

# Greater Norwich Growth Board

## Minutes

**Date:** Thursday, 17 June 2021

**Time:** 10:00 to 10:50

**Venue:** Virtual – MS Teams

<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
Ruth Oyenyi	Greater Norwich senior project officer
Helen Mellors	Assistant director of planning, South Norfolk & Broadland District Council
Harvey Bullen	Assistant director of finance, Norfolk County Council

Jobs, homes and prosperity for local people



**NORWICH**  
City Council



**Norfolk** County Council

**NEWANGLIA**  
Local Enterprise Partnership  
for Norfolk and Suffolk

Matt Tracey	Growth & infrastructure group manager, Norfolk County Council
Sebastian Gasse	Head of Education participation, Norfolk County Council

## 1. Handover

Councillor Proctor thanked the members of the board and officers who had supported him during his term of office as chair.

In handing over the chair to Councillor Waters and the vice chair to Councillor Fuller, Councillor Proctor alluded to the challenge ahead for the board in securing finance for the large projects that the board had in mind for the future.

**RESOLVED** to note the handover and confirm Councillor Waters as chair and Councillor Fuller as vice chair for the civic year 2021-22.

(Councillor Waters in the chair from this point.)

## 2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Stephen Evans, Norwich City Council. CJ Green and Chris Starkie, East Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership had been delayed in another meeting and had intended to join the meeting later.

## 3. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interests.

## 4. Minutes

**RESOLVED** to agree the accuracy of the minutes, including the exempt minute, of the meeting held on 18 March 2021.

## 5. Greater Norwich Infrastructure Plan 2021

Phil Courtier, director of place, Broadland and South Norfolk District Councils, presented the report. The Greater Norwich Infrastructure Plan (GNIP) was agreed annually and was the long list that initiated projects for future allocation of funding for infrastructure, informed the 5 Year Infrastructure Plan and Growth Programme. The GNIP was undergoing a review to bring it into line with the emerging local plans and improve accessibility and would look different in future years.

Councillor Fuller suggested that there was nothing wrong with the report per se, but that it needed to be more public facing. Members of the public needed guidance on which projects had committed expenditure under the 5 Year Infrastructure Plan; what were potential projects which were prepared ready to commence and those that were aspirational projects. The total expenditure on infrastructure should also be

included in the narrative in this document and on public record. Phil Courtier confirmed the purpose of the GNIP as the starting point for projects and that the delivery plan was set out in the 5 Year Infrastructure Plan and Growth Programme. The GNIP also contained projects that were expected to be delivered under other programmes. Councillor Proctor and other board members endorsed the use of additional narrative summaries in the GNIP as proposed by Councillor Fuller.

The chair stated his intention to resurrect the presentations of infrastructure projects to the board which has been suspended due to the pandemic.

During discussion, the board noted two amendments to the GNIP list. Costessey Country Park had been omitted from the GNIP and should be added. It was also noted that the Strumpshaw community village hall had been delivered and was up and running.

In reply to a question from Councillor Proctor about flood alleviation, Phil Courtier explained that Community Infrastructure Levy Funding (CIL) could not be used to retrofit existing schemes or for mitigation. However, it could be used to provide infrastructure to bring forward projects where flooding issues were a barrier to growth and this could be considered as part of this year's review of the GNIP.

The board noted that the diagram on page 22 of the agenda papers, showing the Growth Programme Process and the local planning authorities, for completeness should include dotted lines to Norfolk County Council and the Broads Authority.

During discussion the board were satisfied that if the additional text summaries were added and the amendments to the draft document were made, as outlined above, it would not be necessary to bring the GNIP 2021-22 back to the board for further consideration.

**RESOLVED** to:

- (1) accept the draft GNIP 2021 as appended to the report, subject to:
  - (a) the inclusion of additional narrative text relating to status and expenditure on infrastructure projects;
  - (b) amending the list to include Costessey Country Park and that Strumpshaw community village hall has been completed;
  - (c) amending the Growth Programme Process diagram to include Norfolk County Council and the Broads Authority.
  - (d) note that the GNIP will be reviewed next year.
- (2) note that by accepting the GNIP this will initiate the opening of the 'call for projects' for the Infrastructure Investment Fund (IIF-strategic pooled CIL).

## **6. Greater Norwich Sports and Physical Activity Strategy**

Graham Nelson, executive director of development and city services, Norwich City Council, presented the report which updated members on the progress since the detailed presentation at the last meeting by Simon Hamilton, Active Norfolk. Sport England now recognised the benefits of active lifestyles rather than just the taking part in sports. The purpose of the study was to take a broader approach to support the quality of life of residents. Match funding had been provided by Sport England. Working groups had been set up with all member councils represented. FMG Consultants had been recruited to lead the engagement process and details were set out in the timetable in the report. The appendices to the report contained the governance arrangements. The board would have an opportunity to review the draft strategy.

The chair welcomed the progress of the report and expressed gratitude to Norfolk County Council's procurement team.

During discussion, Trevor Holden, managing director to South Norfolk and Broadland District Councils, suggested that the Greater Norwich Sports and Physical Activity Strategy should be cross-referenced within the GNIP to provide joined-up information to promote healthy lifestyles. Graham Nelson said that it could be included in the review of the GNIP, alongside the emerging Greater Norwich Local Plan and the review of the growth programme. The significance of the Sport and Physical activity study was that it would refine the evidence base and inform the Greater Norwich investment programme.

### **RESOLVED** to:

- (1) note the report;
- (2) include a cross- reference to the Greater Norwich Sports and Physical Activity Plan in the Greater Norwich Infrastructure Plan.

## **7. Greater Norwich City Deal Borrowing**

Harvey Bullen, director of financial management, Norfolk County Council, presented the report and explained the recommendations.

During discussion, Councillor Fuller suggested that the report be amended to reflect the unique arrangement for the use of CIL for "housing and economic development" as agreed in the 2013 City Deal agreement and was not limited to the 6 themes as set out in paragraph 2 of the report. Councillor Waters referred to the action point made at the last meeting (exempt minute, 18 March 2021) to seek exemplification on this point from the Treasury.

Discussion ensued on the proposal to create a mechanism to provide a pot of money for loans which would be repaid and recycled for other projects but members

expressed concern that the use for infrastructure would be constrained to the uses permitted under CIL, as set out in paragraph 2 of the report. Councillor Fuller expressed concern that arbitrary decisions taken now would constrain decisions made by members or their successors in two to three years' time and not reflect the broader scope of the City Deal. He considered that once the money had been repaid the pot would no longer be bound by CIL regulations. Phil Courtier pointed out that there was no governance framework to support this pot of money and suggested additional wording to recommendation (3) to establish a governance framework to support the infrastructure required to support housing or employment development, therefore reflecting the wording in the City Deal agreement. Councillor Proctor suggested an amendment to recommendation (2) to add the word initial before borrowing.

Officers commented that option to invest in a pot to create a cyclical programme of funding that was not constrained by the CIL regulations should be checked with the Treasury to ensure that it was the correct interpretation and provide assurance. Members were advised that the detail of the process needed to be worked out and that the governance framework and processes (as discussed above) were covered in recommendation (3) and would be brought back to the next board meeting for approval. It was noted that the Long Stratton Bypass would be the first example of a project that could be funded under this borrowing model.

After further discussion on consultation with the Treasury on the interpretation of the City Deal agreement, the chair pointed out that it would not delay the process and would be a sensible approach to provide assurance on the investment model and methodology to recycle funding and had been an action agreed at the last meeting. Councillor Proctor said that the recommendations as presented in the report were fine and, to avoid unnecessary changes or tweaking to the scheme until clarification had been received, proposed an additional recommendation should be added to ensure that officers brought back a proposal to reuse or recycle funds to the next meeting.

**RESOLVED** to:

- (1) agree to the 'in principle' draw down of £20m City Deal borrowing to create a cyclical programme of funding to bring forward the delivery of major community infrastructure projects (as detailed in section 4 of the report);
- (2) agree that the Infrastructure Investment Fund (pooled Community Infrastructure Levy) should be used to repay the borrowing agreed in (1) and in accordance with legal guidance (as detailed in section 2 of the report);
- (3) instruct the Infrastructure Delivery Board to develop a model of borrowing to support Long Stratton Bypass, confirming the governance, legal and financial arrangements of the proposed loan and return to the Greater

Norwich Growth Board to seek agreement to proceed on 30 September 2021.

- (4) agree that a proposal for the cyclical programme of funding be brought back to the next meeting following clarification with the Treasury.

CHAIR