

# Economic Reference Group

## Minutes

Wednesday, 11 June 2014 at 14:00

### PRESENT:

Jackie Tinkler (Chair & DWP), Paul Cheeseman (GYBC), Julia Howard (GYC), Toby Matthews (GYBC), Ben Sampson (Voluntary Norfolk), Kasia Beblot (ENSFC), Sue Cook (ENSFC), Alan Carr (GYBC/GYTA), Anne Rawston (DWP), Matt Knights (EEEGR/DWP), Nova Fairbank (Norfolk Chamber of Commerce), Hannah Clay (BITC), Karen Bailey (NCC), Matt Jones (SCC), David Glason (GYBC), Simon O'Leary (Voluntary Norfolk) and Christina Webb (GYBC).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Trevor Wainwright (GYBC), Sharif Sharif (Ingeus UK Ltd), Tracey Jones (GYBC) and Sally Pearson (GYBC)

### **1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest given at the meeting.

### **2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor T Wainwright, Sharif Sharif, Tracey Jones and Sally Pearson.

### **3 MINUTES**

The minutes of the Economic Reference Group meeting held on 6 February 2014 and the Employment and Skills meeting held on 19 February 2014 were confirmed.

### **4 MATTERS ARISING**

The Chairman reported that she had not organised the meeting to discuss Job Centre rules on sanctioning and other related benefit and debt advice matters.

### **5 SPONSORSHIP OF THE SPIRIT OF ENTERPRISE AWARDS**

The Group received an update from the Research and Information Officer.

He asked the Group members to advertise the awards and encourage entries as any

business could and should put themselves forward.

Entry for the awards would be a moral boost for staff as it showed that their employer believed in their staff and wished for their hard work to be recognised.

The closing date for nominations was 12 September 2014 and the Spirit of Enterprise Awards would be held on 21 November 2014 at the Town Hall.

## **6 YARMOUTH FOR JOBS**

The Chairman reported that a sub-group meeting had been held where it had been discussed whether they should piggy back on the Norwich for Jobs initiative or create a unique identity for Yarmouth for Jobs.

The general consensus was to keep the remit as broad as possible to encompass jobs, qualifications and training opportunities.

It was also imperative to find a high profile figurehead to spear the initiative to emulate the involvement of Chole Smith MP in Norwich.

A simple website would be set up to signpost users to other existing sites.

Julia Howard asked that a small working party be formed. The Chairman suggested that the launch date should be October/November 2014 and it was important to get major employers in the Town on board, for example, Gardline. It was important that the news was circulated to the wider audience that Great Yarmouth was an attractive place to live and work.

**Action: That Jackie Tinkler, Julia Howard and Nova Fairbank form a small working group to take the Yarmouth for Jobs initiative forward.**

## **7 EU FUNDING**

It was reported that the programme runs from 2014-2020 and it comprised of 3 strands

ERDF (European Regional Development Fund)

ESF (European Social Fund)

EAFRD (European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development)

The New Anglia LEP region has been notionally allocated £94m of funding. (This, with the required 50% match-funding, represents a potential £188m of project activity)

The programme is predominantly revenue and is seeking large strategic projects.

Partnership working (across sector, district, county and LEP boundaries) is encouraged and the programme is target driven.

Projects must contribute to the aims of the SIF (European Strategic Investment Framework) and the SEP (Strategic Economic Plan). Both of these can be found on the New Anglia LEP website.

3 Facilitators are in post, initially for a year, to help develop a pipeline of ERDF projects

Karen Bailey (based at Norfolk County Council)

Hugh Goldring (based at New Anglia LEP)

Matt Jones (based at Suffolk County Council)

The Facilitators can provide guidance on eligibility and strategic fit, act as a sounding board for applications, make linkages between similar project activity and provide information on programme development.

Although the programme started in January 2014, there are several key aspects of the programme still to be finalised, so money will not flow until late 2014/early 2015. This is the time when applicants can begin developing projects (sourcing match funding, partners, establishing need and demand etc) Facilitators can provide one-one support, as well as developing publicity material and documents that will hopefully demystify the process. We have met with EDOs across Norfolk and Suffolk and are keen to organise district wide events (and/or sector focused sessions) to help develop project ideas and raise awareness and understanding of the new programme.

It was reported that funding, if matched, could be provided for: innovation; SMEs; Low Carbon Economy: Climate Change and Community Led Local Development.

Paul Cheeseman reported that a bottom up approach works in Great Yarmouth, within an existing structure. A working party, or local action group, may be needed to prepare for a community led local development in Great Yarmouth.

## **8 COLLEGE SHOP IN MARKET GATES**

The Group received an update from Julia Howard. she reported that she had recently attended a Chamber of Commerce meeting where the College Shop had been well supported by local business people. The Leader of the Council and the Town Centre Manager were also very supportive and would be funding the project for two years.

The College Shop would be situated in Unit 12 at Market Gates for an initial 2 year period. A range of products would be sold which were as broad as the imagination of the students themselves. The shop would contain a series of pop-up shops within it giving greater flexibility.

Other initiatives would be hosted such as a Job Club, Enterprise Club, Short ESOL courses and CV Writing.

## **9 ANNUAL ECONOMIC STRATEGY PROGRESS REPORT**

The Group received a verbal report from the Information and Research Officer.

The JSA claimant count in May had fallen to 4.1%. The rate of self employment is very high and average earnings of the self employed has crashed in recent years. There is a wider economy recovery, anecdotal evidence of renewed confidence in key Great Yarmouth industries.

It was reported that April's claimant rate of 4.5% is already at a lower rate than at any time since 2008. There was still some uncertainty regarding the long term unemployed. Average resident earnings fell during 2013. In 2013, they were 88% of the level of average UK earnings and 84% of the East's wage level.

The Economic Strategy would aim to raise the profile of Great Yarmouth and reshape its image and reputation.

It would encourage key sector development:

Beacon Park Successes where extended rate relief eligibility to companies that moved in before 18 April 2014. Government Ministers Kris Hopkins and MP Brandon Lewis visited Beacon Park in April.

As it reached its second anniversary, the Enterprise zone's achievements were 478 jobs created, more than £10 million of private investment and 4,078 square metres of new floor space and 3,398 square metres of refurbished floor space.

A £3 million boost for Enterprise Zone in Great Yarmouth. Beacon Park, part of the Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth (New Anglia) Enterprise Zone, was set to receive £3 million of Government infrastructure funding, it was announced in May. This funding allowed a further acceleration of the investment planned by Great Yarmouth Borough. The Council, as the owner and developer of the premier business park, would complete important infrastructure to open up the whole site for development. The Council hoped to lever in further investment, which would see seven new industrial and office buildings constructed.

The Research and Information Officer reported that the Economic Strategy would ensure that major developments in the area were linked to providing employment and training opportunities for local people, especially for low skilled groups, through Q3 & Q4 GY College and NEET levels falling from 7.75% in April 2013 to 6.85% in April 2014 in Great Yarmouth.

The Economic Strategy would improve the Borough's infrastructure to support sustainable economic and social growth. It would create pathways into employment for local people. the Strategy would ensure the needs of the private sector were reflected for training and education;

EPIS Centre would open in July 2014 at Minerva House on Beacon Park.

GY College would deliver a broad range of programmes to local small and medium sized employers which funded by a partnership ESF project to support the up-skilling of their workforce.

The College continued to develop the number of apprentices and the range of apprenticeships on offer to meet the needs of priority sectors.

East Norfolk College's Employer Engagement Event brought together the business and education sectors to better understand how they could help and inform each other.

NCC: The Apprenticeships Norfolk Fund had now reached its target with 452 young people securing funded positions. The fund closed to applicants in January because they met their target 9 months early.

NCC: The Coastal Communities Fund had grown to fund 18 young people, and we are expecting this number to increase rapidly towards the target of 66 soon, due to the start of the next academic year.

The Research & Information Officer gave a brief update regarding eGY.

Applied for Coastal communities Funding for enterpriseGY for an Enterprise Town model to enable more outreach and sector specific work to be undertaken.

Enterprise Norfolk funds gained a modest figure which would allow a Voucher Scheme to help enterprising students.

enterpriseGY was working with GY College

Has offered to help with the Market Gates shop with the branding.

## **10 ASSISTED AREA UPDATE**

The Group received a verbal report from the Research and Information Officer.

Eleven Wards in Great Yarmouth had been included in the Government's new Assisted Area map, which would be in place from July 2014 until 2020. Inclusion in the map allows companies access to a greater level of financial support, especially

with regard to capital expenditure. Large companies, as well as SMEs, were eligible.

Gaining inclusion in the map was the result of a joint effort between New Anglia local Enterprise Partnership, Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils, the Great Yarmouth Economic Development Unit and Waveney District Council, who also saw eleven of their wards included in the map.

The Great Yarmouth wards within the map were: Bradwell North; Bradwell South and Hopton; Caister South; Central and Northgate; Claydon; Gorleston; Magdalen; Nelson; St Andrews; Southtown and Cobholm and Yarmouth North. These wards represented the centre of industry and population within the Borough.

## **11 LEP UPDATE**

The Group received a verbal report from the Research and Information Officer. Glen Moore, the new Business Growth Advisor for Great Yarmouth & Lowestoft would take up his post on Monday, 16 June 2014 offering a one stop shop for grants, advice and signposting. His aim is to contact 3,000 businesses before the end of May 2015. Their target clientele is SMEs of 5 people plus. There will be 9 advisors across Norfolk and Suffolk.

The New Anglia LEP has submitted its Strategic Economic Plan to the Government which is a plan to shape the economic landscape for businesses in Suffolk and Norfolk for the next decade. Their ambition is to deliver more jobs, new businesses and housing in the two counties. The Plan sets a target of delivering 95,000 more jobs, establish 10,000 new businesses and build 117,000 new homes by 2026.

New Anglia is asking for approximately £500 million over 6 years and it was likely that they will get a third of this. The Plan would form the basis of intensive discussions over the next few months between New Anglia LEP and the Government to secure a Growth Deal for the LEP area and a share of the Governments' Local Growth Fund to support the LEP's plans. The Government had established the Local growth Fund with a minimum of £2bn a year from 2015 to 2021 to drive forward the economy. LEP's across the country will be competing for funding from this pot. However, as this was a competitive tender, the details of each project were not yet variable.

## **12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

(i) Matt Knights explained the remit of his new post working for EEEGR/DWP. He worked out of the Yarmouth and Lowestoft Job Centres and was tasked with seeking out individuals with the necessary skills, ie. a minimum NVQ Level 3 in Engineering, to work in the Energy Industry and its supply chain. He also worked in partnership with RATTRAIN who could award up to £4,000 worth of training for an individual to meet the specific needs of an employer.

It was imperative that the advisors at Job Centre Plus were upskilled to advise claimants on the entry requirements for working in the Energy Sectors.

Matt Knights reported that potential job seekers needed to join in as 60/80% of available jobs were filled by word of mouth.

(ii) Anne Rawston, DWP, reported that they would be holding academies for the Hospitality and Care Sectors in late June 2014 for JSA claimants.

### **13     DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Information and Research Officer agreed to circulate a list of possible meeting dates to ascertain the best date for the next meeting to take place.

The meeting ended at: 16:00