

**URN:** 22-066

**Subject:** Great Yarmouth Enterprise Hub pilot update

**Report to:** Economic Development Committee, 23 May 2022

**Report by:** Head of Inward Investment – Simon Best

#### **SUBJECT MATTER / RECOMMENDATIONS**

This report presents to Members an update on the Great Yarmouth Enterprise Hub pilot project and Enabling Self Employment in Norfolk project. It sets out current plans for a fully-funded scheme to run until the end of December 2022 in premises within Market Gates, delivered with the Town Centre Partnership, Norfolk Chamber of Commerce and other trusted partners.

The pilot will also cover costs for the two existing GYBC Business Advisor posts beyond June 2022 – when their current funding ends – and help inform development of the ‘support for businesses’ theme within the Borough’s emerging UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan.

#### **Members are asked to:**

- 1) Review and comment upon the update on the Great Yarmouth Enterprise Hub pilot project and Enabling Self Employment in Norfolk project as set out in this report;**
- 2) Note the associated opportunity to extend existing frontline business support until the end of 2022 and help gauge local need and demand for any further development of the concept under the local UK Shared Prosperity Fund award.**

## **1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

- 1.1 The Enterprise Hub pilot concept will co-locate business advisors and related staff from trusted partners and confer some critical mass in terms of outward-facing and responsive enterprise infrastructure, with £117,818 initially earmarked for GYBC to deliver the scheme within New Anglia LEP’s £619,316 *Enabling Self Employment in Norfolk* project.
- 1.2 The Government’s assessment process took significantly longer than originally indicated and the Project was not notified that it had been awarded funding until 3 November 2021 – 4 months after the specified start date of a project of only 9 months’ duration.
- 1.3 The Government also provided assurances that, as a result of its delay, all projects – nationally – would be automatically extended until the end of June 2022 on the assumption that awardees would be able to achieve the same outputs and outcomes in 6 months with the same overall resources, i.e. significantly intensifying delivery.

## **2 CURRENT STATUS**

- 2.1 Concurrent to securing a delegated funding agreement with the LEP, meetings were convened with the Norfolk Chamber of Commerce and the Town Centre Partnership. The former – through a separate UK CRF bid led by Norwich Business Improvement District – was awarded a minimum budget of £30,000 to pilot a very similar concept. The latter is transitioning to a new operational model whereby it's distributed to smaller satellite offices throughout Norfolk in line with its recently-revised mission to offer support to 'every business in Norfolk' through increasingly peripatetic staff.
- 2.2 Both organisations were keen to pool resources in order to realise a single enterprise hub pilot in Great Yarmouth town centre until the end of June 2022, recognising the efficiencies and synergies that this would realise.
- 2.3 The proposal emulates the short-lease enterprise hub premises concept operated by Nwes and other enterprise agencies on a 'meanwhile' basis, piloting the feasibility/effectiveness of some of the ideas envisaged sitting in the Town Centre alongside the proposed University Learning Centre. The emphasis will be on fostering enterprise culture collaboratively – not just co-located partners operating in their own organisational silos; everyone working together to provide a responsive one-stop-shop.
- 2.4 Officers reported to the Economic Development Committee on 7 March 2022 that whilst the location had yet to be determined, the former Greenwoods Building at 14 King Street was the preference at that time.
- 2.5 Following a series of inspections and assessment of the works necessary to render those premises suitable for occupation and operation as an Enterprise Hub, it was agreed with the Town Centre Partnership that the former GAME store on the ground floor of the Market Gates shopping centre – used at that time as a walk-in COVID testing centre – would be the most deliverable solution in terms of lead-times, the cost of preparatory works required and space afforded.
- 2.6 The Enterprise Hub plan includes a mix of informal space to accommodate walk-ins, meeting/training space for the delivery of one-to-one and one-to-many events, networking, clinics and training provided in-house and by trusted third partners. The pilot will be used to gauge local need and demand for – and the impact of – this kind of enterprise outreach.
- 2.7 In response to these delays in securing a delegated funding agreement from New Anglia LEP, an alternative fall-back position was agreed with the Town Centre Partnership, whereby it would rent the premises until at least the end of June and provide the fit-out, with GYBC Business Advisors, Norfolk Chamber of Commerce staff and other trusted business support professionals based within the Enterprise Hub as their 'guests' – thereby providing an Enterprise Hub pilot independently of New Anglia's UK CRF funding. This option would, however, provide no funding for the two Business Advisor posts – or continuity of GYBC-led frontline business support, advice and facilitation – beyond June 2022.
- 2.8 In late April, NALEP advised that the Government was considering making available to projects, nationally, a further delivery extension to the end of December 2022, reflecting ongoing delays. Officers re-profiled, redesigned and re-costed project on that basis, with reduced costs and contracted outputs and presented it to the NALEP on 28 April. On 4 May, NALEP advised that the Government had granted the project an extension.

- 2.9 Whilst it would have been possible to pilot an Enterprise Hub until the end of June without recourse to UK CRF funding, the clear preference was to agree a workable funding agreement with the LEP to fund and extend delivery of the Enterprise Hub pilot until the end of December 2022.
- 2.10 This option also a) provides full funding for the two Business Advisor posts until that time, b) provides a longer period over which to assess local need, demand and impact to inform the commissioning of interventions under the 'support for business' theme within GYBC's forthcoming UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan.
- 2.11 On 5 May, the Partnership Agreement was successfully renegotiated with NALEP and agreed by both parties. New Anglia LEP signed the agreement on 10 May and it will be countersigned by GYBC, subject to review by the Finance Team and by NPLaw.
- 2.12 The agreed, UK CRF-funded project costs until the end of December 2022 are as set out below. There is no requirement for match funding from Great Yarmouth Borough Council and the budgets factor in the Town Centre Partnership's early investment in both rent and fit-out.

Cost descriptor	Q1	Q2	Q3	TOTAL
100% FT Business Advisor 1	£11,333	£11,333	£11,333	£33,998
100% FT Business Advisor 2	£0	£11,333	£11,333	£22,665
Targeting/outreach, monitoring/tracking, materials	£1,000	£2,000	£0	£3,000
Flat rate 15% overhead on employer's costs	£1,700	£3,400	£3,400	£8,500
Rental of vacant commercial space for Hub	£0	£15,000	£15,000	£30,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£14,033</b>	<b>£43,065</b>	<b>£41,065</b>	<b>£98,163</b>

- 2.13 In summary, the plans mean that the Town Centre Partnership (TCP) secures an all-inclusive rental arrangement for one unit in Market Gates at the earliest opportunity until at least the end of June 2022 and undertakes the fit-out using its own resources. At the end of this period – when the TCP's own UK CRF funding ceases, the rental agreement reverts to GYBC until the end of December 2022, effectively reversing the TCP/GYBC host/guest arrangement.

### 3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Subject to final sign-off by GYBC, the Enterprise Hub pilot and wrap-around project will be fully-funded by New Anglia's UK CRF award until the end of December 2022, with fit-out provided by the Town Centre Partnership. The funding will also cover 100% of the employer's costs for the two GYBC Business Advisor posts beyond June 2022 – when their current funding ends. There is no requirement for match funding from Great Yarmouth Borough Council.

### 4 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are a number of common risks that apply to funded project work, including an inability to achieve contracted deliverables/outputs, the adequacy of project costings/budgets and the availability of capacity/staff. Of these, the risk of issues relating to the retention of existing GYBC Business Advisor capacity up to and beyond June 2022 – in the context of the scaling back of this

kind of support through the New Anglia Growth Hub – would be mitigated, to some, by extending their funding until the end of the year.

- 4.2** The Enterprise Hub pilot will also provide critical insights around local need and demand for pre-start, start-up and new business support as the Council develops and rolls out a UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan covering the period until 2024/25 – within which ‘support for businesses’ is one of two priority themes featured for the whole of that period.

## **5 CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1** This report presents to Members an update on the Great Yarmouth Enterprise Hub pilot project and Enabling Self Employment in Norfolk project, setting out current plans for a fully-funded scheme to run until the end of December 2022, delivered with the Town Centre Partnership, Norfolk Chamber of Commerce and other trusted partners.

## **6 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

<b>Area for consideration</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Monitoring Officer Consultation:	As part of the ELT process
Section 151 Officer Consultation:	As part of the ELT process
Existing Council Policies:	Not applicable
Financial Implications:	As outlined in the Report
Legal Implications (including human rights):	None
Risk Implications:	As identified in report
Equality Issues/EQIA:	None
Crime & Disorder:	None
Every Child Matters:	Not applicable