

Minutes of a meeting of the **Economic Success Panel** held at Thorpe Lodge, 1 Yarmouth Road, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich on **Tuesday 4 April 2018** at **10:00am** when there were present:

Mr S M Clancy – Chairman

Mr J Emsell

Mrs L Hemsall

Mr G K Nurden

Mrs K Vincent

In attendance were the Head of Economic Development, the Economic Development Manager (KH), the Committee Officer (DM) and, for part of the meeting, the Economic Development Manager (SS) and the Economic Development Officer (JK).

### 23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr C Harrison, Mr I Moncur and Mr G Peck.

### 24 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 25 BETTER BROADBAND FOR NORFOLK

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Ms Karen O’Kane, Programme Manager for Better Broadband for Norfolk (BBFN) who gave a presentation (attached at Appendix 1 to the signed copy of these Minutes) on progress with the BBFN roll out.

Ms O’Kane gave an overview of the funding for the programme which essentially, was a public sector investment of £49m up to March 2020 when coverage of 95% would be achieved. If actual take up was greater than estimated, rebates would be accrued. To date, this had provided £5.3m additional funding towards the project.

In response to questions, Ms O’Kane explained some of the factors which affected speeds experienced by customers. These in the main related to the Internet Service Provider (ISP) and the actual service purchased. The ISP determined the number of customers allowed access to the service at any one time and this could impact on speeds. It was important that customers established the minimum speed which could be obtained as part of their contract and, if this was not met, there should be an option to leave the contract. Replacing copper wire infrastructure with fibre would be the best

way forward to improve infrastructure but this was not affordable and would absorb too much of the funding. The main infrastructure provider, BT Openreach, was now moving towards ensuring all new developments benefitted from fibre installation as retrofitting was more costly. They had established a scheme whereby developments of 30+ premises benefitted from free installation of infrastructure as part of new builds. A means by which the Council could help secure proper provision of internet services in new developments was to ensure that planning applications for new developments included clear proposals for internet provision.

Approximately 40% of customers were still using copper services despite a fibre service now being available to 90% of customers, possibly because they were already getting speeds which suited their needs; they did not know the faster service was available or they were still locked into other contracts. Educating the consumer to what was available and how to use it was still a big issue and Ms O'Kane regularly attended parish council meetings to offer advice and guidance. There was a need for more regulation of the industry, in particular the ISPs, to help protect customers. Ms O'Kane shared details on how customers could check independently what was available to them and explained that by the end of 2020 it was proposed that a universal service obligation would be available which would set out minimum download/upload speeds and quality parameters.

Ms O'Kane went on to outline two proposed opportunities for expanding broadband coverage into as much of the remaining final 5% of the area not covered by the current programme. One proposal would utilise rebates based on higher than expected levels of take up. The other involved funding from DEFRA to reach business premises in the final 5% which met certain criteria. A further report was being considered by the County Council in April regarding these proposals. The District Council had been actively working with BBFN to identify those businesses in the district which were not already covered by the current rollout programme and which met the criteria. Weston Longville (the Dinosaur Park) and South Walsham (a cluster of small businesses) had been selected. A Member raised the issue of another location at Acle Bridge where businesses were in need of better broadband services. Officers commented that Acle was already included in the current programme but undertook to see if this extended to Acle Bridge.

The Chairman thanked Ms O'Kane for a very informative and useful update and officers undertook to circulate the presentation to all Members.

## 26 LOCAL ECONOMY UPDATE

Officers updated Members on the main areas of activity since the last meeting.

- Asset Management – progress was continuing and a further report would be made to Cabinet in due course.

- Food Enterprise Park – this facility now had its own web site and branding and was actively being marketed. Negotiations were ongoing to secure a potential anchor tenant.
- The last Broadland Business Forum had been held in Woodbastwick and the theme was Food.
- Work was ongoing with the Communications Team to continue to coordinate the community engagement work being undertaken Council wide.
- The Greater Norwich Manufacturing Group (GNMG) and the Financial Industry Group (FIG) continued to grow, both in membership and reputation and useful connections were being created and productive sharing of best practices. The GNMG had been a great asset at the time Oyster Marine had been experiencing difficulties and opportunities had been taken to re-engage skilled workers within other industries, retaining skilled labour. Both North Norfolk and Broadland Councils had received very positive feedback on the support offered to Oyster Marine and its staff who were given opportunities to connect with other manufacturers. Discussions were ongoing with Brooms Boats regarding their current situation.
- The Council was involved in discussions with the Community Sports Foundation about their proposals to develop an extensive community / sports facility at Horsford. Funding had been secured to start the first phase and facilities would include pitches, gym, classrooms, café and other facilities.
- The Council continued to invest in Visit Norfolk with the Head of Economic Development sitting on the Board. The Council's Tourism Officer continued to ensure the Council secured a good return from its investment in the organisation.
- Officers were currently working closely with colleagues at South Norfolk on collaboration.
- With regard to European funding, the local investment in future talent initiative was supporting various projects including: care leavers, farm management courses, business coaching, rural transport, ex-offenders, IT and construction and women in the workplace.
- LEADER funding was drawing to a close and grants needed to be allocated by March 2019. A dialogue was ongoing with DEFRA regarding any future funding proposals after LEADER. If all the proposed initiatives reached conclusion, the funding would be fully utilised, but there was potential to apply to access funding elsewhere in the country where

underspends had occurred. In response to a question, officers confirmed that work was ongoing by the County Council to establish what funding mechanisms would replace LEADER.

- The Repton 200 festival had its National launch on 23 March in Aylsham Church to start a year of nationwide celebrations coordinated by the Gardens Trust to mark the bicentenary of the death of Humphry Repton. A programme of events celebrating his life and work had been planned in Norfolk and around the country and the Council's Tourism Officer had been instrumental in coordinating and promoting local events and celebrations as well as overseeing the National Launch. The celebrations were attracting publicity for the area and Radio 4 had expressed an interest in events. Members congratulated the Tourism Officer on organising such a successful launch which had received much positive feedback.
- The "dragon" statue was currently being utilised to undertake work with dementia groups with a theme of WW1, and Orchestra's Live were planning to facilitate song writing and composing sessions and a musical performance would take place later in the year.
- The Council was supporting the Young Enterprise initiative and working with high schools to enhance students' job ready and entrepreneurial skills.
- Investigations were being undertaken regarding possible masonry apprenticeships.

Members noted the update.

## 27 CAR PARKING

The Economic Development Manager updated Members on the latest position on car parking and the Norfolk Parking Partnership. The current Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) arrangements had been in place since 2011 and a review of the Norfolk Parking Partnership had recently taken place to ensure financial stability going forward. The County Council was looking to develop the CPE in Norfolk as a positive intervention to ensure that traffic management met the expectations of business, residents and visitors and was commencing a wide-ranging review of current arrangements in order to:

- deliver the statutory duties of traffic management, air quality management and equalities legislation;
- meet public expectations for better parking experiences and travel options through improved technology;

- address the key concerns for Norfolk people such as the effects of pavement parking and the impact on communities of un-controlled parking on the highway and
- reduce the overall cost of transport service provision.

The District Council would be invited to consider a number of options to work together with the County Council to review the current parking principles document and agree a strategy across the county. The review would include options for on and off-street parking charges, prohibition of pavement parking, balancing the need to boost the economic vitality of an area alongside the need to raise revenue for local improvement schemes, working in partnership and sharing data and information relating to parking to help to deliver improvements and also reviewing the CPE arrangements as part of a broader programme of work. A new 2 year temporary post to oversee the work was being established by the County Council and it was suggested that the new officer be invited to a future meeting of the Panel to update Members on the proposals.

Whilst supporting the proposals for working together with the County on this matter, Members stressed that any decisions about parking proposals for Broadland would need the agreement of the District Council to ensure the residents and businesses in Broadland were not detrimentally affected. There was a need to secure innovative, solution based proposals to address the CPE review and avoid additional bureaucracy.

A comment was made that advice from the Highway's Authority regarding parking provision associated with residential/commercial developments did not always accord with the impact of additional parking demands arising from the development. Reference was also made to issues in Acle with commuters parking in the village and travelling by bus into the city as an alternative to taking cars into the city. Members commented that there was an opportunity as part of collaborative working with South Norfolk to explore the issue of parking and charges.

The Economic Development Manager reported that options for installing electric charging points on Council owned car parks were being explored. Members commented that these needed to be rapid charging points to be useful.

(The Chairman left the meeting at this point and Mrs Hemsall was elected temporary Chairman for the remainder of the meeting.)

Mrs Hemsall in the Chair

### **28 FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME**

The following were included in the work programme:

- Car parking – Autumn
- Apprenticeships – Summer 2018
- Tourism update/Repton Festival – 2 October 2018

In response to a request, officers undertook to arrange a visit to the aviation academy.

### **29 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled for 12 June 2018 at 10:00am but this might need to be rescheduled due to the availability of the Chairman.

*The meeting closed at 12:05 pm*