

# **ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of a meeting of the Economy and Environment Policy Committee of South Norfolk District Council, held on Friday 18 June 2021 at 2pm.**

**Committee Members Present:** Councillors: A Dearnley (Chairman), L Glover, K Hurn, J Knight and R Savage.

**Apologies for Absence:** Councillor: V Clifford-Jackson

**Cabinet Member Present:** Councillor: L Neal

**Officers in Attendance:** Director of People and Communities (J Sutterby), Assistant Director for Economic Growth (T Armstrong), Assistant Director for Regulatory N Howard), Assistant Director of Community Services (S Phelan), Assistant Director of Individuals and Families (M Pursehouse), Market Towns and Business Development Manager (D Disney), Senior Economic Development Officer: Inward Investment (P Chapman) and the Recycling and Partnerships Officer (N Noorani)

## **13 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Economy and Environment Policy Committee held on 12 February 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

## **14 SKILLS AND TRAINING PROJECT**

The Assistant Director of Individuals and Families presented the report, which outlined the Council's scoping work for the future direction of the skills and training provision. He also provided members with a presentation (attached at Appendix A) which outlined:

- The background

- Mapping our skills and training offer
- The proposal
- The recommendations

In response to a query, the Assistant Director of Individuals and Families informed members that the Council was obligated to ensure that a minimum of 2.3% of its workforce were apprentices

Members queried how the project would be funded and whether an additional budget would be needed to cover additional costs. The Assistant Director of Individuals and Families advised members that the costs would be covered using existing internal resources, the Director of People and Communities further explained that the project would utilise the recurring underspent in the service area budget.

In response to a query on whether apprenticeship opportunities within Big Sky would be considered, the Assistant Director of Individuals and Families confirmed that the team were considering apprenticeships within Big Sky, but that focus would also be given to areas where there was most need and hard to recruit sectors.

The Assistant Director provided members with information on the Governments Kickstart Scheme, he explained that this was a 6 month course, which was shorter than an apprenticeship which was usually 12 months to 4 years long. He highlighted a number of issues with the Kickstart Scheme which included a strict criteria which made it difficult to be eligible for the scheme and the complications if applicants had additional sources of income or were in receipt of benefits, He pointed out that the Government were looking to address a number of the issues.

Further discussion followed with regard to the origin of the project and its progress onto Cabinet, where it was noted that the Councils Strategic, Development and Recovery Plans make reference to the need of apprenticeship schemes and the need to reduce unemployment across the District.

Members highlighted their support for the project and their desire for it to be progressed further.

Voting was then carried out, and it was unanimously:

## **RESOLVED**

To

- 1) Note the impacts on skills, training and the wider economy in South Norfolk and Broadland and to note the intended approach to tailor our support to specific cohorts of residents and start-up businesses.
- 2) Note that the Committee fully endorse the project and recommend that Officers undertake further research before the project is brought before Cabinet.

## **15 RESPONSE TO THE GOVERNMENT'S CONSISTENCY IN RECYCLING CONSULTATION**

The Recycling and Partnerships Officer presented the report which provided members with key details from the Consistency in Household and Business Recycling in England Government Consultation and sought the Committees views in order to shape the officer's formal response.

### Dry Recycling

The consultation outlined a core set of dry recycling materials to be collected separately from households and businesses by the end of 2023/24, these were:

- Glass
- Paper and card
- Metal (includes aluminium tubes)
- Plastic (includes food and drink cartons)
- Plastic films (from 2026/27 for households and 2024/25 for businesses)

National exemptions were possible. For example, by collecting plastic and metal together or glass and metal together.

Member raised concerns over the possibility of having numerous recycling bins which would rely on each household separating items into the correct bin and suggested that it would be more efficient to have all recyclables in one bin which would then be separated at the recycling centre.

The Recycling and Partnerships Officer sought members view on having paper recycling separate with all other recyclables co-mingled, she highlighted issue of paper contamination from other recyclables. The Assistant Director of Community Services added that recycled paper had a high value compared to other recyclables.

During a discussion on the recycling of glass, the Assistant Director of Community Services explained that recycled glass held very value, however as it was heavy was worth more credits in under the Government's current credit system. Members noted that the Council previously did not have glass recycling but had bottle banks in a variety of locations throughout the district

and queried whether this could be suggested in the officers response as an alternative recycling method. The Recycling and Partnerships Officer advised the Committee that the District still maintains a small number of bottle banks throughout the District.

The Assistant Director of Community Services raised the issue that Government had not, within the consultation, advised how the increased volume of recyclables would be used nor whether the government would be purchasing the recyclable goods from local councils.

### Separation of Food Waste

The Recycling and Partnerships Officer outlined the consultations proposals regarding food waste, which included:

- The Environment Bill would require food waste to be collected weekly from every household
- If that was not technically environmentally or economically practicable a case could be made for collecting food waste along with garden waste
- To be introduced by 2024/25 financial year
- Requirement for business to separate food waste for collection
- This could be via dedicated vehicles bypassing the depot, joint county-wide contract, external contract, etc

In response to members queries on the cost of collection food waste, the Assistant Director of Community Services informed members that Broadland District Council currently provides food waste collections to approximately 30,000 properties (1/2 of District) at a net cost of £300,000-£350,000, he noted that South Norfolk would need to purchase vehicles and hire additional staff to provide this service and so the cost would likely be higher.

During the discussion some members queried whether it would be beneficial to begin preparations for the collection of food waste, as if this were to become mandatory by the Government there might be a shortage of the necessary equipment needed. The Assistant Director of Community Services explained that as the suggestions formed part of the consultation process and had not been adopted by the Government very little was known at this stage so it would not be practical to begin preparations or purchases at this time.

### Provision of a free fortnightly collection of garden waste

The Recycling and Partnerships Officer outlined the consultations proposals regarding garden waste, which included:

- New burdens funding would apply
- 240L bin or sacks to be provided to households
- Local Authorities would be able to charge for additional capacity and/or more frequent collections

- In be in place by 2023/24
- Alternatives to a free service to be considered
  - Updated guidance on reasonable charges (in the region of £18-£30 per household per year depending on the region)
  - Clear communications to non-participating households (to discourage garden waste being put in residual waste bins)
  - Increase home composting (it is higher up the waste hierarchy than recycling)

Once member noted that some residents were put off from using the garden waste collection service and 240L bins as they only had a small amount of garden waste, which would often then be placed in the general waste bins. The Recycling and Partnerships Officer explained to members that the current garden waste collection service did have an option of a smaller sized bin for those residents with less garden waste.

During the discussion members noted that they felt the Council's current charge was reasonable and fair, they also noted that a large proportion of residents utilised the current paid for garden waste collection service and were happy/willing to pay the charge and so could not see the need to change this.

#### Recycling credits

The Recycling and Partnerships Officer outlined the consultations proposals regarding recycling credits, the 2 options for revised payments were:

1. Keep recycling credits for non-packaging waste (payments for packaging waste would be met through Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR))
2. Discontinue recycling credits (require all two-tier authorities to agree local arrangements)

Members queried whether the current recycling credit system was beneficial to the Council, the Assistant Director of Community Services explained that the current recycling credit system was good for the Council and that the Council averages 1.6 million credits per year.

After further discussion It was;

#### **RESOLVED**

To note the report on the Government consultation on Consistency in Recycling and provide feedback to include in the Council's formal response.

## **16 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

It was;

### **RESOLVED**

To exclude the public and press from the meeting under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act (as amended)

## **17 COURTAULD 2025 UPDATE**

Members considered the exempt report presented by the Assistant Director of Community Services, which provided a summary of the background to the Courtauld Commitment. It sought to establish the Council's ongoing commitment to Courtauld 2025 currently being revised and conclude if the Council wished to remain a signatory

Officers explained the background of the report and the reasons behind the final recommendations proposed.

A detailed discussion took place and a number of questions were raised around the benefits of being involved and its link with the Council's own Environment Strategy. Members then voted on the recommendations contained in the report, and it was,

### **RESOLVED**

To recommend to Cabinet that Council support the recommendations set out in the exempt report.

(The meeting concluded at 3.47 pm)

---

Chairman

Appendix A



# Skills & Training Project

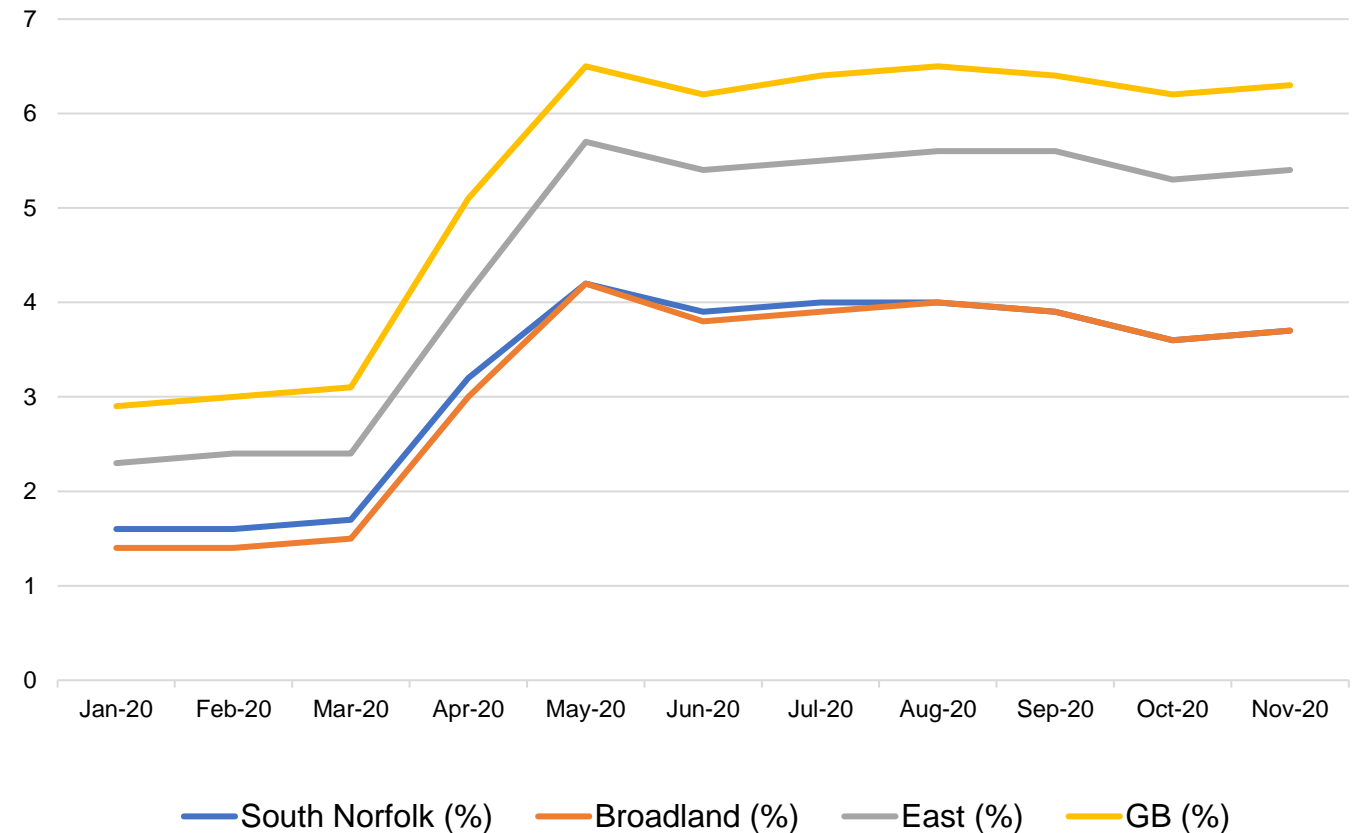
Economy and Environment Policy Committee

**18<sup>th</sup> June 2021**

# Background

- The pandemic has created an extremely challenging job market, with redundancies reaching a record high in the three months to October 2020 (ONS, 2020)
- The greatest impact has been felt by young people and lower earners. Additionally, individuals over the age of 50 who have lost their jobs due to the pandemic face greater barriers finding a new job.
- The South Norfolk and Broadland Joint Inclusive Growth Strategy (2019) raised a number of issues relating to skills and training, many of which have been exacerbated by the pandemic.

Out of Work Benefit Claimants - % of the Potential Workforce (NOMIS, 2020)





# Mapping our Skills and Training Offer

- 7 initial groups were refined to 4 distinct cohorts (see Appendix 1):
  - School leavers
  - Higher education leavers
  - Recently unemployed (including underemployed)
  - Individuals wishing to begin their own business (start ups)
- An internal and external audit of existing provision was conducted to identify gaps in support for the above cohorts (Appendix 2 and 3)

# Proposal

Proposed Action	Target Cohort
Kickstart	School Leavers
Future Paths	School Leavers
Apprenticeship Scheme	School Leavers
Norfolk Public Sector Graduate Scheme	Higher Education Leavers
Work4All	Recently Unemployed (including underemployed) / school leavers
Choices	Recently Unemployed (including underemployed)
Business Training / Support (TBC)	Start-ups

- Actions are categorised in three ways (see Appendix 3):
  - Direct delivery
  - Signposting and facilitating
  - Advocacy and influencing
- Actions for direct delivery are outlined in the table (see para. 4.3 in the report)
- Formation of a Skills and Training Project Board

# Recommendations

- To note the impact on skills, training and the wider economy in South Norfolk and Broadland and to note the intended approach to tailor our support to specific cohorts of residents and start-up businesses
- To comment on the potential establishment of a central apprenticeship fund, funded by recurring underspend of existing budget