.10pm.

#### CHAIRMAN



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