

## **BROADLAND ECONOMIC SUCCESS POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL**

**Minutes of a meeting of the Broadland Economic Success Policy Development Panel of Broadland District Council, held on Monday, 27 June 2022 at 6.00 pm.**

**Committee Members Present:** Councillors: A Crotch (Chair), N Brennan (Vice-Chair), J Davis and K Vincent

**Apologies for Absence:** Councillors: L Hemsall, G Peck and R Potter

**Substitute:** Councillors: S Prutton (In place of G Peck)

**Cabinet Member in Attendance:** Councillor: J Copplestone and T Mancini-Boyle

**Officers in Attendance:** D Baillie-Murden (Programme Manager - Economic Growth), N Cunningham (Strategic Growth Projects Manager), D Disney (Market Towns and Business Development Manager), E Howman (Management Trainee) and D Matthews (Democratic Services Officer)

### **1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

### **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L Hemsall, G Peck and R Potter.

### **3. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 April 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

No matters were discussed.

## **5. ECONOMIC GROWTH STRATEGIC PLAN;**

The Panel considered the report which invited members to review and recommend to Cabinet the approval and adoption of the Broadland Economic Growth Strategic Plan 2022 – 2027 and summary document.

The Plan and the summary document had now been considered at a number of Panel meetings and the National Management Trainee detailed the latest revisions made to both documents arising from the last meeting. The Chairman welcomed the updated documents which were now more Broadland centric.

The National Management Trainee then answered a number of questions from members. She confirmed that performance would be measured in the increments set out in the report and that a base line of data had been sourced from existing national OS statistics or local KPs.

### **RESOLVED to recommend Cabinet to**

approve and adopt the Broadland Economic Growth Strategic Plan 2022 – 2027 and use of the Summary as an externally facing document.

## **6. NORFOLK STRATEGIC FUND GRANT - BUSINESS BUILDER**

Members considered the report which was seeking endorsement for the delivery of a suite of interventions to complement the Council's business support offer, enabled by the Norfolk Strategic Fund (NSF), and requesting authority be delegated to the Assistant Director for Economic Growth, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth to use the grant monies in support of the Business Builder programme outlined in the report.

The Market Town & Business Development Service Manager explained that the current proposals had been developed following the desire to look at an alternative to the specific branded programme originally offered as part of the NSF funded project. The current proposal was consistent with the aims of the NSF grant but was more in line with the Broadland established focus on holistic support where needed most. The proposal was a bespoke wraparound service which could in the main be delivered by existing officers who had a range of expertise in supporting start up business. Mindful of the anticipated ending of EU funding it was felt the proposed programme was the right intervention at the right time. The Market Town & Business Development Service Manager went on to outline the four main phases of support offered by the programme as set out in the report.

The Chairman welcomed the proposals which would enable the right support to be given to businesses and enable the scheme to be adapted in response to changing demands.

The Market Town & Business Development Service Manager then answered questions from members. He explained the phased interventions proposed and the support which could be offered at each phase subject to the business meeting

the criteria.

A concern was raised that the environmental impact of the proposals could be given added weight mindful of the rising energy costs, for example the issue of insulation could be added to the range of measures to which businesses could be encouraged to consider. The lack of specific criteria could lead to it being overlooked. The Market Town & Business Development Service Manager commented that the existing list of potential measures was not exclusive and businesses would be supported and mentored in a wide range of measures to help with energy saving and reducing their environmental impact. It was not felt it would be helpful to include specific environmental criteria as this could remove flexibility to deal with a wide range of circumstances. The main purpose of the proposals was to help new business to start up – the main driver was not environmental criteria.

A suggestion was made that it would be helpful to facilitate networking between businesses and the Market Town & Business Development Service Manager agreed this was important and would be encouraged. With regard to evaluation of the programme, the Market Town & Business Development Service Manager commented that the programme would be subject to ongoing evaluation to ensure it met demand and any changes needed would be implemented based on what the demand was and how the scheme was responding.

With regard to the process for approving grants, the Market Town & Business Development Service Manager explained that the process was still to be finalised but all applications would be judged on merit and that there was a wealth of expertise within the team to assess applications. It was difficult to anticipate take up at this stage but adjustments would be needed if demand was high.

#### **RESOLVED to recommend that Cabinet**

1. endorses the proposed revised programme of activity to be funded from the NSF grant.
2. agrees to delegate authority to the Assistant Director of Economic Growth, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development to determine the use of the balance of the grant monies in accordance with the programme detailed in the report.
3. agrees to officers submitting a variation request to the NSF for the new programme of work detailed in the report.

#### **7. SHARED PROSPERITY FUND – INVESTMENT PLAN**

Members considered the report which explained that, to access Broadland's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) allocation, an investment plan needed to be submitted setting out measurable outcomes that reflected local needs and opportunities. The report proposed Governance arrangements to ensure expenditure met the requirements of the funding and requested that delegated authority be given to finalise and submit an investment plan within the required timescales.

The Strategic Growth Projects Manager presented the report and updated the annex with changes to the named persons representing the Norfolk Chamber of Commerce and the Department of Work and Pensions on the Shared Prosperity Fund Board. To adhere to the guidelines, two meetings of the Board would be held prior to the submission of the investment plan, the first was scheduled for 1 July.

The Strategic Growth Projects Manager detailed the recommendations in the report and summarised the key issues. As with all district councils, Broadland had been awarded an allocation of funding via a funding formula. The proposal was to focus on three principal interventions, building on existing work streams to maximise the impact of funding and better secure the delivery of outcomes within the required timeframe. As there was no ability to carryforward any underspends, careful consideration of spent profiles was needed. The three areas being funded included: Communities and Place (pride in place work programme), Support for Local Business (Cambridge Norwich Tech corridor work programme) and People and Skills (apprenticeships work placements and a council led training offer). Discussions were ongoing with other Districts and the County Council and with the LEP regarding wider possibilities. A question was raised about the evaluation and sustainability of projects and a comment was made that those projects that were successful and met an ongoing demand would likely continue where as others which did not deliver would not be sustained e.g. the creation and subsequent success of Community Connectors during COVID was likely to be continued post COVID.

In response to a question, the Strategic Growth Projects Manager stated that the proposals could involve Town and Parish Councils. A member commented on the challenge of engaging smaller councils and this was acknowledged. It was suggested that district councillors had a role in facilitating their involvement. In addition to town/parish councils, there was a need to identify other community groups / individuals / councillors involved in community projects including Community Action Norfolk and Norfolk Community Foundation. The Strategic Growth Projects Manager commented that at its future meeting, the Board could look to identify other potential sources of community representatives.

### **RESOLVED to recommend that Cabinet**

- 1 Approve the principal areas of investment as set out within this report.
- 2 Delegate to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, the Managing Director and the Leader of the Council, for the sign off and submission of a three-year investment plan to meet the requirements of the UKSPF.
- 3 Delegate to the Director of Place to finalise the initial and ongoing Governance arrangements for the UKSPF.
- 4 Delegate to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, the Managing Director and the Leader of the Council, to make any non-substantive changes to the investment plan as required by the Department of Levelling up Housing & Communities and to sign the contract and accept the

terms of the UKSPF, subject to appropriate legal advice.

5 Delegate to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, the Managing Director and the Leader of the Council, for the commitment and expenditure of the Council's allocation of UKSPF in line with the investment plan.

(The meeting concluded at 6.55 pm)

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Chairman