

Economic Development Committee

Minutes

Monday, 16 September 2019 at 18:30

PRESENT:

Councillor Plant (in the Chair); Councillor Candon, G Carpenter, P Hammond, Mogford, Wainwright, B Walker, C M Walker & A Wright.

Councillor D Hammond attended as a substitute for Councillor Freeman.

Mr D Glason (Development Director), Mrs M Burdett (Head of Inward Investment) & Mrs C Webb (Executive Services Officer).

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cordiner-Achenbach, Freeman & Lawn.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor C M Walker declared a personal interest in item number 7 but in

accordance with the Council's Constitution, was allowed to both speak and vote on the matter.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2019 were confirmed as a true record.

4 MATTERS ARISING

The Chairman reported that there were no matters arising from the above minutes.

5 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee received & considered the Forward Plan.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee endorse the Forward Plan.

6 LOCAL INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY & ACCOMPANYING DRAFT NORFOLK & SUFFOLK LOCAL INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

The Head of Inward Investment reported that Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) were now leading the work in developing "Local Industrial Strategies" (LIS) which was the next step to documenting how local actions could build on competitive strengths and to develop local high growth sectors such as clean energy, agri-food and ICT/digital.

The Head of Inward Investment reported that the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (NALEP) had been engaging local stakeholders over the summer in leading on and developing the Norfolk & Suffolk Local Industrial Strategy.

Members were requested to reflect on the NALEP Local Industrial Strategy and consider endorsing it. However, it was highlighted that the document could be strengthened with additional information as detailed within the report. The Head of Inward Investment reported that officers would strengthen the report recommendations as advised by the Committee and the final report would be given to the Chairman to present at the Norfolk Leaders meeting on 18 September 2019.

The Chairman reported that excess Apprenticeship Levy monies from large employers would be pooled and made available to SME's across the County instead of being returned to the Government. Councillor A Wright reported that he would prefer some of the excess funding be given to colleges across the County to provide skill courses to meet local needs and/or demands. The Head of Inward Investment reported that she would check the eligibility & compliancy criteria in this matter.

The Head of Inward Investment reported that once the LIS had been finalised and signed off by the Government, officers would then start the process of refreshing the Great Yarmouth Economic Growth Action Plan and delivering the projects and reporting on the deliverables to ensure alignment with the final LIS.

Members felt that the dualling of the Acle Straight was integral to opening up the economic growth of the Borough and that tourism should be highlighted with its own heading as it accorded with the national strategy. The Committee requested that the terminology of Greater Yarmouth be utilised as there were buildings which required regeneration in Gorleston, for example, the Gorleston Pavilion.

RECOMMENDATIONS:-

That Members endorse the LIS, however subject to the amendments suggested at the meeting, request that this would be on the basis that more reference and importance should be placed on:

- The importance of infrastructure to the economy, in particular the need to dual the Acle Straight which is supported by the Local Enterprise Partnership, Norfolk County Council, Transport East & the A47 Alliance,
- The significance of the Tourism Sector and Visitor Economy in Greater Yarmouth, in particular, the need to reference the importance of the "Golden Mile" regeneration , and how Arts, Culture & Heritage should take centre stage in the "Underpinning Sectors" section and in the "Places" section of the strategy; specifically within the objectives,
- The significance of Start-Up businesses , enhancing existing businesses and scaling up existing businesses and that the LIS should recognise this,
- The role of the Apprenticeship Levy and the impact this could have on local SMEs and also the employment of local people if the levy could be redirected; and

- The role that the "Future High Street Fund" and "Stronger Towns Fund" will take in the development of "Places".

7 QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE REPORT 2019-20

The Committee received & considered the report from the Head of Planning & Growth which detailed current performance measures for April to June 2019-20 whereby progress is assessed against targets which were set at the beginning of the financial year.

Councillor Waters-Bunn reported that it had become apparent to her that there were numerous vacant units on Gapton & Harfrey's Industrial Estates and asked whether the Council had any data on the vacancy rates. The Development Director reported that this information could be gathered and mapped and a report brought back to the Committee.

Councillor P Hammond reported that he had asked on several occasions for figures to prove that new jobs had been created at Beacon Park instead of jobs relocation from other industrial estates within the Borough as this would be a true growth indicator.

A Member asked whether the Council's industrial units/starter units at Martham were fully occupied. The Development Director reported that he would liaise with property services and report back to the next meeting.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee note the report and that all measures to be monitored during the next quarter.

8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(i) The Development Director reported that the public consultation for the Great Yarmouth Transport Strategy had been launched today at the Town Hall for four weeks and he encouraged Members to view the display boards in the Town Hall foyer and to complete a consultation form.

(ii) The Development Director reported that the Third River Crossing public examination would open at Great Yarmouth Racecourse on Tuesday, 24 September 2019 at 10 am. An open floor session was scheduled for 6 pm on the day.

9 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

The meeting ended at: 19:30