

# Greater Norwich Growth Board

Minutes

2pm to 3.10pm

24 March 2015

## Present:

### Board members:

#### South Norfolk Council:

Councillor John Fuller (Chair)

#### Broadland District Council:

Councillor Andrew Proctor

#### New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership:

Mark Jeffries  
(substitute for Mark Pendlington)

#### Norfolk County Council:

Councillor Steve Morphew

#### Norwich City Council:

Councillor Mike Stonard  
(substitute for Councillor Brenda Arthur)

### Officers:

Tim Horspole

Phil Courtier

Chris Starkie

Fiona McDiarmid  
Richard Doleman  
Phil Morris

David Moorcroft  
Graham Nelson

## 1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Brenda Arthur (Norwich City Council) and Mark Pendlington, New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

## 2. Minutes

**RESOLVED** to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2014.

Arising from minute number 1, Fiona McDiarmid updated the Board on Norfolk County Council's recent appointment of Mr Hamilton (Tig) Armstrong following the retirement of Sandra Eastaugh. She confirmed that Mr Armstrong would be attending the next meeting of the Board.

### **3. Growth Deal – Update**

Mark Jeffries gave an update and tabled an infographic (a copy of this document is available on the LEP website) outlining investment in the region. He drew the Board's attention to the newly-signed Growth Deal, confirming that this Government investment in excess of £220million would lead to 16,000 new jobs and 3,000 new homes in Norfolk and Suffolk whilst improving and supporting local infrastructure, and gave examples of some of the projects and schemes being supported, such as the Construction Training Centre at Easton and Otley College, and the Aviation Academy at Norwich International Airport.

The Board was also advised that the transport improvements to the A11 corridor in the Norwich Policy Area would commence in 2016.

Reference was also made to the Growing Business Fund, which would be supporting 91 businesses across the region, securing 1000 jobs, whilst helping to secure additional private investment, and the Growing Places Fund which was supporting improvements at the UEA Enterprise Centre and a Digital Incubation Hub at Norwich University of the Arts, amongst many other projects.

The Chairman confirmed that the planned improvements to the Thickthorn Interchange had been included in the Government's Road Investment Strategy which released £30m that otherwise would have been provided by Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) monies.

Mark Jeffries confirmed that the New Anglia LEP had been meeting with representatives from Norfolk and Suffolk banking institutions to discuss the possibility of securing investment in local infrastructure projects through financial bonds. These discussions would be ongoing.

**RESOLVED** to note the update on the Growth Deal.

### **4. City Deal – Where Next?**

Fiona McDiarmid introduced the report which set out recent national policy developments and gave the Board an update on the current position and next steps required to ensure the delivery of strategic infrastructure to support the growth ambitions of the area.

The Board was encouraged to prepare for and consider the way in which funding may change as a result of the forthcoming General Election, with the Chairman suggesting that the Board should be prepared to approach the new government within 100 days of the election with its proposals. He added that the Board must learn lessons from the first round City Deals experience.

There followed some discussion around the issue of financial leverage and innovative financial opportunities that may be available in the near future, particularly investments involving infrastructure. Cllr Steve Morphew advised the Board not to underestimate the importance of private sector funding. Fiona McDiarmid confirmed

that officers would be focussing on financial aspects and working closely with the LEP in this regard.

**RESOLVED** to note the contents of the report and request that officers work up proposals for freedoms, flexibilities, financing and funding to drive forward delivery.

## 5. Growth Programme – 6 month update

Richard Doleman presented the report and updated the Board on the Growth Programme for 2014/15, highlighting individual projects, and confirming that overall the projects were on track. There was some slight slippage with a small number of projects but these were being carefully managed and monitored and it was anticipated that these would catch up and finish on target.

The Board was advised that the 2015/16 had now been signed off by each of the partner authorities, but that since the programme had been approved by the Board in October 2014, there had been a number of important funding announcements:

- The Road Investment Strategy had been published, confirming the Government's commitment to the funding of improvements to the A11/A47 Thickthorn Interchange.
- £4million of Local Growth Fund monies had been secured and £8.4million of City Cycle Ambition Grant funding for delivery of Norwich Area Transportation Strategy schemes including improvements to walking and cycling around Norwich.

The Board discussed the importance of securing mainstream funding such as this which could be 'topped up' as appropriate by CIL monies.

The Chairman suggested that a 'master document' be produced showing total funding received as it would be useful to have an up to date view of all achievements, and could also be used to demonstrate the Board's track record on project delivery.

Richard Doleman went on to introduce the Greater Norwich Infrastructure Plan which would form the basis for the preparation of the 2016/17 Growth Programme. The Board discussed the document and its importance as an evidence base. The Chairman suggested that it could also include additional information such as the arrangement in place between a number of authorities in the County with regard to the pooling of business rates, and the significant amount of housebuilding taking place in the area. Members were in agreement that the introduction should be amended to set the context of the GNIP within the Joint Core Strategy.

There was some discussion about the delivery of NHS primary care (ie GP practices and other local health services) keeping up with housing growth. Fiona McDiarmid advised the Board that she and other colleagues had met with NHS England and local CCGs and would be involved in ongoing discussion about this issue. She confirmed she would keep the Board briefed on developments.

**RESOLVED to:**

- (1) note the progress on the current Growth Programme and publication of the Greater Norwich Infrastructure Plan subject to amendment of the introduction
- (2) note the timetable for preparation and approval of the 2016/17 Growth Programme

**6. Greater Norwich Communications Protocol**

Phil Courtier introduced the item, and confirmed that the principles remained the same as the GNDP Protocol. Following a brief discussion it was

**RESOLVED** to agree the Greater Norwich Growth Board Protocol

**7. Greater Norwich Local Infrastructure Fund**

Phil Courtier presented the report which gave a summary of progress on applications approved to date, put forward amendments to the Local Infrastructure Fund (LIF) criteria and also gave an update on the financial profile of all applications received by the GNGB.

The Chairman commented on the importance of ensuring that the Board was able to engage with applications to the LIF as quickly as possible. Members were in agreement that the best method to achieve this was to liaise with the Board by email to avoid unnecessary delays in the process.

Members considered the amendments (shown in red) to the LIF criteria and guidance and were in agreement with these.

**RESOLVED to:**

- (1) note progress on the proposals approved in principle at the Board Meetings on 31 July 2014 and 8 October 2014
- (2) agree amendments to the Criteria and Guidance Notes for the Local Infrastructure Fund as follows:

Schemes should provide a repayment profile, milestone or time-based, over 5 years. *In certain circumstances, and where the other LIF objectives and criteria are met, schemes with a longer repayment profile that are purely commercial may be considered.*

- (3) agree that subject to further detailed financial scrutiny under item 8 on the agenda the proposal be approved in principle and authorise negotiations to commence between the accountable body and the applicant to prepare a loan agreement.

## **8. Exclusion of the public**

**RESOLVED** to exclude the press and public from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as specified in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (paragraph 3).

## **9. Greater Norwich Local Infrastructure Fund**

(Councillor Steve Morpew declared an Other Interest in this item because the County Council owned land at Beeston Park).

Phil Courtier presented the report and answered questions.

During discussion the Board members concurred with the recommendations set out in section 5 of the report. Members of the Board discussed the importance of a strict time-frame of six months (from the date of this meeting) for progress to be made and the need for robust legal arrangements. Members were advised that the position could be re-evaluated after the six month period.

Cllr Andrew Proctor suggested that a viability appraisal should be required as part of the programme addressed at paragraph 4.1 of the report. Members of the Board concurred with this view.

**RESOLVED** to agree in principle the availability of a loan but give the parties a timetable for progress and conditions to be met. Each party to be given six months to demonstrate meaningful progress on this programme as set out in the confidential report, after which the application be reviewed.

CHAIR