

# **ECONOMIC SUCCESS POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL**

**Minutes of a meeting of the Economic Success Policy Development Panel of Broadland District Council, held at the council offices on Monday 25 April 2022 at 6pm.**

**Committee Members Present:** Councillors: A Crotch (Chairman), N Brennan, S Beadle, S Catchpole, J Davis, R Potter, K Vincent

**Cabinet Members Present:** Councillors: J Copplestone and T Mancini-Boyle

**Officers in Attendance:** The Assistant Director Economic Growth (GD), the Programme Manager – Economic Growth (DBM), the National Management Trainee (EH) and the Democratic Services Officer (DM)

## **70 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER PROCEDURAL RULE NO 8**

No declarations were made.

## **71 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor G Peck.

## **72 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the inclusion of Cllr K Vincent in the list of apologies given.

## **73 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 National Management Trainee explained that the Strategic Plan outlined the activities and

projects the Economic Growth team would be undertaking to deliver against the priorities in the Council's Delivery Plan. The Strategic Plan would be reviewed in 2025.

The document had first been considered by the Panel at its meeting in February 2022 and recommendations from the Panel and from internal and external stakeholders had been incorporated into the Plan. The primary changes following consultation had been the inclusion of key sites for tourism and culture, for example, Lenwade, and the addition of Rackheath in the manufacturing and engineering cluster sites. The levelling up section had been expanded following a better understanding of what this might mean for the district. Also, a number of current projects had been added including Broadland Community Renewal Fund projects and Transforming Cities projects.

The Chairman welcomed the report and commented that it was important that the Plan was Broadland centric and aspirational. To this end a few tweaks would be needed to ensure the Plan met these aims and that it included further data to reflect the current position and the 5-year aspirational plan and was grammatically sound.

A member commented that they felt unable to support the Plan with its fundamental principle being one of economic growth. They felt the Plan needed instead to be a plan for economic development rather than economic growth given the constraints and challenges likely to be faced in the future and should focus on social and economic wellbeing. Challenges included logistics, supply chains, impact of the environment, war and climate change and the recent issues raised regarding nutrient neutrality which in particular would impact on Broadland and how land was utilised.

The Chairman responded that the Plan was driven by the aspirations to grow the economy and with it would come social and economic wellbeing.

A concern was raised about the performance and delivery measures referenced in the Plan by way of 6 monthly meetings with key cluster groups and how effective this would be. Officers were currently accountable for the performance and delivery targets set out in the Council's delivery plan which were monitored by members and there was concern about how the proposed 6 monthly meetings would facilitate measurement of performance. The Assistant Director of Economic Growth commented that informal meetings with key partners were already taking place and that the proposals for key cluster groups to hold scheduled 6 monthly meetings was regularising the current informal arrangements. There would be no additional meetings or costs, many of the meetings were held virtually. With regard to measuring the productivity of the meetings, he added that the meetings were primarily about relationship building and attracting other key partners and investment and not about measuring the performance of the cluster. It was difficult to measure the value of the clusters but the meetings were key events providing opportunities for lobbying partners and attracting key investors and stakeholders. The National Management Trainee added that a measure could perhaps be the number of people employed within each of the cluster groups.

A member raised a concern about elements of recent policy making in relation to charging for street naming and monitoring section 106 agreements which did not

appear to reflect the inclusive growth ambition in the Plan as it penalised smaller developers. Other members were satisfied the Economic Growth Plan would create inclusive growth and members were reminded that the objective of the charges was to cover the cost of the service.

A member made reference to clean energy generation and highlighted the issues faced by the lack of access to power and the inability of the grid to support increasing demands. There had been no success in creating an energy community in Norfolk. Perhaps this was an area for future attention.

In supporting the Plan in principle, a number of other members agreed the Plan needed to be more Broadland centric. Following discussion, a number of suggestions were put forward for consideration about inclusion in the Plan as follows:

- reference to suburban areas of Broadland in addition to the market towns
- mindful of the environment, agriculture and the rural farming nature of the area of Broadland, to broaden reference to encouraging innovative farming practices and attracting skills and expertise in this area
- increase reference to Broadland Gate for example Gridserve
- consider listing the Board members of each cluster group by job title and not by name
- investigate “car clubs”, particularly on new developments
- more emphasis on Carrowbreck in particular in relation to the skills gaps and attracting the right talents. Review the offer at Carrowbreck and look at running online courses.
- mention conservation areas and heritage assets
- more Broadland specific case studies: Bure Valley Railway/Solar Wind Farm

The Assistant Director Economic Growth advised members that the Council needed to develop a three-year investment plan by the end of June to secure any UK shared prosperity funding. He was keen to use the Economic Growth Strategic Plan as the framework for the investment plan and therefore requested that the recommendations in the report be updated as follows:

To Recommend Cabinet:

1. to approve and adopt the Economic Growth Strategic Plan 2022 – 2027 and use of the Summary as an externally facing document
2. to agree to the use of the Economic Strategic Plan as a framework for the three-year investment plan required for accessing UK Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF)
3. to delegate to the Assistant Director for Economic Growth, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and the Leader of the Council, for the creation, finalisation and submission of a three-year investment plan to meet the requirements of the UKSPF
4. to agree to delegate to the Assistant Director for Economic Growth, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and the Leader of the Council, to sign the contract and accept the terms of the UKSPF, subject to appropriate legal advice.
5. to agree to delegate to the Assistant Director for Economic Growth, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, the Portfolio

Holder for Finance and the Leader of the Council, for the allocation and expenditure of funding of the UKSPF. In line with the commitments set out in the investment plan and, by exception, lines of expenditure not included in the plan.

Mindful of the comments and suggestions made by members to further develop the Plan, a discussion took place on options for progressing the Plan. Members expressed a preference for an additional meeting of the Panel to consider the updated Plan prior to it being recommended to the Cabinet meeting on 14 June 2022. It was further suggested that this meeting be held at Carrowbreck House.

#### **RESOLVED**

that arrangements be made to hold an additional meeting of the Economic Success Policy Development Panel at Carrowbreck House to consider the updated Plan.

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

#### **RESOLVED**

to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the following two items of business because otherwise, information which was exempt information by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 would be disclosed to them.

#### **75 REVIEW OF TRAINING SERVICES - CARROWBRECK HOUSE**

The Panel considered the exempt report regarding a review of training services at Carrowbreck House which set out potential options for generating additional income to offset running costs, proposed a commitment to continuous review of the Council's training offering and proposed a revised fee structure for 22/23. The Programme Manager – Economic Growth stated that the facility had been running since 2015 and she gave details of the running costs and income generated. As part of the review of training services offered, the opportunity had been taken to engage a commercial agent to undertake a valuation of the facilities to understand the opportunities for the site. Members noted that a small increase in the number of tenants could generate additional income to offset costs.

In response to questions, officers confirmed that there was still a demand for in-person classes and that classes covered a wide range of subjects and could include adult education. Courses offered were constantly reviewed to ensure they met current demand including consulting stakeholders to identify their current training requirements. It was confirmed that the facility had been supported with appropriate Covid grants. A comment was made that should there be a demand for courses needing access to up-to-date kitchen facilities, consideration could be given to upgrading the existing kitchen facilities.

In welcoming the report, members expressed their support for the facility and the value and benefits it offered. They did however agree there was a need to review the offer and ensure the facility was as effective as possible. A cost-neutral position would be ideal, but the value of the service was also important. They noted the current arrangements for management of the site and any bespoke management of the facility would result in additional costs to the running of the facility.

With regard to attendance at courses by Broadland staff, it was noted this was at a discounted level and that costs were recharged to the Council. A number of courses were programmed to meet demand arising from staff training needs assessments and potentially these would appeal to other businesses and organisations. It was felt that the facility would benefit from additional promotion.

### **RESOLVED**

to recommend Cabinet to

1. agree the pricing structure for room hire as outlined in section 4.4
2. the pricing structure for course fees as outlined in sections 4.7 & 4.9

## **76 EXEMPT MINUTES**

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

(The meeting concluded at 7.25pm)

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Chairman