

# Economic Development Committee

## Minutes

Monday, 08 January 2018 at 18:30

Present :

Councillor B Coleman (in the Chair); Councillors Andrews, Grant, K Grey, Hammond, Hanton, Jeal, Pratt, Thirtle, Wainwright, Walch and Walker.

Also in attendance :

Mr D Glason (Development Director), Mrs C Starkie (CEO, New Anglia LEP), Mrs D Thompson (Theatre Director, St George's) and Mrs S Wintle (Member Services Officer)

### **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Reynolds.

### **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor B Coleman declared a personal interest in the item relating to St George's Theatre in his capacity as a Trustee of St Georges but in line with the Constitution was allowed to both speak and vote on the matter.

Councillor Wainwright declared a personal interest in the item relating to St

George's Theatre in his capacity as a Trustee of St Georges but in line with the Constitution was allowed to both speak and vote on the matter.

### **3 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 20 November 2017 were confirmed.

### **4 FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee received and noted the contents within the Forward Plan for the Economic Development Committee.

Councillor Wainwright asked in relation to the Ice Rink and whether this item would be brought back to the Economic Development Committee, it was pointed out that this matter was to be an item on the next meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee, but that it was assumed an update would then be brought back to the Economic Development Committee.

### **5 UPDATE PRESENTATION ON ST GEORGES THEATRE**

The Committee received and considered a verbal progress report from Debbie Thompson, Theatre Director at St Georges Theatre which provided Members with an update on the progress made since the 'Business and Culture' report commissioned by the Borough Council and the Arts Council had made recommendations to the St Georges Trust.

Members were advised of the following actions that had been taken :-

- A Trading Board which meets on a monthly basis has now been set up.
- New Trustees with legal expertise, financial skills and marketing experience are being sought.
- The Business Plan has been approved and a new Commercial Manager has been appointed.
- A Theatre Director has now been appointed
- A Strategic Audience Development Plan is to be implemented to increase audience numbers and create community engagement.
- A new brochure for 2018 has been produced
- In January 2018 a new streamlined staff structure was to be put in place
- Regular staff and volunteer training regime to be implemented in January 2018

The Theatre Director advised Members that the Theatre had made positive plans moving forward, this including the creation of a kitchen as a capital investment which would allow meals to be cooked to be able to offer packages for weddings, events and theatre dinners, the Theatre are also actively seeking business sponsorship and are keen to offer corporate

events. Members were also advised that Marketing for the Theatre is to be increased following the commencement of a contract with TMS Media who will look after the Theatre's press and publicity.

Councillor Jeal asked whether it was felt that the Theatre would be in competition with the Council should wedding packages be made available, and the Theatre Director advised that the packages on offer at the Theatre would be less formal than those offered at the Council's venue.

Councillor Andrews asked whether outside industries had been approached in respect of funding needs, and it was advised that relationships are being strengthened with potential funders.

Councillor Thirtle asked when it was hoped that the new catering facilities would be available, and he was advised that this had been planned for completion by the end of 2018 and that the cost of this refurbishment would be approximately £130,000.

The Development Director commented in relation to commercial investment and suggested that the Economic Development Team provide the Theatre Director with contacts that may potentially be interested in providing commercial sponsorship.

## **6 NEW ANGLIA LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP PRESENTATION**

The Committee received and considered a presentation from the CEO of the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership, Chris Starkie, which provided Members with an update on the Economic Strategy for Norfolk and Suffolk.

Members were advised of the following five mechanisms for funding Business Growth :-

- The Growing Business Fund - awards grants of £25,000 to £500,000 to businesses which must create 1 job for every £10,000 of grant received. Alone this programme has directly contributed to the creation of more than 2,000 new jobs in our two counties since 2011
- Small Grant Scheme - awards grants from £1,000 to £25,000 – covering 20% of the cost of projects to expand, drive efficiency or move into new markets.
- The Growing Places Fund - provides loan-funding to help kick-start and support development projects across Suffolk and Norfolk.

- The Eastern Agritech Initiative - along with Partners Anglia Capital Group and New Anglia Capital - provides loan-funding to help kick-start and support development projects across Suffolk and Norfolk.
- New Anglia Capital - £2m co-investment fund to kick-start new products and ideas and support high growth companies.

Councillor K Grey asked if the number of small businesses who had received small grant scheme funding in the Borough could be provided, and it was agreed that this information be sent to the Development Director. Councillor Jeal asked for clarification as to the representatives for Great Yarmouth Borough Council, it was agreed that this information also be sent to the Development Director.

Councillor Thirtle asked whether the Borough Council were maximising their position in terms of grant funding, and he was advised that the Borough Council had a good working relationship with the New Anglia LEP.

Councillor Wainwright raised some concern in relation to the small Local Authority representation on the Local Enterprise Board, Councillor Grant reiterated these concerns and asked whether there were opportunities for Local Authorities to change the representation, and it was advised that this would be a matter for Local Authorities to decide.

Councillor Wainwright asked in relation to the funding allocations that have been completed for Great Yarmouth, it was agreed that information be sent to the Development Director to show what grants have been allocated in Great Yarmouth.

## **7 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC**

RESOLVED :

"That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part I of Schedule 12(A) of the said Act."

## **8 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**

(Confidential Minute on this Item)

The meeting ended at: 19:31