

Greater Norwich Growth Board Meeting Minutes

Date: Thursday 23 March 2017

Time: 11.30 am

Venue: Broadland District Council, Thorpe Lodge, 1 Yarmouth Road, Norwich, NR7 0DU

Present:

Board Members:

Broadland District Council:

Cllr Andrew Proctor (Chair)

Norwich City Council:

Cllr Alan Waters

South Norfolk Council:

Cllr John Fuller

Norfolk County Council:

Cllr Stephen Morphew

New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership:

In Attendance:

Greater Norwich Projects Team

Officers:

Phil Kirby
Phil Courtier
James Dunne

Laura McGillivray
David Moorcroft
Graham Nelson

Sandra Dinneen
Tim Horspole

Harvey Bullen
Vince Muspratt

Chris Starkie

Mike Burrell
Amy Broadhead
Ellen Goodwin
Angela Freeman

1. APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Mr Mark Pendlington.

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2016 were approved as a correct record.

3. CHAIR HANDOVER

Mr A Proctor, Broadland District Council, was appointed to the position of Chairman of the Board.

4. NOMINATION OF THE VICE-CHAIR

Mr A Waters was appointed to the position of Vice-Chairman of the Board.

5. CITY DEAL UPDATE

Chris Starkie, Managing Director of the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership, gave a presentation on the City Deal and the work being done to improve the skills of the workforce in Norfolk.

Much of the business support element of the Norwich City Deal was focused on skills. The New Anglia Skills Board had been in place since February 2014 and included representatives from industry, skills providers and local authorities. The Board played a role in allocating funding, as well as maintaining data and intelligence.

One of the main strands from the City Deal was improving employer engagement with young people and in particular breaking down the barriers between schools and business.

To address this issue the LEP and the Government's Careers and Enterprise Company had established the New Anglia Enterprise Adviser Network, which allocated a volunteer business person to a school to support their interaction with business.

Another initiative was the Employer Training Incentive Pilot, in which 800 employers had taken part and 3,000 grants had been provided to invest in upskilling more than 2,500 employees.

A significant challenge faced in skills provision was being responsive to the needs of businesses, as too often courses were established based either on available funding or their popularity, which made it hard for niche courses to become established.

The Skills Deals programme was designed to address this and promote higher level training to be provided. Areas where this had been successful were with welding and renewable energy.

Other examples of the work being carried out were; a new construction skills centre at Easton College funded by the LEP that was teaching students about Passivhaus construction techniques.

A Youth Pledge Marque for employers had also been created to encourage businesses to invest more in their future workforce. To secure the Marque an employer would need to be signed up to the Enterprise Adviser Network and increase their amount of work placements and apprentices on a yearly basis.

So far over 50 companies had been signed up for the Marque.

The LEP skills manifesto aimed for an additional 5,000 apprenticeships by 2019 and already 75 percent of this number had been achieved.

Looking ahead the LEP Skills Board would continue to drive the skills agenda and build on the work it had established to increase the skills of the workforce in Norfolk.

The Board was advised that the GNGB could use its influence to better align Government initiatives and funding and to focus on the opportunities to improve the work being done by the LEP.

Members were informed that the County Council was exploring alternative sources of funding for apprenticeships schemes and the Economic Development Sub-Committee Officers had recently received a report that had identified that up to £150,000 could be available through the European Social Fund to support the delivery of this work from July 2017. The report would be forwarded to Board Members.

It was emphasised that organisations should maintain close contact, so that more effective joint working could be undertaken. For example, the LEP had been unaware of the work being done by district council's with schools through their Early Help Hubs.

The Chairman noted that the GNGB could have a role in facilitating and it would be a suitable forum for the LEP to report to on a regular basis. It was also suggested that a future meeting of the GNGB be held at the Norwich Aviation Academy.

RESOLVED

that the Board would receive updates on the implementation of the City Deal from the Local Enterprise Partnership on a regular basis.

6. GROWTH PROGRAMME UPDATE

The report provides an update on the Growth Programme approved to date and the current financial position of the Infrastructure Investment Fund. It also set out the timetable for developing the 2018/19 Growth Programme including the publication of the updated Greater Norwich Infrastructure Plan.

Members were advised that the borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board to help fund the Norwich Northern Distributor Road had been drawn down.

Some slippage had occurred for the 2017/18 income/expenditure and projects had been re-profiled accordingly.

RESOLVED

- (i) to note progress on the Growth Programmes approved to date including the project delivery re-profiling approved under delegated decision making by the Infrastructure Delivery Board;
- (ii) to note the current financial standing of the Infrastructure Investment Fund including the borrowing drawdown to date;
- (iii) to note the delivery impact of not having an agreed 2017/18 Growth Programme; and
- (iv) to delegate responsibility of managing the delivery of the Growth Programme, including the development of the 2018/19 Growth Programme, working with Section 151 Officers, to the Greater Norwich Infrastructure Delivery Board.

7. HOUSING WHITE PAPER

The report summarised the Housing White Paper, which proposed significant changes to planning and housing policy that aimed to increase the delivery of new homes. The report also suggested that the GNGB prepare a response to the Department of Communities and Local Government, as well as drafting a paper on the implications for Greater Norwich.

The Board was informed that Norwich City Council was preparing a separate response, as it had a distinct profile as the only local authority with a significant housing stock within Greater Norwich.

A Member noted that the paper's emphasis on opportunities for villages to thrive meant that there would be much more distributed growth across Greater Norwich.

The Chairman also noted that developers would be expected to deliver once they had secured planning permission and that local authorities would be given powers to ensure that they did.

RESOLVED

- (i) that officers be asked to prepare a full response to the Housing White Paper and the related consultation on build-to-rent, building on the "headline" responses set out in Appendix A and paragraphs 6.1 and 6.2;
- (ii) that officers be asked to prepare a piece of work to better understand what the implications of potential changes to the developer contributions system to Greater Norwich might be, in

particular relating to projected future income (paragraph 3.8);

- (iii) that officers be asked to seek further information from DCLG officers about the potential nature of a 'bespoke' housing deal with Government, with Greater Norwich authorities giving the matter detailed and careful consideration (paragraphs 4.4 and 7.7).

8. GREATER NORWICH INWARD INVESTMENT ACTIVITY

The report proposed that Greater Norwich be represented at the 2017 MIPIM UK, following attendance at the event last year.

MIPIM UK was an offshoot of 'MIPIM – the world's leading property marketplace' which was held annually in Cannes, and brought thousands of international property specialists and investors together with promoters of property development projects, including national and local government.

Greater Norwich had been encouraged by the Government to attend MIPIM UK to:

- Raise the Greater Norwich profile within the investment community
- Actively promote inward investment opportunities; and
- Demonstrate the growth ambitions of Greater Norwich to Government Ministers and senior officials.

Over the course of the event contact was made with nearly 70 leads interested in the investment opportunities in Greater Norwich and Norfolk.

Support from private sector partners was very good and the feedback received on the partnership approach to promoting Greater Norwich to wider audiences was positive.

The Chairman suggested that Greater Norwich should attend under the 'Invest East' banner, which was coordinated by the LEP and that objectives be set about what attendance at MIPIM UK was seeking to achieve.

It was also suggested that a theme or sector led approach be taken, to ensure there was a role for private sector partners at the event.

A Member noted that attending the event had been an expensive exercise that had seen few tangible benefits; however others thought that attendance would be part of a strategy to raise the profile of the region that would see results in the long term.

RESOLVED

- (i) to note the update on Greater Norwich promotional activity including attendance at MIPIM UK, the development of a visual identity and narrative, and the strengthening of existing partnerships with other sectors; and
- (ii) to note the development of proposals for attendance at MIPIM UK 2017, as part of the Invest East proposition and with a clear set of objectives.

9. GREATER NORWICH LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

The report updated the Board on the financial position of the two finalised Local Infrastructure Fund loan agreements as well as progress made towards finalising the loan agreements for the four further schemes.

The two finalised loan agreements were £4.5m to support construction for a roundabout on the A146 at St Georges Park Loddon and £1.5m to support the demolition and redevelopment in Little Plumstead. The loans were expected to be repaid in 2020/21 and 2019/20 respectively.

Members noted that some of the other applicant schemes were unlikely to go ahead over the next few years and that if loans were to be provided they should be time limited to ensure prompt delivery. It was also suggested that a certain amount of risk should be accepted when providing loans.

In light of the delays to the other agreements, it was proposed that some of the funding set aside for the four remaining applicant schemes should be used for other sites that would be ready to go if additional finance was available.

It was suggested that instead of another Call for Sites that Local Plans across Greater Norwich be assessed to identify those sites, with consent, that had stalled for want of additional finance. A list could then be compiled and the developers approached. The list should focus on small and medium sites that could be brought forward quickly, to enable the funds to be recycled and be available for the current, longer term commitments.

RESOLVED

- (i) to note the signing of the second loan agreement, drawdowns to date and the progress of the other proposals approved in principle to date;
- (ii) to review the delivery profile of each of the agreed projects and report back to the next meeting of the Board; and
- (iii) to compile a list of sites with planning permission and the potential to be developed within a short timescale using recycled funds.

10. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business because otherwise, information which is exempt information by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by The Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, would be disclosed to them.

11. THE FUTURE OF GREATER NORWICH

The Board was requested to consider a package of recommendations designed to reinvigorate and develop the Greater Norwich partnership in order to meet the challenges of achieving long term growth. Seeing the position of the GNGB as setting the strategic direction for the partnership as its central body.

Following extensive discussion it was:

RESOLVED

to

- (i) agree the new structure of the partnership as set out in Appendix 3 of the report, and recommend to the partners that this model be adopted at the earliest opportunity;
- (ii) to instruct Chief Executive Officers to commence work and present back to the Board for adoption, a clear vision, objectives and coherent narrative for the growth of Greater Norwich including a strapline to pave the way for:
 - the appointment of a Greater Norwich Director for Growth;
 - the establishment of a special purpose delivery vehicle and
 - the preparation of a single Greater Norwich Economic and Inward Investment Strategy which will be a priority for preparation later in 2017;in reporting back to the next Board meeting, identify the minimum staffing requirements to make the arrangements effective and potential sources of funding for a three year budget period;
- (iii) agree to meet on a six weekly cycle;
- (iv) agree to the partners adoption of the Annual Growth Programme for 2017/18 without any provision for maintenance funding but recognise that a sufficient future maintenance pot (18/19 onwards) will be necessary as part of the future investment programmes in the Greater Norwich area;

- (v) to maintain a commitment to focus growth on the most sustainable locations and deliver sites in the Joint Core Strategy;
- (vi) to give a steer to the Local Plans Working Group, that subject to the evidence not suggesting anything to the contrary, the policy framework within the Greater Norwich Local Plan provides for the housing land supply to be calculated over the single Greater Norwich geography;
- (vii) add 'develop and promote an identity for the GNGB' to the functions of the Board;
- (viii) agree use of > Norwich logo in all communication;
- (ix) agree that all communications around delivery are branded as coming from the GNGB;
- (x) create and use only one website – www.greaternorwich.co.uk; the site will mainly focus on selling the area as an area for growth, focussing on people and place and current opportunities for growth. It will incorporate areas for GNDP and GNLP areas as well as agendas/minutes etc;
- (xi) create a suite of central materials to be used to promote the GNGB.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To be agreed.

The meeting closed at 2.08 pm.

