

# Economic Development Committee

## Minutes

Monday, 26 October 2020 at 16:00

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

Councillor Bensly attended as a substitute for Councillor Freeman.

Mr J Newman (Town Centre Manager).

Ms K Watts (Strategic Director), Mrs L Barker (Strategic Director), Mr D Glason (Director of Planning & Growth), Mrs M Burdett (Head of Inward Investment) & Mrs S Wintle (Corporate Services Manager).

### **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Freeman & Myers.

## **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Cordiner-Achenbach declared a personal interest in item 7, Kickstart Programme. However, 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 17 February 2020 were confirmed by assent.

## **4 FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee received and noted the Forward Plan.

## **5 GREAT YARMOUTH TOWN CENTRE PARTNERSHIP BID (TCP) - PROPOSED FOURTH BID TERM**

The Committee received and considered the report from the Strategic Director.

The Chairman welcomed Kate Watts, Strategic Director, back after her period of maternity leave.

The Strategic Director reported that the Town Centre Partnership Company (Great Yarmouth) Limited (TCP) was a public limited (not for profit) company set-up to manage and deliver activities, currently under a five-year term as a Business Improvement District (BID), on behalf of its 191 levy payers. Since its establishment in 2006, the BID company had undergone two renewals with a fourth term now in preparation.

The Strategic Director reported that supported by Great Yarmouth Borough Council, Norfolk Police and Norfolk County Council, the TCP was focussed on promoting the economic, social and environmental well-being of Great Yarmouth town centre. As high street's across the UK faced significant challenges with the closure of national chain stores and reducing footfall, it was more important than ever to have a thriving TCP to support the regeneration of the town centre and market place. This would support incoming and independent retailers as well as diversification and re-purposing of buildings to further investment opportunities.

The Strategic Director reported that under the BID Regulations, the BID proposer (TCP) was obliged to notify the Borough Council & Secretary of State at the commencement of a BID renewal process. The Council had received a letter detailing this, dated 25 September 2020. As the company was coming

to the end of its 5-year term, this report requested authority from the Council to commence the process of a BID renewal. The proposed ballot period for the second BID term would be from 19 February 2021 to 18 March 2021. The TCP was a key partner working with the Council to regenerate Great Yarmouth town centre to support the corporate priority of:

Economic Growth – ensuring the Borough of Great Yarmouth is well positioned to gain from the next generation of offshore energy developments and continue to build on creating the conditions for private and public investment, capturing growth and the benefits to local communities.

The Strategic Director reported that between now and the ballot, Council officers proposed to work with the TCP to support the development of both an Operating Agreement and Business Plan for the BID company which complimented the Council's corporate priorities and supported the business community within the geographic area of the town centre. The detail of the Business Plan and Operating Agreement would be presented to Full Council prior to the commencement of the ballot.

Councillor Wainwright asked for confirmation regarding how the BID income had been modelled going forward and where the additional £100k of funding came from to make up the total income figure of £211k as only 3117k had been raised via the BID. The Town Centre Manager explained the rationale behind the financial modelling forecast and other income streams available to the TCP.

The Town Centre manager reported that future funding would be a challenge and the BID was currently looking at what other business were located in the town centre but not currently contributing to the BID and current rateable values and thresholds.

Councillor Candon asked if the pandemic could pose a potential problem to the BID ballot process. The Town Centre Manager reported that the ballot was carried out by post, the only logistical issue was identifying the decision makers at Head Office who were currently not based there but were working from home.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee:

(i) Note the work undertaken by the Town Centre Partnership Company (Great Yarmouth) Limited during the term of its current Business Plan.

(ii) Acknowledge receipt of a letter dated 25 September 2020, from the Town Centre Partnership Company (Great Yarmouth) Limited notifying the Council of its

intention to commence a renewal process in 2020/21 for the Business Improvement District (BID).

(iii) Acknowledge the request from Town Centre Partnership Company (Great Yarmouth) Limited to supply the necessary information it requires to develop the BID in accordance with the Regulations.

(iv) Authorise officers to work with the Town Centre Partnership Company (Great Yarmouth) Limited to support the development of TCP's Business Plan and as the relevant billing authority, and to agree an Operating Agreement.

(v) Request prior to the BID ballot, that the Town Centre Partnership Company (Great Yarmouth) Limited provides the Council, as the relevant billing authority, with the information listed under Regulation 4 Schedule 1 of The Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004.

## **6 ECONOMIC GROWTH ACTION PLAN - UPDATE REPORT**

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

The Head of Inward Investment reported that this report presented to Officers and Members the progress made against the Economic Growth Action Plan since its approval by Members in February 2020. Since the last Economic Development Committee had been held, progress had been made in many areas, including significant progress on key strategic projects whilst responding at a business, community and organisational level to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Head of Inward Investment reported that at the last Committee meeting, Members had approved the Economic Growth Strategy and Action Plan and agreed that it would be a living document. As such, the Economic Growth Action Plan had been refreshed and updated to show progress against the aims and the outcomes. The themes and the Corporate Plan strategic priorities have remained the same.

The Borough's economy had been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. Nevertheless, the Council had been able to both respond to the crisis (as evidenced by the 'Pathway to Recovery' paper presented to Policy and Resources Committee in June 2020), as well as moving forwards on major projects and programmes of work particularly in relation to the plans to

regenerate the Borough.

Councillor A Wright asked for clarification regarding the Council and Norfolk County Council's co-ordinated responses to the recent Freeports consultation and the exploration of Freeport opportunities. The Chairman reported that conversations were taking place at the Council, NCC and the LEP regarding Freeports.

RESOLVED:-

(i) That the Committee review and comment on the Economic Growth Action Plan progress update; and

(ii) That the Committee approve the request to move the reporting to Members to bi-annually.

## **7 KICKSTART PROGRAMME - OPTIONS REVIEW**

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

The Head of Inward Investment reported that Kickstart was a core Government scheme to mitigate employment risk for young people. It was soft-launched on the 2nd September 2020 and was effectively live now. The Kickstart Scheme was a national government £2 billion scheme to create hundreds of thousands of high quality 6-month work placements for young people aged 16-24, who were claiming Universal Credit.

The Head of Inward Investment informed the Committee that there were two options for the Council:-

(i) Promote the scheme and direct to an already existing gateway partner. This would be the simplest route to take, particularly as the scheme was still new and it was difficult to fully ascertain what the issues and gaps might be. Discussions have already taken place with Norfolk Chamber of Commerce and East Coast College, who have both agreed to work in partnership if Members agreed this as the chosen option. The Chamber, in particular, had noted that the wrap around care for businesses and placements was considerable and had fully developed systems to support this process already in place. This was the recommended option.

(ii) To sign up as a gateway as a Council. The Council could seek to promote the scheme and attempt to bring together a cohort of 30+ places and should this be possible, the Council could seek to apply as an intermediary. This was certainly viable, and whilst there were potential resource constraints, the £9000 minimum, would go some way to assist with the costs to administer the scheme, support the placement wrap around care required and set up the oversight and application systems. Should the Council not be able to find 30

places, officers could direct the businesses to another local intermediary, such as East Coast College or Norfolk Chamber of Commerce, though previous work in setting up the scheme in this circumstance would be negative and as such, this was not the preferred option.

The Chairman reported that he felt the recommendation for the Council to limit itself to working with the Chamber of Commerce was too restrictive and that the recommendation should be expanded to include Norfolk County Council and East Coast College.

Councillor Wainwright reported that he had asked for this report to come before the Committee. However, he felt that it would be better if the Council acted as a gateway in its own right and follow the example set by South Norfolk and Broadland Councils. The Council had the staff, the Business Advisors, in house to operate this scheme and had a good track record in delivering similar initiatives. He proposed that the Council should act as a gateway. This motion was seconded by Councillor C M Walker.

The Chairman referred to the agenda report and highlighted the risks involved if the Council opted to become a gateway. Councillor Wainwright responded that there were risks to many initiatives to which the Council signed up to.

Councillor A Wright reported that he supported the views of Councillor Wainwright and hoped that this initiative would not be a repeat of the Youth Opportunities Programme which had just been a source of cheap labour for employers.

Councillor Cordiner-Achenbach reported that she had looked very carefully at this scheme and that this could allow the Council to be funded to provide the gateway referral service as opposed to referring business to other gateway providers with no financial recourse for the work undertaken. This would show the young people of the Borough, those aged 16 to 24 years, that they were valued.

Councillor Hammond suggested that the Council could email local businesses to gauge their interest in the scheme. The Chairman reported that there were 4,680 businesses in the Borough and this would be a major undertaking. The Head of Inward Investment reported that this initiative would be largely promoted via social media. The Strategic Director reported that GDPR would prevent the Council from using spam email practices and that option 1 was preferred as the Council was still suffering from stretched resources due to Covid19 and was trying to manage its resources as best as it could to meet the needs of its residents.

Councillor Candon agreed that this initiative would require a lot of officer time and effort during this difficult time and would be an additional strain on officers and a risk to the Council. The Chairman concurred the Council might have the ability but did we have the capacity to act as a gateway for this scheme.

Councillor B Walker asked that Councillor Wainwright's motion which had

been seconded, be voted on, that the Council act as a gateway in its own right. However, following a vote, this motion fell.

The Chairman proposed that the recommendation be amended to include that delegation be given to officers to administrate the scheme and that Option 1 include Norfolk County Council and East Coast College as well as the Chamber of Commerce. This proposal was seconded by Councillor P Hammond.

RESOLVED:-

(i) That the Committee review and comment on the Kickstart scheme with a view to recommending recommend Option 1, to work with the intermediary gateway bodies of Norfolk County Council, Chamber of Commerce and East Coast College to promote the scheme across the Borough.

(ii) That the Committee delegate responsibility to officers the ability to administer the scheme.

## **8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

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

## **9 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.

## **10 CONFIDENTIAL - GREAT YARMOUTH OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE REPORT**

(Confidential Minute on this Item)

## **11 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

(Confidential Minute on this Item)

## **12 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES - GREAT YARMOUTH TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN MEMBERS WORKING GROUP**

(Confidential Minute on this Item)

**13      CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES - GREAT YARMOUTH TRANSPORT AND  
INFRASTRUCTURE STEERING GROUP**

(Confidential Minute on this Item)

The meeting ended at: 18:00