

# Economic Reference Group

## Minutes

Tuesday, 16 September 2014 at 15:30

Present:

Peter Wright (in the chair), Councillor Wainwright, Glen Moore (Anglia Growth Hub), Julia Howard (FE College), Matt Jones (Suffolk County Council), Nova Fairbank (Norfolk Chamber of Commerce) and Tony Wright (Gardline).

Toby Matthews, Penny Bain, David Glason, Paul Cheeseman and Karline Smith (Great Yarmouth Borough Council Officers).

### **1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Laurence Brooks and David Dukes.

### **3 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2014 were confirmed.

### **4 MATTERS ARISING**

Councillor Wainwright reported that Great Yarmouth Borough Council had agreed to pay the rent for the shop in Market Gates for the college for two years but that this had now fallen through as the college was not able to obtain the funding.

The Chairman reported that the Dudgeon Wind Farm was now going ahead at a cost £1.5b and would have 67 turbines with the Operations and Management base being based in Great Yarmouth. A contract has already been let for the cable and a contract to Siemens for the Wind Turbines.

## **5 EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL AND INVESTMENT FUNDS GROWTH PROGRAMME 2014-2020 (MATT JONES)**

Matt Jones talked to the group about applying for European funding. Stating that this began in January 2014 and runs until 2020. He reported that this would commence in early 2015 with LEP sub committees being created and meeting early to mid November. Partners were asked to submit initial ideas on the form attached to the agenda and that partners would need 50% match funding and ideas could include initiatives that including developing the local area and innovation.

## **6 VISION AND PRIORITIES FOR THE BOROUGH, COUNCIL AND ECONOMIC STRATEGY (TOBY MATTHEWS)**

The Research and Information Officer reported on the Economic Strategy 2011-2016 Quarter 1 2014/15 stating that all partners had been asked to send their quarter reports in and that the NEET figures were down across the County. A Benchmarking report for 2014 was due at the next meeting. JSA claimants rate fell to 3.5%. The Enterprise Zone has attracted 12 new businesses since its inception in 2012.

What is the future vision for the Borough of Great Yarmouth?

It was reported that the Great Yarmouth Borough Council public consultation closes on the 20th October 2014. The context of the Great Yarmouth Borough Council's Transformation work was explained.

Nova Fairbank explained that she would forward a link to local chamber businesses and it was also agreed that something would be sent out through the colleges.

It was reported that 75,000 residents in the borough could have responded but only 520 responses had been received so far.

Tony Wright stated that although unemployment figures are down Long Term unemployment is not as low as it was in 2008 and that companies such as Statoil need a pool of local people that are trained and ready to employ. The reference group then discussed apprenticeship changes where employers have to pay upfront for staff. It was reported that there were trail blazers which were pilot areas and that if a small firm employs under 50 people they can receive more money back but they have to pay the training provider themselves, which may create a short term cash flow problem.

Councillor T Wainwright spoke of the fact that there are several employers in the town that are employing apprentices for example SeaJacks.

## **7 INTRODUCING THE GROWTH HUB (GLEN MOORE)**

Glen Moore introduced himself as a Business Growth Adviser stating that he had been in post for 2 1/2 months.

He reported that they were a team of 9 Business Growth Advisers which were strategically located covering the whole of Norfolk and Suffolk and were working in Partnership with National and Regional local organisations.

They carry out face to face meetings, gain access to a range of grant funding and

finance to help the company grow. One adviser manages each account with a telephone helpline for advice and an online business information portal.

Some of the support programmes on offer include:-

- \* Growing Business Fund 20% £25k-£500k
- \* Small Grant Scheme 20% £5k-£25k
- \* Innovation Vouchers, mentoring, Internship, consultancy, specialist facilities.
- \* MAS and MAS grow offshore
- \* Growth accelerator : 3 strands, Finance, Innovation and Business Development.
- \* NWES and NWES Ready Set Go
- \* Grants 4 Growth 28%
- \* Low Carbon Keep 40%
- \* Agri Tech
- \* MedTech
- \* Groundwork
- \* UKTi
- \* Enterprise Europe Network : Horizon 2020.

## **8 UPDATE ON ENTERPRISE GY PROJECTS, INCLUDING:**

### **a) Coastal Communities Fund**

It was reported that the Council had been actively pursuing funding bids and were now preparing a second round bid for this which would be to help existing businesses, tourism, retail and the energy sector. Start up businesses, out reach for small businesses and training for self employment for young people. A bid would be submitted by the 15th October 2014.

### **b) Spirit of Enterprise Awards**

The Spirit of Enterprise Awards would be held on 21st November 2014 and each category has now been sponsored. A new award has been introduced this year which is for great personal contribution to the local economy.

### **c) Global Enterprise Week**

It was reported that on the Tuesday students at the college would be spoken to about self employment. A stand would be held at Market Gates on the Wednesday to talk to residents about self employment. Also the Great Yarmouth for Jobs initiative would be launched during this week.

## **9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Great Yarmouth Industry Handbook and Business Directory 2014-15 was tabled.

The New Economic newsletter was tabled.

Paul Cheeseman reported that work was taking place on long term unemployment working with the Big Lottery called "Neighbourhoods at Work".

## **10     DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 10 December 2014 at 4pm.

The meeting ended at: 17:00