



Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting Held on 22 September 2021
at 2 pm at County Hall Norwich

Present:

Cllr Steve Morpew (Chair)

Cllr Lana Hemsall (Vice Chair)

Cllr Lesley Bambridge

Cllr Michael Dalby (substitute for Cllr Nick Daubney)

Cllr Barry Duffin

Cllr Phillip Duigan (substitute for Cllr Graham Carpenter)

Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris

Cllr Jamie Osborn

Cllr Richard Price

Cllr Brian Watkins

Mr Giles Hankinson (Parent Governor representative)

Also present (who took a part in the meeting):

Cllr Graham Plant

Cllr Andrew Jamieson

Cllr Greg Peck

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy

Cabinet Member for Finance

Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management

C-J Green

Chair of the New Anglia LEP

Chris Starkie

Chief Executive of the New Anglia LEP

Vince Muspratt

Director Growth and Development

Simon George

Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services

Simon Hughes

Director of Property

Peter Randall

Democratic Support and Scrutiny Manager

Kat Hulatt

Head of Legal Services

Karen Haywood

Democratic Services Manager

Tim Shaw

Committee Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Carl Annison, Cllr Graham Carpenter, Cllr Nick Daubney, Cllr Keith Kiddie, Cllr Ed Maxfield, Mrs Julie O' Connor (Church Representative) and Mr Paul Dunning (Church Representative)

2 Minutes

- 2.1 The minutes of the meetings held on 21 July 2021 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

3. Declarations of Interest

- 3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4 Urgent Business

- 4.1 No urgent business was discussed.

5. Public Question Time

- 5.1 There were no public questions.

6. Local Member Issues/Questions

- 6.1 There were no local member issues/questions.

7 Call In

- 7.1 The Committee noted that there were no call-in items.

8 County Farms Estate - An Update

- 8.1 The annexed report (8) was received.

- 8.2 The Committee received a report that explained how the County Farms Estate formed a significant part of the Council's property portfolio, strategically and operationally managed by the Corporate Property Team (CPT).

- 8.3 During discussion of the report with the Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and the Director of Property the following key points were noted:
- There were currently 154 tenant farmers on the County Farms Estate who produced a wide range of high-quality products.
 - Some of the success stories were mentioned in the report and explained to Cllrs.
 - One of the most important success stories was the way in which the County Farms Estate provided a route into farming for those young people who were seeking to enter the industry.
 - The County Farms Estate accounted for £2.3 m in gross revenue to the County Council and this money helped deliver wider corporate services and objectives, such as Care Farms and environmental initiatives, such as the planting of trees and laying of new hedgerows.
 - There were currently three care farms in the county with advanced plans for the creation of a fourth in the west of the county which had been delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
 - It was hoped to provide Cllrs with an opportunity to visit farms within the estate when the Covid-19 restrictions began to soften.
 - Specialist websites, Facebook and professional publications were used to promote the County Farms Estate.
 - Tenants were encouraged to undertake good environmental practice and

support the planting of additional hedgerows, which helped meet carbon reduction targets.

- The strategic management approach was to maintain an estate of over 16,000 acres.
- The new 2021/22-2025/26 Strategic Asset Management Plan was due to be adopted by full Council later this year.
- The evidence base for the carbon footprint of the County wide Estate and wider biodiversity within the county would be made available to Cllrs outside of the meeting, when produced by the Environment Team.
- Cllrs also asked for details about what should be done to achieve a net zero carbon emission target in relation to the County Farms Estate by 2030.
- The Vice-Chair suggested developing a policy for the County Farms Estate care farms and the excellent work that they did in support of disabled and vulnerable people.

8.4 **RESOLVED**

That the Committee note the report and the answers given by the Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and the Director of Property and ask to receive a further update report in the early new year

9 **Update from the Chair of the Norfolk Countywide Community Safety Partnership (NCCSP) Scrutiny Sub Panel**

9.1 The Committee received the attached report (9) that was published with the supplementary agenda.

9.2 In introducing the report, the Chair of the NCCSP said that they had agreed to recommend to the Partnership that it consider extending the Delivery Plan period beyond 2024, to provide direction and certainty for partners while the next Community Safety Plan was being developed. They had also raised concerns about the resilience of the Community Safety Team and had suggested this was something the Partnership might wish to keep under review. Furthermore, the NCCSP had also raised concerns about the lack of response from Asian communities in Norfolk and challenged the Partnership to learn lessons for future consultation exercises to improve its connection with ethnic minority communities. In reply Members of the Scrutiny Committee spoke about the importance of consultation with ethnic minorities of and keeping this matter on the NCCSP agenda.

9.3 The Chair of the NCCSP added that he had asked officers to write to the District Councils about poor attendance by Cllrs at NCCSP meetings. The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee said that he would be happy to do all that he could to support whatever approaches were made to the Districts on this matter.

9.4 **RESOLVED**

That the Committee note the report and the actions being taken by the NCCSP.

10 **Support to the local economy following the COVID-19 Pandemic- New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership**

10.1 The annexed report (10) was received.

10.2 During discussion of the report with C-J Green, Chair of the New Anglia LEP, Chris Starkie Chief Executive of the New Anglia LEP Cllr Graham Plant, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy and Vince Muspratt, Director Growth and Development the following key points were noted:

- The speakers explained how the LEP was an important strategic partner of the County Council, supported the local economy and interacted with Norfolk County Council.
- They explained how the LEP are also working with a wide range of other partners to create a Norfolk and Suffolk Renewal Plan that helped the partners to recover more quickly from the pandemic and capitalise on shared priorities.
- There was significant coloration between the partners on skills and employment issues, including the industrial strategy, the response to the pandemic and in bidding for Government support for activities through the creation of an evidence base to help draw down future government funding.
- The LEP was the connecting force between the public and private sectors and the education sector on the basis that they all needed to work together to get things done.
- The LEP's remit included helping to support the delivery of private sector growth which was sustainable and inclusive.
- The governance arrangements for the LEP were set out in the report.
- Cllrs asked how it was possible to measure the effectiveness of the LEP's plans.
- The LEP was supporting several initiatives to promote Norfolk and Suffolk as a place for existing businesses to grow and as an area for high quality companies to locate.
- There were also opportunities around tourism and financial services.
- The impact of the pandemic was still being felt and support for local businesses and for individuals coming off furlough was being provided though the skills agenda.
- The LEP was asked to measure the impact of the restart plan following the pandemic.
- The speakers said that the LEP had worked with others throughout the pandemic on the supply chain, putting together a database for the supply of PPE locally and support to vulnerable people. Cllrs spoke about how the lessons learnt should not be lost.
- The speakers added that some 16,000 calls were made to the growth hub during the pandemic (approximately one in four businesses).
- The goal was for Norfolk to become the UK's clean growth region which highlighted the potential of energy, agri-food and ICT Digital.
- This had included offering business support through different funding streams and working together to put together a single business support script that was used by everyone within the growth hub.
- Through the restart programme a vacancies website for the private sector had been created that was proving to be very popular. Development and management of the LEP vacancies service on the LEP website had proved to be very popular,

- The renewal plan was due to be published in January 2022 with a consultation draft published before Christmas 2021.
- People and skills remain a core priority for the LEP.
- Support for those who had been on furlough remained a big concern and would be addressed through a fresh start up programme run with the County Council.
- In reply to questions the Chief Executive of the New Anglia LEP agreed that the recovery was linked to the Brexit situation as part of a mix of issues that businesses were having to cope with.
- There were currently staff shortages in a range of industries including the care sector.
- An evaluation of the implications of the support available for the care sector in Suffolk would be taken up by the Chair after the meeting.
- The shortage of labour was expected in time to lead in some industries other than the care sector investing more in productive equipment and machinery.
- The clean growth taskforce involved small businesses supporting each other, the launch of events with schools and colleges, the support of alternative fuels and a bid for funding from the government renewal fund.
- House installation and retrofitting were issues that were being looked at from the skills angle and the Chief Executive of the New Anglia LEP said that he would speak to Cllr Osborne about this after the meeting.
- The impact of the cut in universal credit on Norfolk was something that the LEP would also examine.
- The outcome of the bid to the Community Renewal Fund for £12.5m was still awaited although this money had to be spent by the end of March 2021.
- The reduction in core funding for the LEPs was under review although this was not an issue for the current financial year. Cllrs would be kept informed of developments when the outcome of the review was known.

103 **RESOLVED**

That the Committee note the report and the answers given by C-J Green, Chair of the New Anglia LEP, Chris Starkie, Chief Executive of the New Anglia LEP, Cllr Graham Plant, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy and Vince Muspratt, Director Growth and Development and ask to receive a further update report in March 2022 to include details about work to create new jobs and provide an evidence base of the positive impact that the LEP is having on the behaviour of local businesses and further lessons learnt from the pandemic. As part of this update, officers are also asked to provide further information around the proposed review of LEP services.

11 **Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme**

11.1 The annexed report (11) that was circulated following the dispatch of the agenda was received.

11.2 All topics were subject to change, with the Committee remaining flexible to ensure the ability to adapt to emerging and urgent topics for consideration.

11.3 **RESOLVED**

That the Committee note the forward work programme as set out in the appendix to the report subject to the following:

- **an update on the Children's & Adult Social Care Performance Review Panels moved to 24 November 2021**
- **an update from the LEP on 23 March 2022**
- **the December meeting moved to 15 December 2021 with the original date of 22 December 2021 held for call-ins (if any).**

The meeting concluded at 4.20 pm

Chair