

# Greater Norwich Growth Board

## Minutes

**Date:** Thursday, 30 September 2021

**Time:** 14:00 to 14:50

**Venue:** Virtual – Zoom

<b>Present:</b>	
<b>Board Members:</b>	<b>Officers:</b>
<b>Norwich City Council:</b>	
Councillor Alan Waters (chair)	Graham Nelson
<b>South Norfolk Council:</b>	
Councillor John Fuller (vice chair)	Trevor Holden Phil Courtier
<b>Broadland District Council:</b>	
Councillor Shaun Vincent	<i>Trevor Holden Phil Courtier</i>
<b>Norfolk County Council:</b>	
Councillor Andrew Proctor	Vince Muspratt
<b>In attendance:</b>	
Grace Burke	Greater Norwich project team leader
Harvey Bullen	Assistant director of finance, Norfolk County Council
Matt Tracey	Growth & infrastructure group manager, Norfolk County Council
Sebastian Gasse	Head of education participation, Norfolk County Council

Jobs, homes and prosperity for local people



## **1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from CJ Green and Chris Starkie, New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership, Tom McCabe, Norfolk County Council and Stephen Evans, Norwich City Council.

## **2. Declarations of Interests**

There were no declarations of interests.

## **3. Minutes**

**RESOLVED** to agree the accuracy of the meeting held on 17 June 2021.

## **4. IIF Project Showcase – GP49: Earlham Millennium Green**

(Matthew Davies, Project Officer, Norwich Fringe Project, Development and City Services, Norwich City Council attended the meeting for this item.)

Matthew Davies gave a power point presentation to demonstrate the outcome of the 2015 CIL (community infrastructure levy) funded project to improve biodiversity and access to Earlham Millennium Green, located between Earlham Road and West Earlham/Clover Hill, along the Yare Valley, and managed by the Norwich Fringe Project for the city council as one of its natural areas. The project was carried out in three phases and included: the replacement of the wooden boardwalk around the pond, with raised banks using silt removed from the pond; the installation of a pipe to ensure an all-year round water supply to the pond from the ditch network and conserving its biodiversity; the replacement of fishing/dipping platforms with long lasting, sustainable plastic (that was recyclable); the provision of new surfaces for pathways and improved wheelchair access; and signage to encourage community use. The Norwich Fringe Project volunteers had carried out the work which kept costs down.

Graham Nelson, executive director of development and city services, Norwich City Council, said that the board had supported Earlham Millennium Green and the provision of a bridge at Bowthorpe Southern Park, as part of a network of investment on green infrastructure and improved community access linking Norwich Research Park, Colney, Eaton, University of East Anglia and Norfolk and Norwich Hospital.

**RESOLVED** to thank Matthew Davies, project officer, for the presentation and to ask him to convey the board's gratitude to the Norwich Fringe Project volunteers for their contribution and work on the project.

## **5. Children's Services Capital Programme update**

Sebastian Gasse, head of education participation, Norfolk County Council, presented the report. He referred to the previous item and said that photographs could be

presented to the board in future, suggesting that the board might like to see images of the new schools recently opened at Hethersett.

During discussion, Councillor Proctor said that there was a need to provide schools in relation to the large housing developments being built and spoke in support of using the £2 million annual CIL contributions for capital educational schemes on an ongoing basis to furnish loans (up to £30-40 million) rather than allocating it to named schemes. There was no S106 funding available for schools in the Greater Norwich area.

Councillor Fuller commented that he had been pleased when the board had first allocated the £2 million per annum as he had considered that education was part of the infrastructure load of building houses and had been concerned that previous board members had supported road infrastructure over education. Developer contributions had not been realised and there was not the funding available to fill the gap in school provision in the Greater Norwich area. He was open to using the funding more flexibly to service borrowing where CIL regulations allowed, but the Greater Norwich Growth board or the partner district councils could not take on the liability of the repayments for servicing the loans which should lie with the county council as the statutory provider and holder of the assets.

Members agreed that there needed to be further information on the finances before it could be committed but there was agreement that funding should be used more flexibly to deliver schools. The chair commented on the role of central government to provide DfE (Department of Education) funding for Free Schools or direct to local authorities to provide new schools. A perennial question from residents was that they wanted communities not just houses and that people were concerned about the provision of schools and health facilities. Members considered that there needed to be further consideration of the financial implications of recommendation (2). Officers undertook to review the viability of funding going forward and consider the financial implications and report back to the board.

**RESOLVED** to:

- (1) note the ongoing need for additional school places in response to housing growth;
- (2) agree to consider the use of City Deal Borrowing to support the delivery of Greater Norwich capital education projects within their future decision making, subject to a report on the viability and financial implications to the board;
- (3) continue to support the shared responsibility with Norfolk County Council to ensure the delivery of schools' infrastructure resulting from housing development in the Greater Norwich Area.

## **6. City Deal Borrowing and the establishment of the Strategic Investment Fund**

Harvey Bullen, assistant director of finance, Norfolk County Council, presented the report.

During discussion, Councillor Fuller spoke in support of the proposal and suggested that the challenge going forward would be to identify schemes to provide cash flow to fund the longer-term schemes. The Long Stratton ByPass was a good example of this recyclable funding model. South Norfolk Council would secure S106 funding through the planning process and therefore the developer's contribution would be legally enforceable.

The chair thanked the officers on behalf of the board.

### **RESOLVED** to:

- (1) agree the draft Terms of Reference for both the initial City Deal borrowing and the Strategic Investment Fund (SIF), as detailed below in (3) and as appended to the report at Appendix A and Appendix B;
- (2) instruct the Infrastructure Delivery Board (IDB) to design and agree the processes that are required to support the delivery of strategic infrastructure projects through both the initial City Deal borrowing and the SIF;
- (3) recommend the establishment of the SIF to each District Authority's Cabinet and Full Council; seeking agreement to draw down the initial £20m through the City Deal and for the interest and loan repayments to be made from the Infrastructure Investment Fund (IIF – pooled CIL);
- (4) seek delegated authority from each District Authority's Cabinet and Full Council to oversee the allocation of the £20m City Deal borrowing and SIF on a scheme by scheme basis. This will be done in accordance with the fund's Terms of Reference, the Greater Norwich Growth Board's Joint Working Agreement and under the direction of Norfolk County Council as the Greater Norwich Growth Board's Accountable Body.

## **7. Date of Next Meeting**

**RESOLVED** to confirm that the next meeting will be held at 14:00 on Thursday, 2 December 2021.

CHAIR