



Economic Development Committee

Minutes

Monday, 31 January 2022 at 18:00

PRESENT:-

Councillor Plant (in the Chair); Councillors Candon, Lawn, Mogford, B Walker, C Walker & A Wright.

Councillor Jeal attended as a substitute for Councillor Cordiner-Achenbach.

Councillor Galer attended as a substitute for Councillor Freeman.

Councillor Wells attended as a substitute for Councillor Price.

Mr D Glason (Director of Planning & Growth), Mrs M Burdett (Head of Inward Investment), Mr K Balls (Senior Strategic Planner), Mrs T Read (Project Manager) & Mrs C Webb (Executive Services Manager).

Mr J Munson (New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership) & Mr M Hayward (Norfolk County Council).

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cordiner-Achenbach, Freeman, P Hammond, Price, Talbot & Wainwright.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Plant declared a personal interest in item 6, as he was the Norfolk District Member representative on the Transport East Board.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2021 were confirmed.

4 MATTERS ARISING

The Chairman reported that there were no matters arising which were not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

5 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee received and considered the Forward Plan.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee note the Forward Plan.

6 TRANSPORT EAST - DRAFT TRANSPORT STRATEGY CONSULTATION

The Committee received and considered the report from the Senior Strategic Planner.

The Senior Strategic Planner reported the salient areas of the report and asked the Committee to support Transport East's draft Transport Strategy and Investment Delivery Programme which was currently subject to public consultation. The Senior Strategic Planner reported that attached to the report was the draft Transport Strategy consultation brochure and the draft Investment Delivery Programme for information.

The Chairman reminded Members that the Council had representation on Transport East with himself as the Norfolk Districts Member representative, and David Glason, the Council's Director of Planning & Growth, as the supporting officer.

Councillor A Wright reported that he had no issues with the strategy; but he asked for clarification as to the figures quoted for the numbers required for houses and jobs for the next 15 years. Councillor A Wright reported that transport links offering affordable public transport would also be needed as an integral element of this strategy to ensure that young people could be mobile to get to college and their workplace. Councillor A Wright was also sceptical of the decarbonisation aim for net-zero as

detailed in the strategy.

The Chairman highlighted paragraphs 2.6 relating to the Acle Straight and 2.8 relating to the Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan & Town Deal as examples of investment brought into the Borough and that Great Yarmouth was well represented.

Councillor C Walker reported that she had been working for the last thirty years to get the Acle Straight dualled and that she welcomed the report. However, she disputed the figures given for the use of public transport and requested that they be adjusted when local residents ceased working from home and returned to their offices. The Chairman reported that the strategy was a living document, and as such, these figures would be re-looked at and adjusted as necessary.

Councillor Wells asked if the Council would receive a response from the Department for Transport. The Chairman reported that the Government would inspect our submission and could suggest amendments to the strategy but this was unlikely. The Chairman reported that once the strategy was agreed by all the local authorities concerned it would be submitted to the Department for Transport to approve but he was unsure of the timescales involved in this process. The Strategic Planning Officer referred Members to page 45 of the agenda report where the next steps were detailed.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee endorse the Transport East draft Transport Strategy and Investment Delivery Programme.

7 GREAT YARMOUTH LOCAL CYCLING AND WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

The Committee received a presentation from Matthew Hayward (Norfolk County Council) and a copy of the presentation slides was forwarded to Members following the meeting for information/reference.

The presentation summarised work carried out to deliver the Great Yarmouth Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for the borough as part of a broader suite of measures which complemented the Town Deal and Future High Street Fund initiatives.

The LCWIP had been endorsed by the Great Yarmouth Transport and Infrastructure Steering Group and required individual formal endorsement by both authorities, Great Yarmouth Borough Council and Norfolk County Council, before being submitted to the Department for Transport for approval.

Councillor Jeal highlighted that not many roads in the Borough were suitable for safe, shared cycle and vehicle use. Councillor Jeal requested sight of the survey results for Great Yarmouth walking/cycling data detailed in the standard transport planning document for the Borough. Matt Hayward agreed to send this data to Members after the meeting.

Councillor Mogford reported that he welcomed this report and highlighted the lack of connectivity for walking and cycling in the Northern parishes. Matt Hayward reported

that it was a key focus of the strategy to ensure safe links between villages in the Borough to connect communities.

Councillor Wells highlighted that a significant number of residents who lived in Great Yarmouth did not drive and that it was essential that high level connectivity was achieved between Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft.

Councillor Candon reported that he welcomed the strategy which was imperative for Norfolk County Council and Great Yarmouth Borough Council to lever funding in from central Government and it would greatly benefit the mental health and physical well-being of local residents.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee endorse the Great Yarmouth Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) before being submitted to the Department for Transport for approval.

8 ENERGY SECTOR RECOVERY PLAN

The Committee received a presentation from Julian Munson (New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership) and a copy of the presentation slides was forwarded to Members following the meeting for information.

Councillor Wells asked if there was a benchmarking mechanism in place to ensure transparency and accountability through measurable targets/outputs for delivery. Julian Munson reported that he would forward this information after the meeting.

Once again, Councillor A Wright highlighted the skills gap in the Borough as a major pitfall. It was imperative that young people were skilled up to be able to take advantage of the energy related jobs which were coming to the region.

Councillor Wainwright asked if energy related career visits were made into local schools and colleges to entice students into this sector.

Councillor C Walker asked if assistance was available for local companies who wished to move away from the gas/oil industries into the renewables sector. Councillor C Walker would also like to see an increase in the number of apprenticeships offered to local students. Julian Munson reported that apprenticeships were a key agenda focus and that he would be keen to work with the Council to support and promote this.

The Chairman reported that it was very positive news that there were a number of incentives and schemes across Norfolk to promote apprenticeships which was well supported by all local authorities in the eastern region. For example, Norfolk Apprenticeships had been nominated for a national award this month for the promotion of energy sector apprenticeships which was excellent news.

Councillor Candon reported that Norfolk County Council had received £1.9m of external funding for apprenticeships across Norfolk and that part of this funding would assist young people to access apprenticeships in the energy sector.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee note the update.

9 ECONOMIC GROWTH DELIVERY AND RECOVERY UPDATE

The Committee received and considered the report from the Economic Growth Manager & the Regeneration and Funding Manager.

The Head of Inward Investment reported the salient areas of the report to the Committee which gave the progress against the Economic Growth Strategy Delivery Plan and Pathway to Recovery Plan since the meeting held in September 2021. Highlights were presented in the narrative of the report, with a comprehensive update in the attached annexes.

The Head of Inward Investment reported that it also outlined the delivery of the Council's economic growth service, including business support, in response to recovery and sets out options to further extend business support reach and capacity, alongside an overview of local grant distribution and key strategic programmes.

The Chairman thanked the Head of Inward Investment and her team for all their hard work in securing the grants and external funding for the Council and he read out paragraph 3.1.1 of the agenda report to the Members to highlight the investment brought in by the Town Deal and Future High Street Fund.

Councillor Candon commended the officers for their hard work and success in securing millions of pounds of funding into the town.

Councillor Wells highlighted the speed at which officers had disseminated the ARG grants to businesses across the Borough which had been a complicated process.

Councillor Mogford praised the officers and that the borough had much to look forward to and celebrate in the next 3 to 4 years.

Members thanked the officers for an excellent report and their hard work over the last two years during the pandemic and it was highlighted that the Council had operated a very good Economic Development unit over the years which went back as far as the 1980's. Paragraph 2.7.2 on page 213 of the agenda report regarding Jobs and Employment in the Borough was referred to and clarification was sought regarding the Gateway statistics and what 15% job filled rate actually meant. The Head of Inward Investment reported that this related to the number of jobs created by businesses, of which, a large number remained vacant as it had proved challenging to fill these vacancies through the Gateways. It was asked what the barrier was to fill these vacancies. The Head of Inward Investment cited the lack of suitable candidates from the application pool which was a national problem and did not relate to funding issues. The Head of Inward Investment reported that the appetite for Kickstart had been affected by the pandemic and the transition to apprenticeships after six months.

The Kickstart statistics for Great Yarmouth were requested. The Head of Inward

Investment reported that the Council was experiencing difficulty in getting statistics from the Gateways but she promised to share it with Members when it was received and would share this request at the next meeting with the primary Gateway. The Chairman reported that Norfolk County Council had ceased being a Gateway in December 2021.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee review and comment upon the appended Economic Growth Strategy Delivery Plan update and Recovery Progress Report.

10 E-SCOOTER TRAIL

The Committee received and considered the report from the Project Manager.

The Project Manager reported the following progress to date since the trial launched on 30 March 2021 up until 15th December 2021:-

- Total Registered Riders: 11,300
- Total Journeys: 52,800
- Total Mileage: 121,000 miles
- Average Journey Distance: 2.4 miles
- Average Journey Length: 35 minutes
- The average Great Yarmouth rider has taken 5 rides with Ginger Scooters, GY's most active rider has taken 219 rides with Ginger
- 86% of recent journeys (within the past month) have been point to point (i.e from one designated parking bay to a different designated parking bay)
- Estimate CO2 saving as a result of the trial: 31 tonnes of CO2
- Total Bays: 74 (additional bays can be added where needed based on feedback and demand)
- Users banned: 21
- Warnings issued: 86 warnings issued by text
- Only two serious incidents reported (serious incident defined as an accident that required medical attention)
- Scooters have stickers on them saying 'no pavements please'
- Ginger will receive DfT data around usage – NCC have received data to say 15% shift from private vehicles, some of this was a shift from taxi use.

The Project Manager reported that Ginger had launched an 'end journey photo' feature within the app. This means that all journeys could now only end when the user took a live photo of their scooter to show its end state. This was to promote positive user behaviour for good, upright parking and to ensure users left the vehicles in a roadworthy state. It would help Ginger identify any problem parkers or damaged vehicles earlier, allowing the fleet managers to respond faster.

The Project Manager reported that there was a desire from members of the public to increase the fleet size and have more parking bays, particularly in the more residential areas of Bradwell and Gorleston. The Department for Transport trial had approved 100 e-scooters within the Great Yarmouth trial, currently all 100 live e-scooters were deployed. Ginger had proposed raising the number of e-scooters to

450, not all 450 e-scooters would be deployed unless demand was proven, this does mean, however, that wear and tear on e-scooters was kept to a minimum and other e-scooters were available to replace those taken away from the trial for repairs, this would also ensure all bays had available e-scooters, which with the current fleet size was not possible.

The Project Manager reported that any increase to the number of deployed e-scooters would be based on data collected by Ginger on the need and demand for e-scooters. 450 e-scooters would not be deployed across the trial area at any one time; there would be a gradual increase over a period of time until need and demand was met, any increase to number of deployed e-scooters would also be driven by feedback and any complaints and/or rise in number of reports of misuse.

Councillor Candon reported that he welcomed the report and was pleased to see that the novelty of joy-riding had worn off and the majority of journeys were now work related. However, he was slightly concerned regarding the increase in the scooter fleet size from 100 to 450. The Project Manager assured Members that although 450 scooters was the maximum number applied for to ensure that scooters were available in all bays, there would never be this number in use at any time as a phased approach would be implemented.

Councillor A Wright questioned the projected CO2 savings as 16-17 year olds were non-car drivers so there would in effect be no savings. Councillor A Wright asked if these figures were factual or assumptive. The Project Manager reported that she would ask Ginger to break the data down into those users under and over 18 years of age.

Councillor A Wright reported that the increase from 100 to 450 scooters was totally unacceptable as the trial should start and end with the same number of scooters to give a true picture to the Department for Transport and it was morally wrong to change the goalposts at this stage in the trial. Users of the scooters did not wear protective helmets and often used the scooters illegally by riding on pavements or two people to a scooter. Councillor A Wright often witnessed instances of illegal riding of scooters but did not report these misdemeanours to the police any more due to the lack of response.

Councillor C Walker reported that she was not anti-scooter but was anti-ASB and often witnessed scooters slung down and abandoned on to pavements nowhere near a designated parking bay which was a death trap to partially sighted people. The Project Manager reported that she would make the Fleet Managers aware of this situation which followed on from complaints that scooters parked upright were being pushed over by teenagers.

Councillor Wells reiterated that this was a trial and issues were to be expected as such. Councillor Wells asked if the data could be broken down to reveal how many rides were undertaken by residents or visitors. The Project Manager reported that the data was not available as postcode data.

The Chairman asked why the first application to increase the fleet size to the Department for Transport had failed. The Project Manager reported that this was due to lack of supporting data. The Project Manager reported that Norwich had a fleet of 400 scooters but had found their sweet spot to be 250 deployed at any one time to ensure a bank of scooters for maintenance and enough scooters deployed at every parking bay and the Council hoped to mirror this.

Councillor Jeal reported that he lived at the southern end of the seafront and that the scooters were a good idea if used properly.

Councillor Candon acknowledged all the concerns voiced this evening but reminded Members that some cyclists did not ride their bicycles correctly and were also a danger to pedestrians at times.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee:-

- (i) Note the progress of the E-Scooter trial,
- (ii) Agree the proposed project change request to increase fleet size; and
- (iii) Note the extension of the trial to 30th November 2022.

11 CULTURAL ASSET STUDY AND CULTURE PARTNERSHIP

The Committee received and considered the report from the Head of Inward Investment.

The Head of Inward Investment provided an overview of the existing financial support provided to cultural partners and institutions from across the Borough including an overview of the funding sourced from the Arts Council England for the amount of £20k to develop an independent cultural asset study which aimed to provide a clearer, more comprehensive undertaking of roles, impact and capacity within Great Yarmouth and Gorleston and identification of any gaps.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee note the paper and agree to a one-year extension of funding in 2022/23 for the three current cultural partner organisations with a view to reviewing this budget in 2022/23.

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman reported that there was no other business being of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration at the meeting.

The meeting ended at: 20:00