



Moving Thetford Forward
The Local Delivery Vehicle for Thetford
Growth Point

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD

Held on Friday, 17TH September 2010 at 10.00 a.m. at Keystone Innovation Centre, Thetford

Present (Voting Members)

Martin Aust (MA)
Cllr Paul Claussen (PDC)
John Connolly (JCo)
Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris (MK-M)
Cllr Robert Kybird (RGK)
Cllr Tony Poulter (TP)
Cllr Jennifer Chamberlin (JC)
Cllr Ann Steward (AS)
Alec Witton (AW)

Representing

Flagship Housing
Breckland Council
Thetford Business Forum
Breckland Council
Thetford Town Council
Brettenham & Kilverstone Parish Council
Norfolk County Council
Norfolk County Council
Land Representative

Present (Non-Voting Members)

Margaret Bailey (MB)
Natalie Beal (NB)
Phil Daines (PD)
Tim Edmunds (TE)
Susan Glossop (SG)
Mark Stokes (MS)
Steve Udberg (SU)
Tim Newton (TN)
Dan Cox (DC)
Kevin Ward (KW)

Breckland Council
Capita Symonds for Breckland Council
Capita Symonds for Breckland Council
Norfolk County Council
Thetford Town Council
Breckland Council
Breckland Council
Norfolk County Council
Breckland Council
Breckland Council

In attendance

Cllr Marion Chapman-Allen (MCA)

Alison Gamble (AG)

Norfolk County, Breckland & Thetford Town
Councils
Breckland Council

Apologies for Absence Received

Cllr Daniel Cox (DC)
David Potter (DP)
Anita Brennan (AB)
Jo Pearson (JP)
Rob Leigh (RL)
Mark Stanton (MSta)
James Smith (JS)
Ross Ingham (RI)
Mary Marston (MM)
Tony Trotman (TT)
Fiona McDiarmid (FD)
Cllr William Nunn (JWN) (Chairman)
Cllr Sam Chapman-Allen (SCA)
Mike Goulding (MG)
Ed Chambers (ECh)

Norfolk County Council
Inspire East (RICS East)
Breckland Council
Local Business Representative
Breckland Council
Breckland Council
Forestry Commission
Urban Delivery Team
Go East
NHS Norfolk
Norfolk County Council
Breckland Council
Breckland Council
Homes & Communities Agency
Thetford Town Council

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WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS (AGENDA ITEM 1a)

44/10 The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (AGENDA ITEM 1b)

45/10 No declarations of interest were expressed.

MINUTES AND ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING OF 30 JULY 2010 (AGENDA ITEM 2)

Comments were made regarding the minutes as follows :-

(a) **Financial Report (Minute ref. 37/10)**

MB confirmed that the sum of £66,385 had now been reallocated to the Skate Park project and that the funding of £1.7m which was previously at risk had now been secured and now in BDC's bank account.

(b) **Bus Interchange Planning Proposal (Minute ref. 39/10)**

A correction was noted the final paragraph on page 6 which should read JCo and JC.

The resolution should be amended to include the wording 'if necessary'.

(c) **Thetford Vision /prospectus (Minute ref. 40/10)**

AW requested a revision to the wording to the paragraph starting with 'AW could not see' on page 9.

The paragraph should now read:-

AW could not see how a footfall was necessary along the proposed footpath on the north bank of the river and mentioned the monies had been allocated for works to be carried to haling footpath alongside the river which would channel the people in the same direction He pointed out that the UDT plan pre-dated the Haling path decision and suggested that the plan be changed.

Subject to the above changes being made the minutes of the meeting of 30th July 2010 were confirmed.

46/10 **THEMATIC GROUP UPDATES (AGENDA ITEM 3)**

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(a) **LEARNING AND EDUCATION**

A presentation and update of the Forum/Academy was given by TN.

(i) **Academy**

The first stage of the Academy process had now been achieved with the signing of the Funding Agreement by the Secretary of State and the formal opening of the Thetford Academy on 1st September.

Capital funding still remains uncertain dependant on the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) announcement on 20th October. It is still unclear what volume of capital would be available for the rebuilding programme and Vision.

(ii) **Land Acquisition**

In principle the Forum Land acquisition has been approved by NCC Cabinet.

The land acquisition is not currently part of the package. The acquisition is now in abeyance and additional financial provision is now being put forward to the Capital Priorities Group at Norfolk County Council (NCC).

(iii) **Development Options**

NPS have carried a high level assessment of the existing sites and on the options for development with or without the forum site.

TE explained that NCC have no revenue capacity for feasibility and design work.

At present the procurement route is not known until the DfE review of capital later in the year.

(b) **PLANNING STRATEGY & MONITORING/GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**

(i) **Thetford Loops Stage 2**

NB reported that the consultant had now their finished the draft report and this was now with the Project Group for comments. A final report is due in 2-3 weeks.

(ii) **Thetford Retail Study**

PD informed the meeting that the study provided a positive message for the district as a whole and the document supports the LDF especially the

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Site Specifics and the TAAP. He added that he'd just received the study so his presentation was a high level and the Retail Study and TAAP would be presented at a later meeting.

The Study shows that there will be the need for additional floor space by 2026. For more detail, see the LDF pages of the Breckland website.

RK asked whether it would mean that people would continue shopping in Norwich and Bury.

PD said the study only looked at the current shopping patterns and a takes into account:-

- A reasonable assessment of who would shop in Thetford based on the new houses and occupancy.
- The need to keep the allure of the town centre.
- Existing planning permissions and the need to ensure that any future additional planning permissions take account of these findings and are focused where they are needed.

RK added that Thetford needed to attract niche retailers in order to make the town centre more attractive and asked whether this had been addressed in the study.

JCo added that there's a clear message coming from people that they would use it if it was more attractive. At the moment there is a lot of negative comment about the shopping being disappointing.

PD responded by saying the overall the percentage of vacant shops in Thetford is below the national average and that the growth in the Retail sector could not be assumed to be sustained over the next few years. The Retail study is updated every 3-4 years.

JCo said that Thetford was rich in assets and poor in cash and commented that use could be made of other commercial assets.

JC asked if the figures take into account the Forum site and Thetford becoming a destination for education and whether the local economic assessment feeds into the Retail Study.

JC asked if the figures take into account the Forum site and Thetford becoming a destination for education and whether the local economic assessment feeds into the Retail Study.

PD said that the Retail Study provided headline information and that more detail would be given to the next MTF Board meeting. He agreed that that is would be a multi phased approach incorporating the TAAP,

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<p>policy, Vision and economic strategies.</p> <p>PDC added that this proves that there's no need to have a 3rd or 4th out of town supermarket.</p> <p>It was agreed that comments should be e-mailed to PD that can then be incorporated in to the TAAP.</p>	ALL
<p>SG asked whether the figures account for the influx of visitors and tourism.</p> <p>PD confirmed that the study does account for leisure and tourism.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED</u> The report on the TAAP and Retail Study will now be presented at the next MTF Board on 15 December 2010.</p>	PD
<p>(c) <u>HOUSING AND REGENERATION</u></p>	
<p>(i) <u>Single Management Organisation (SMO)</u></p>	
<p>MA gave an update on the SMO and reminded the meeting that it is the intention of SMO to manage housing assets now and in the future to exemplar standards.</p>	
<p><i>NB: Since the meeting an update has been received from Laura Handford, the Strategic Projects Manager, for Flagship:</i></p>	
<p>Background Flagship commissioned, as requested by MTF, an options report to be prepared. In April 2010, Anthony Collins Solicitors LLP, Flagship's selected corporate services solicitor, provided an options report in relation to a Single Management Organisation</p>	
<p>Executive Summary</p>	
<p>1.1. In summary, our findings and recommendations in relation to the structure of the SMO are:</p> <p>1.1.1. Instead of a separate legal vehicle, the SMO could take the form either of an agreed standard for the management of all affordable housing (of the Stakeholders) in Thetford (see section 4) or a series of contractual arrangements between the Stakeholders by which those that own affordable housing assets contract out the management function to another Stakeholder, for example Flagship Peddars Way;</p> <p>1.1.2. However, it is our view that the formation of the SMO as an independent entity will provide a stronger platform for the development of a cohesive and forward-thinking neighbourhood strategy for Thetford than either a simple contractual collaboration or agreed management standard</p>	

- between Stakeholders;
- 1.1.3. For practical reasons, the SMO will be non-asset holding, at least for the foreseeable future;
 - 1.1.4. Because it will not own the assets it manages, a series of management/services agreements will need to be put in place between the SMO and the asset-owners;
 - 1.1.5. At least the majority of the asset-owners are contracting authorities for EU procurement purposes, which means they must comply with the procurement regime when contracting for the delivery of property management services;
 - 1.1.6. If a contractual collaboration structure is used (under which each asset-owner contracts out the management function of its Thetford stock to Flagship Peddars Way, for example), the value of the property management contracts involved is likely to mean that each would need to be tendered in accordance with the EU procurement regime. There is no guarantee that Flagship Peddars Way would be the successful bidder for all or any of those contracts;
 - 1.1.7. However, if the SMO is a separate organization specially-formed of which each of the contracting-authority asset-owners becomes a part-owner, this would potentially enable it to benefit from an exemption (called the “*Teckal* exemption”) to the need to comply with the full EU procurement regime
 - 1.1.8. To comply with *Teckal* caselaw, there can be no element of “private” or commercial ownership of the SMO. This means that private landowners, individual residents and community members will not be able to be members of the SMO. However, there are alternative ways of facilitating the participation of such people and organizations within the SMO, for example through the use of nomination rights to the SMO’s board of management;
 - 1.1.9. If the SMO employs a management team to carry out various aspects of the landlord services function, this would reduce the risk of a challenge to the use of the *Teckal* exemption. In any event, some transfers may happen automatically under TUPE. Care will need to be taken with any transferring employees (whether under TUPE or otherwise) to understand fully any relevant factors to this process, for example in relation to their pension provision and admitted body status;
 - 1.1.10. The repairs and maintenance service can be contracted out to the members of the SMO;
 - 1.1.11. Because it will not own any housing stock, the SMO is not

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capable of being registered by the Tenant Services Authority as a Registered Provider. However the asset-owners will remain accountable to the TSA for the stock managed by the SMO. Therefore the management agreements must contain mechanisms by which the SMO is accountable to the stakeholders for meeting any relevant regulatory requirements to which they are subject;

1.1.12. We understand that there is likely to be a significant tax advantage for the SMO to be part of the vat group of one of the members. This requires advice from an appropriately qualified tax advisor;

1.1.13. The most appropriate structure for the SMO is likely to be either a company limited by guarantee or a Limited Liability Partnership. However, before we can advise categorically on this, the members need to consider whether the SMO should be charitable, what should happen to any surpluses the SMO generates and what their long-term aims and aspirations for the SMO are; and

1.1.14. Council representation, community engagement and resident involvement can be achieved through representation at management board level and other accountability processes.

(d) **HERITAGE & CULTURE/ TOURISM**

SG gave an update from the Heritage and Culture Thematic Group.

(i) **Murals for Forum Site**

The artwork for the murals has now been completed and show what has happened to Thetford from 400BC onwards and across the world.

(ii) **Feasibility Study**

SG reported that the feasibility study had unearthed some fantastic material in respect of the 13 periods. This will be reported to the Thematic Group on 18th October 2010 and the study will be signed off on 1st November 2010.

(iii) **Boudicca Site, Interpretation Panels, Orientation panels and signs**

JC asked what would happen if the Forum doesn't go ahead?

SG said the murals are on the hoardings and will stay there until removed.

JCo added that it provided a good history but felt that the Hoardings were meant to show what was coming to Thetford and didn't provide a

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<p>positive message.</p> <p>RK added that there was enough hoarding space to do both.</p>	
<p>(e) <u>LAND ASSEMBLY AND ASSETS</u></p>	
<p>(i) <u>Skate park</u></p>	
<p>KW updated the Board on the Public Meeting held at the Leisure Centre on the 16th September 2010.</p> <p>The meeting was attended by approximately 15-20 Skaters who expressed concern about the size of the proposed Skate Park stating that they felt it was too small.</p> <p>The specification in respect of the project still needs to be looked at including ownership, design and costs.</p> <p>MSt thanked KW of his update and suggested that with the constant press challenges that there is a greater need to capture the positive information and use the press to promote and embrace the 'good news' stories in respect of the MTF project.</p>	
<p><u>RESOLVED</u></p>	DC
<p>DC to issue a press release in respect of the Skate Park meeting.</p> <p>BDC to investigate the possibility of further land acquisition and the skaters would develop a design based on the current available site.</p>	
<p>47/10 <u>MTF WEBSITE (AGENDA ITEM 4)</u></p>	
<p>KW gave an update on the status of the Website.</p> <p>MSt asked whether the website would include a link to the milestones and outputs.</p> <p>KW said this was currently being worked on and that a link would be included on the website.</p> <p>SG asked whether a link to up and coming events would be included. KW confirmed that it could be.</p>	
<p>48/10 <u>Thetford Vision/Prospectus (AGENDA ITEM 5)</u></p>	
<p>MSt informed the meeting that the Thetford Vision/Prospectus would be launched after the Comprehensive Spending Assessment announcement.</p>	

RESOLVED to defer the launch of the Thetford Vision until after the next Board meeting.

49/10 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS (AGENDA ITEM 6)**

(i) **Railway Station**

JC asked if there was an update on the status of the railway station upgrade.

MCA informed the meeting that a further meeting is planned with BDC Councillors, Network Railway and Keystone.

(ii) **A11 Meeting**

An evening meeting in respect of the A11 is planned for 17th September 2010. AS said that she would be attending the meeting and would be happy to represent the views of views of BDC, NCC and the MTF Board.

(iii) **Bund for Abbey Meadow Field**

MSt informed the meeting that an e-mail had been received requesting repair works/tree planting to be undertaken to the Bund at Abbey Meadow Field so that no re-incursion of Travellers could use it in the future.

RESOLVED that a proposal should be worked up and bought forward for revenue funding to be allocated.

(iv) **Dates of Future Meetings**

Following discussion it was agreed to delay the MTF Board meeting on 29th October 2010 until mid November to allow time to assimilate the Comprehensive Spending Assessment information due to be announced on 20th October 2010.

RESOLVED That the Board meeting on 29th October 2010 is cancelled and revised Board meeting is arranged for mid November.

***Since the Board meeting this has been arranged for
19th November 2010 at the Keystone Innovation Centre, Thetford
starting at 10.00am***

The meeting closed at 11.35am.