

Minutes of a meeting of the **Economic Success Panel** held at Thorpe Lodge, 1 Yarmouth Road, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich on **Monday 19 August 2019** at **6pm** when there were present:

Mrs J K Copplestone – Chairman

Mr S C Beadle
Mr P E Bulman

Mr A D Crotch
Ms R M Grattan

Mrs T M Mancini-Boyle
Mrs K A Vincent

Also attending were Cllr L Neal (South Norfolk Council Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economic Growth), Mr N J Brennan, Mr D G Harrison, Mrs J Leggett, Mr M L Murrell, Mrs S M Prutton and Miss J L Thomas.

Officers in attendance were the Assistant Director of Economic Growth, the Operational Economic Development Manager (DD), the Economic Development Manager (KH) and the Committee Officer (DM).

5 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Member	Minute No & Heading	Nature of Interest
Mr S Beadle	8 – Car Parking – a consistent approach	Other interest – member of the national valuation tribunal service

6 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Ms S J Catchpole.

7 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Minute no 3 – Overview of the work of the Economic Development Department.

A Member re-emphasised the need for Broadland to continue to provide support to emerging and small businesses.

8 CAR PARKING – A CONSISTENT APPROACH

Members considered the report of the Operational Economic Development Manager inviting a discussion on the wide-ranging issues around car parking across the Broadland district and seeking guidance on the development opportunities to manage car parking that collaboration provided to enable a

consistent approach across the wider area. The Operational Economic Development Manager took Members through the report in detail highlighting the opportunity arising from collaboration to review the approach to car parking with a view to addressing space blocking, increasing footfall and mitigating the financial costs of car parking. The opportunity could also be taken to explore the expansion of electric vehicle charging point provision.

The South Norfolk Council Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economic Growth, Cllr L Neal, stated that as part of the consultation process associated with the Market Town Initiative in South Norfolk, concerns had been raised by shop owners about space blocking. The introduction of a charging policy had made a significant improvement in alleviating space blocking and increasing footfall, particularly following the introduction of new modern pay machines which allowed for a number of different payment options and to pay only for the time used by checking in/out. The income generated had helped to mitigate against repair/maintenance/improvement works and enforcement costs.

The Chairman reminded Members that Broadland currently contributed £15k each year for 2 years to the Norfolk Parking Partnership (NPP) to secure enforcement services in the district. She then invited Members of the Panel and other Members present to raise any questions and share their views on the report. The following matters were raised and the officers' responses detailed:

- Parking issues in Aylsham had improved following enforcement activity and not all the car parks referred to in the report were owned by the District Council, for example Buttsland. Consideration needed to be given to devolving responsibility for car parking to the Town Council. Officers commented that the lease of the Buttsland car park, which was owned by the National Trust, was due for renewal shortly and there was always the possibility that the National Trust could apply charges in the future. Devolution of car parking to the Town Council would not necessarily address the issues of space blocking and increase footfall. Any such issues could be raised as part of the consultation exercise. It was also noted that the Bure Valley Railway currently leased a carpark from the District Council and this would need a discussion and local solution.
- Parking charges could potentially result in increased parking in residential areas. Officers commented that a broad-brush approach to all car parks would not be appropriate and that specific arrangements for each site would be needed depending on the circumstances. The availability of an hour's free parking and the low level of charges envisaged should not encourage too much displacement.
- Was there any evidence to demonstrate that footfall had increased as a result of charges being introduced in South Norfolk and was there any evidence relating to retail spending? Officers confirmed that the number

of carpark “sessions” had increased demonstrating increased footfall and more spaces available. Resources had not been available to collect data of retail spend. Harleston was cited as an example where the Town Council had retained control of the carpark and had retained free parking and footfall was much lower, and there was also a cost implication for residents in their parish precept.

- What portion of the Civil Enforcement Officers’ time was attributed to on-street / off-street enforcement? Officers confirmed that the current arrangement of 50% of the CEOs’ time being spent on each would continue in any new proposals.
- Was any evidence available in relation to space blocking in Reepham / Aylsham? Officers confirmed that such evidence/data would be gathered as part of the consultation process should the proposals be endorsed. Anecdotal evidence indicated a need to free up spaces.
- Clarification was sought as to the current budget for car parking and the implications for enforcement work of the savings arising from a reduction in the contribution to the NPP. Officers confirmed the current budget for car park maintenance was £3k pa for routine repair work with requests for additional large capital works such as resurfacing being made from council reserves as required. The cost for civil enforcement work was offset by income from parking penalties.
- Disabled parking spaces would continue to be free of charge.
- With regard to any potential implications for business rates if charging was introduced, it was confirmed this would need further investigation.
- Reference was made to the current arrangements relating to management of car parks in Reepham and the need to consider these as part of any proposals. There was also a need to gather more information on whether there was a problem or a demand for spaces. A concern was expressed that any proposals to charge for car parking in Reepham and Aylsham would ultimately subsidise car-parking provision in the rest of the district which weakened the argument for placing the burden of the cost of provision on the end user. The populations of Wymondham and Diss were significantly larger than Aylsham and Reepham and so comparisons were not relevant. Officers commented that the proposals would allow for further consultation and information gathering before any decisions were made as to the best way forward. The financial estimates used were not based on populations but on car park spaces acknowledging that many shoppers were not necessarily residents.
- Reference was made to the relatively low level of income generated from charging – equating to under £1 per space per day. It was noted that a

substantial number of stays utilised the free hour's parking and the primary objectives of charging were to free up spaces and increase footfall and not to generate income. It was noted the estimated income of £62k arose from carpark tickets and did not include income from on-street enforcement which went to the NPP.

- A Member stressed the need to consult with all Town and Parish councils on the proposals.

Members were generally supportive of a review of the current arrangements for the management of car parking in Broadland but were keen to ensure that sufficient consultation was carried out and evidence was collected to enable informed decision making. An amendment was therefore suggested to the recommendations to allow for consultation and information gathering before a car parking management plan was developed. Members supported the amendment and it was, with 5 Members voting for, 1 against,

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND Cabinet to instruct officers to:

- (1) initiate a comprehensive review of car parking, in consultation with Town and Parish Councils, which would provide the necessary information to fully develop a Car Parking Management Plan for Cabinet approval, to improve overall space availability and mitigate the financial impact of the Norfolk Parking Partnership;
- (2) make an application to the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) to take advantage of the grant funding available to extend the Electric Vehicle Charging Point network and set aside a budget of £7,500 for implementation if successful.

9 WORK PROGRAMME

The following two items were scheduled for consideration by the Panel:

- 14 October 2019 – Tourism Briefing (meeting at Carrowbreck)
- 9 December 2019 – Broadband Briefing (open to all Members)

The following matters were raised to be considered by the Panel at a future meeting(s):

- Review of statutory and non-statutory services
- Review of Economic Development assets

The meeting closed at 7:20pm