

Minutes of the Greater Norwich Growth Board

Date: Thursday 28 November 2024

Time: 2.30pm

Venue: The Upper Yare Room, Horizon Centre, Peachman Way, Norwich, NR7 0WF

Present:

Name	Organisation	Role
Cllr Sue Holland (Chair)	Broadland District Council	Board Member
Cllr Mike Stonard (Vice Chair)	Norwich City Council	Board Member
Cllr Fabian Eagle	Norfolk County Council	Board Member
Cllr Daniel Elmer	South Norfolk Council	Board Member

In Attendance:

Sarah Ashurst	Norwich City Council	Officer
Wendy Brooks	Norfolk County Council	Officer
Grace Burke	Norfolk County Council	Officer
Phil Courtier	South Norfolk Council & Broadland District Council	Officer
Thomas Cushan	Norfolk County Council	Officer
Georgie Day	Norfolk County Council	Officer
Ellie Leeper	Norfolk County Council	Officer
Ruth Oyenyi	Norfolk County Council	Officer
Steven Peet	South Norfolk Council & Broadland District Council	Officer
Chris Starkie	Norfolk County Council	Officer
Simon Spanyol	Wymondham Tennis Club	Secretary
Matt Tracey	Norfolk County Council	Officer
Dominic Watkins	CBA Consultants	Director

1. APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Cllr K Mason Billig, her substitute was Cllr F Eagle.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Grace Burke declared an interest in respect of item 5, Draft 5 Year Infrastructure Investment Plan 2025 – 2030, as a member of Wymondham Baptist Church, which had been put forward in the 2025/26 Annual Growth Programme as a project for a Community Space. She confirmed that she had not been involved in the application process for this project.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2024 were confirmed as an accurate record.

4. PROJECT SHOWCASE: WYMONDHAM TENNIS CLUB

The Board received a presentation from Steven Peet, Leisure Strategic Development Manager, Broadland and South Norfolk District Councils, on Wymondham Tennis Club.

Wymondham Tennis Club moved to Kett's Park and formed a partnership with Wymondham Town Council in 2003. The facility had three outdoor courts but lacked investment and had seen reducing membership.

An application to the Greater Norwich Growth Board was made in June 2019, by South Norfolk Council and Wymondham Tennis Club, to re-surface the existing courts, create a fourth tennis court, with overmarking for netball and install new LED floodlights. The bid had been successful and £149,932 had been awarded to fully fund the project.

Following a delay caused by COVID, the project commenced in July 2022 and was completed under budget at £140,394, in November 2022.

Since the completion of the project a new clubhouse had been installed, a new coach had been recruited and a range of initiatives and events had been introduced that had expanded activities at the club and increased participation and membership.

Going forward it was the ambition to make the club the tennis venue of choice for all ages and levels of ability, by offering superb facilities and activities.

Simon Spanyol, the Wymondham Tennis Club Secretary, thanked the Board for funding the project, which had rejuvenated the club.

The Chair noted that this was an excellent example of what the Councils could achieve working together across Greater Norwich.

5. DRAFT 5 YEAR INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PLAN 2025 – 2030

Phil Courtier, Director of Place at Broadland and South Norfolk District Councils, introduced the report, which presented the Draft Greater Norwich Joint Five-Year Infrastructure Investment Plan 2025-30.

Members' attention was drawn to the chart on page 32 of the agenda, which showed the process for bringing forward projects for the Growth Programme and it was explained that projects were categorised under the four infrastructure themes of Transport, Green Infrastructure, Communities, and Education.

The proposed projects were then assessed and agreed by the Infrastructure Delivery Board to be put forward as the 2025/26 Annual Growth Programme. The Board was requested to review the Draft Investment Plan 2025-30 and recommend it to each of the constituent Greater Norwich Councils before it was returned to the Board on 11 March 2025.

Details of the 2025/26 Annual Growth Programme were set out on page 46 of the agenda, which showed a request for funding of £4.1m towards projects worth a total of more than £12m.

At page 43 of the agenda was an overarching summary of the Growth Programme, the funding of which would be drawn down over several years. Members were also asked to note that the cumulative expenditure through the Infrastructure Investment Fund for 2025/26 would be in excess of £65m. The Board was also informed that although Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts had decreased in recent years due, mainly to nutrient neutrality and other external pressures, it was anticipated that with the huge growth agenda nationally that the CIL receipts would return to previous levels in due course. Included in the table were also details of the cash reserve, which had been set at a figure sufficient to cover annual loan repayments.

In response to a query about the recovery of CIL income, Members were advised that the forecast was put together with the best intelligence available, which included information gathered by each partner authority as part of the Local Plan monitoring process, as well as developers' projections for bringing forward their respective sites. Overall, the forecasts were based on cautious assumptions.

In answer to a query about the Northern Distributor Road it was confirmed that the loan was being repaid at a rate of £2m per year with the final payment due in 2041.

Tom Cushman then took the Board through the digital dashboard, which was an interactive platform for exploring the financial data in the Annual Growth Programme. The dashboard showed details of projects, which could be filtered by authority, theme, location, and status, as well as match funding, loans, CIL forecasts, planned spend and the Infrastructure Investment Fund balance.

Members commended the dashboard, which presented the information in a very user friendly and accessible way.

Cllr D Elmer welcomed the schemes being brought forward in South Norfolk for the 2025/26 Growth Programme, which included improvements to the public realm in Diss.

It was,

RESOLVED

To recommend to each District Cabinet and Full Council:

The approval of the Draft Five Year Infrastructure Investment Plan 2025-30 which includes the proposed 2025/26 Annual Growth Programme, (Annex A).

6. REQUEST FOR FUNDING FROM THE SCHOOL OF ORAL HEALTH

Chris Starkie, the Director of Growth and Investment at Norfolk County Council, presented the report which requested £1.5m from the Infrastructure Investment Fund to help with the delivery of the University of East Anglia's (UEA) new School of Oral Health. The school would provide the initial capacity for 40 undergraduate students per year for courses in Dentistry starting in 2026.

The £1.5m funding would provide the 'shell and core' for the second storey of an extension to the Edith Cavell building at Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital Campus, UEA. The internals of the space would be outfitted using £1.5m funding from the UEA.

The Board noted the acute shortage of dental provision in Norfolk and that the proposal had been supported by MPs of all parties in the previous parliament, as well as partners in the health sector.

Cllr M Stonard noted that training dentist locally could encourage many to stay in Norfolk after qualifying and would also strengthen the UEA by adding a prestigious medical facility to its campus.

The Board strongly supported the proposal, and it was,

RESOLVED

To

- i. Accept the request for funding from the School of Oral Health, and to recommend that £1.5m of funding be committed to it from the Infrastructure Investment Fund.
- ii. Instruct that the required changes be made to the draft Five Year Infrastructure Investment Plan 25-30 (the Plan - reported as item 5) adding the School of Oral Health to the Greater Norwich Annual Growth Programme for 25/26, ahead of the Plan progressing to each District Cabinet and Council for a decision.

7. GREATER NORWICH GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

Wendy Brooks, the Head of Environment at Norfolk County Council welcomed Dominic Watkins, from CBA consultants to the meeting, who took the Board through the presentation for a refreshed Green Infrastructure Strategy.

The Strategy would set out a vision and strategic approach to enhancing and expanding the Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure network over the next 10-15 years.

The mission of the Strategy could be summarised as:

To work with partners in securing opportunities for nature recovery and enhanced access to nature by supporting the development of Green Infrastructure to help tackle climate and ecological challenges, and support vibrant, healthy, inclusive and growing communities.

The objectives of the Strategy were:

- Enabling access to nature and healthy lifestyles
- Harnessing productive landscapes
- Strengthening distinctive places
- Supporting nature recovery
- Promoting urban greening
- Strengthening blue-green infrastructure

The guiding principles of the Strategy were:

- Delivering high quality Green Infrastructure
- Long-term stewardship
- Optimising gains and benefits
- Targeting Green Infrastructure in areas with greatest need/potential
- Integrating Green Infrastructure into policy
- Collaborative approach

The Chair noted the importance of having a healthy and active lifestyle in a green economy that was both good for our communities and would help address some of the wider issues related to the climate emergency at a local level.

It was,

RESOLVED

To note the details of the draft Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy, to enable CBA to progress with developing the final outputs of the Strategy and Delivery Plan.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

11 March 2025 at 10:00am, The Horizon Centre, Upper Yare Room.

The meeting closed at 3.25pm