

Greater Norwich Growth Board Meeting Minutes

Date: Thursday 25 May 2017

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: International Aviation Academy, 5 Anson Road, Norwich, NR6 6ED

Present:

Board Members:

Broadland District Council:

Cllr Andrew Proctor (Chair)

Norwich City Council:

Cllr Alan Waters

South Norfolk Council:

Cllr Michael Edney

Norfolk County Council:

Cllr Cliff Jordan

New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership:

Mr Mark Pendlington

Officers:

Phil Kirby
Phil Courtier

Laura McGillivray
David Moorcroft
Graham Nelson

Tim Horspole

Vince Muspratt
Andrew Skiggs

Chris Starkie

In Attendance:

Greater Norwich Projects Team

Mike Burrell
Amy Broadhead
Ellen Goodwin
Angela Freeman

1. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chairman welcomed Cllr Cliff Jordan; the new County Council Board Member to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received on behalf of Cllr John Fuller.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2017 were agreed as a correct record save for the following amendments to the resolution of Minute 11 – The Future of Greater Norwich:

Resolution (v) was expanded into the following two resolutions:

- (v) to maintain a commitment to focus growth on the most sustainable locations;*
- (vi) to drive growth on existing allocated sites especially but not limited to Beeston Park, Rackheath, the Deal Ground/Utilities site, Barrack Street, the Norwich Research Park and Long Stratton;*

Resolution (vii) (previously numbered vi) could not be agreed, therefore, it was decided that this matter would be discussed outside the meeting and brought back to be agreed at a later date.

In response to a suggestion that 'sufficient' be replaced with 'limited' in (iv), the Chairman emphasised that the size of the maintenance pot would be determined by the Board according to what was required. It was, therefore, agreed that (iv) remain unchanged.

4. CITY DEAL UPDATE

Chris Starkie gave a presentation on New Anglia Business Growth attached at Appendix 1 to these Minutes.

The presentation explained the Growth Hub concept and how it was being rolled out as a means of delivering flexible support for business. Across Norfolk and Suffolk over 6,000 businesses had been supported in this way; receiving around 30,000 hours of business support.

In response to a query, it was confirmed that there was sufficient money in the Regional Growth Fund until at least 2021.

It was also confirmed that there was a 'No Wrong Door Policy' for the support provided by the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). This ensured all businesses received access to the support that they needed. Initially businesses would be given 15 hours of support from LEP advisors, before being referred to other support providers if required. Businesses that showed potential, especially in the number of jobs they might generate, were fast tracked through a national scheme and provided with intense support.

So far, 740 of these intensive supports had been undertaken.

A Member emphasised that there were a considerable number of small businesses that were hidden, yet had the potential to grow and it was very important to make the effort to reach this type of business.

The meeting was also informed that some of the Growth Advisors employed in the Hub specialised in the tech/innovation sector and focused on the kind of work being undertaken at the Norwich Research Park, Hethel and the International Aviation Academy.

5. ANNUAL GROWTH PROGRAMME

The report set out the Greater Norwich Growth Programme and recommended projects for inclusion in 2017/18.

Members were requested to note that delays in agreeing the 2017/18 Growth Programme had impacted on a number of projects and that some further slippage on other projects might occur as a result of this.

The Board was also advised that no maintenance costs were being sought for the 2017/18 Growth Programme, but it had been recognised by each council that sufficient funding for the maintenance pot would be required from 2018/19 onward.

Concern was expressed in respect of the ongoing annual allocation of £2m from the Infrastructure Investment Fund for capital education provision, as there were insufficient Community Infrastructure Levy receipts to commit to such a figure at present.

In response, the Chairman emphasised that the proposal was to commit up to £2m in forthcoming years and this would be evaluated and agreed by the Board as investment plans were considered in the future.

It was also noted that the Infrastructure Investment Fund would be used as leverage to access funding for infrastructure projects from other sources as well.

It was requested that a delivery trajectory of projects be included in future reports, as the Board needed to be aware of delays so that other projects could be brought forward instead.

RESOLVED

to

- (i) endorse the seventeen projects recommended for inclusion in the 2017/18 Annual Growth Programme and commit spend from the Infrastructure Investment Fund towards these projects;
- (ii) commit up to £2m from the Infrastructure Investment Fund for the delivery of capital education provision in the Greater Norwich area;
- (iii) agree to build up a cash reserve, equal to one year's loan repayment, to be built up over three years;

- (iv) note the delivery impact of not having an agreed 2017/18 Annual Growth Programme until May 2017, recognising some projects will have already slipped; and
- (v) continue to delegate responsibility of managing the delivery of the Growth Programmes to the Greater Norwich Infrastructure Delivery Board.

6. GREATER NORWICH LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

The report provided an update on the delivery profile of projects to be funded from loans to developers for infrastructure required to unlock onsite delivery of development.

Officers had met informally with two developers, one of which was interested in going ahead with a loan. It was now proposed that officers be permitted to make developers formal offers.

A Member suggested that housing associations should also be approached, as they might also be interested in taking advantage of a loan.

The Chairman emphasised that the loans already agreed and agreed in principle needed to be confirmed, as the funding could be used elsewhere if not required.

It was confirmed that the loans would continue to be reviewed, to assess their likelihood of being brought forward and that, therefore, recommendation (ii) would be amended to reflect this.

The Chairman also suggested that a decision on risk might need to be explored; possibly looking at taking a second charge, rather than a first charge on property secured against the loan.

RESOLVED

to

- (i) note the withdrawal of the Bowthorpe scheme from the fund;
- (ii) note the delivery review of each of the projects agreed and agreed in principle by this Board to date *and review them again*;
- (iii) instruct the Infrastructure Delivery Board to proactively approach developers who might benefit from the current arrangements; and
- (iv) instruct the Infrastructure Delivery Board to approach small and medium sized developers with the offer of a smaller scale facility over the next 2-3 years, based on the available identified headroom of the fund.

7. GREATER NORWICH LOCAL PLAN

The Board noted the issues regarding maximising delivery, the role of existing and planned infrastructure and the economic priorities of the Greater Norwich Local Plan.

8. FUTURE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS IN GREATER NORWICH

The Board was provided with initial proposals for the revised working arrangements for the Greater Norwich Growth Board (GNGB) .

The Board had requested that a clear vision, objectives and coherent narrative for the growth of Greater Norwich be drafted.

The vision was that by 2036 >Norwich would be known as an international centre with a global reputation for excellence in the knowledge, life science and financial sectors. This would be achieved in partnership with business, who through sustainable growth would be motivated along with communities to stay and enjoy a better quality of life in Greater Norwich.

The proposed objectives were based on three strands; the Greater Norwich City Deal, recognising the unique natural assets of the area and working in partnership between local authorities and business to tackle skills gaps and shortages and to promote gender equality in employment.

A Member welcomed the inclusive growth model, as it was important not to marginalise people especially in Norwich, which had an hourglass economy.

The Chairman noted that partnership working would be a key aspect of the work of the GNGB.

It was emphasised that this was a work in progress and would be developed as the role of the GNGB increased.

The meeting was informed that the job description of the Greater Norwich Director of Growth had been drafted, and the recruitment process would be brought to the Board for agreement. EELGA had worked up a draft proposal, which would now be finalised. It was also suggested that increasing the size of the Delivery Team should also be considered as part of this work.

Members were also advised that a range of options were also being looked at for the Special Purpose Delivery Vehicle, as well as the content of the Delivery Programme for the Team.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

10.00 am, Thursday 13 July 2017, at Broadland District Council

The meeting closed at 11.11 am.