



Moving Thetford Forward

***The Local Delivery Vehicle for Thetford
Growth Point***

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD

Held on Thursday, 19 November 2009 at 10.00 a.m. the Innovations Centre, Croxton Road, Thetford

Present (Voting Members)

Cllr Ivor Andrew (IA) (*substitute*)
Martin Aust (MA)
Sgt. Steve Burke (SB) (*substitute*)
Cllr Jennifer Chamberlain (JC)
Cllr Sam Chapman-Allen (SC-A)
Cllr Paul Claussen (PDC)
Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris (MK-M)
Cllr Robert Kybird (RGK)
Jo Pearson (JP)
Cllr Tony Poulter (TP)
Cllr Ann Steward (AS)
Neil Stott (NS)
Alec Witton (AW)

Representing

Croxton Parish Council
Flagship Housing
Norfolk Constabulary
Norfolk County Council
Breckland Council
Breckland Council
Breckland Council
Thetford Town Council
Local Business
Brettenham & Kilverstone Parish Council
Norfolk County Council
Keystone Development Trust
Land Representative

Present (Non-Voting Members)

Margaret Bailey (MB)
Natalie Beal (NB)
Ed Chambers (EC)
Paul Crick (PC)
Phil Daines (PD)
Tim Edmunds (TE)
Susan Glossop (SG)
Chris Haye (CH)
Trevor Holden (TH)
Tim Newton (TN)
Martin Peckitt (MP)
Mark Stanton (MSta)
Mark Stokes (MS)
Steve Udberg (SU)

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

In attendance

Cllr Marion Chapman-Allen (MCA)

Kevin Cooper (KC)
Samantha Goodwin (Sgo)
Elizabeth Ground (EG)(*observer*)
Ross Ingham (RI)
Ray Johnson (RJ)
Rob Leigh (RL)
Peter Newton (PN)
Mark Taylor (MT)
Tony Trotman (TT)
Rob West (RW)
Elaine Wilkes (EW)

Norfolk County, Breckland & Thetford Town Councils
Project Manager (Thetford Forum Project)
MTF Team
Breckland Council
Urban Delivery
Consultant Surveyor
Breckland Council (Marketing & Communications)
Principal Architect, Studio Reel
Thetford Healthy Town
Thetford Healthy Town
Director, Studio Reel
Breckland Council (Committee Services)

Apologies for Absence Received

John Connolly	Thetford Business Forum
Cllr Daniel Cox	Norfolk County Council
Andrew Egerton-Smith	NHS Norfolk
Mike Goulding	Homes & Communities Agency
Cllr Bob King	Croxton Parish Council
Cllr Ian Mackie	Norfolk County Council
Cllr William Nunn	Breckland Council
David Potter	Inspire East

Cllr Paul Claussen – Vice-Chairman, in the Chair

		<u>Action by</u>
44/09	<p><u>WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS (AGENDA ITEM 1)</u></p> <p>The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting and introductions were given.</p> <p>No declarations of interest were made.</p>	
45/09	<p><u>MINUTES AND ACTIONS (AGENDA ITEM 2)</u></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2009 were confirmed as a correct record.</p> <p>A correction was noted to include the name of Cllr Chamberlain in the list of apologies for absence received at the last meeting.</p> <p>There were no other matters arising.</p>	
46/09	<p><u>PRESENTATION – FINDINGS OF THE COMPACT REVIEW (AGENDA ITEM 3)</u></p> <p>It was reported that the Norfolk Compact was administered by Voluntary Norfolk and was a tool for improving relationships between organisations in the public sector and those in the voluntary and community sector. Its purpose was to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- provide a framework for good and productive working relationships;- promote better understanding between the sectors; and- support best value principles between the sectors. <p>The Norfolk Compact was agreed and published in February 2001 and Breckland Council and other public sector organisations signed up to the Compact in 2001 and made a funding commitment to it.</p> <p>Nationally, the Compact protocol/approach was currently being reviewed and a task and finish group had been set up within Norfolk to react to the national review.</p> <p>NS commented that he supported the guidelines but felt that they were not always followed by all sectors and that there was a need for more commitment to be shown to the Compact.</p> <p>The position was noted.</p>	

Action by

47/09 **FINANCIAL REPORT (AGENDA ITEM 4)**

The following notes to the budget were highlighted:

- a) Revenue commitments included salaries and these were subject to change depending on who was charged to MTF.
- b) All outline business cases not yet approved were subject to full evaluation. The outline business cases for projects listed on that day's agenda for decision were included, as well as future items provision.
- c) The capital allocation included provision for the required CLG adjustment.
- d) The revised balance should at least equal the provisional allocation for 2010-11 until such time as the final allocation for 2010-11 was confirmed.
- e) Close monitoring and regular updates to the funding position were required to take account of the varying completion dates of projects affecting when monies would be drawn down, as some projects were long-term and funding was likely not to be drawn until nearer the end of the MTF programme.

The provisional allocation for the G-Bic scheme referred to a proposed Green Incubator project to be located on the Thetford Enterprise Park. Brief details of the proposal were given. A fuller report was due to be presented to the Board at its meeting in January.

In answer to a question, it was confirmed that full CLG programme funding for committed schemes as at 31 March 2011 would be retained. However, any money not committed at the end of the programme was likely to be taken back by CLG.

MB suggested a thorough review of budgets should take place in September 2010 to review progress on spend to ensure all funding was committed by 31 March 2011.

The report was noted.

48/09 **PROJECT REPORTS (AGENDA ITEM 5)**

- (a) The Academy Development Model (3-site "Thetford Campus" Academy)

Details of proposals for the Academy development were presented by TE and CH. The proposed model covered three sites – the two existing High Schools, plus the town centre Forum site. A letter of intent had been received from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). Scheme details were nearing readiness for submission for Ministerial approval before Christmas, to be followed by a consultation process.

Key partners would be DCSF, Partnership for Schools (PfS), Norfolk County Council and sponsors (Wymondham College, Easton College, West Suffolk College and Norfolk County Council).

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The sponsors would be required to establish an Academy Trust and to lead on governance.

The proposed development would be subject to the national procurement process for academies and would attract national funding from the schools capital building programme, administered by the Partnership for Schools agency on behalf of the DCSF.

Norfolk County Council as Education Authority would be responsible to DCSF and would have a key role in leading the procurement process. As Education Authority, Norfolk County Council was required to own all the land on which the Academy would be sited, which would then be leased to the Academy Trust.

Key documents in the development process included the revenue funding agreement, outline business case for capital funding (based on a broad concept of the building) and final business case.

Proposed timescales were as follows:

- Expression of Interest – November 2009
- Consultation/Decision making – January-March 2010
- Academy opens on two sites (existing High Schools) – September 2010
- Outline business case – October 2010
- Final business case – October 2011
- Construction complete (Forum site) – September 2013

Other key points to note included:

- The scheme would have to follow the PfS standard template model for establishing the academy and procuring the building.
- There would be national political pressure to meet target dates.
- Partner contributions were possible but needed to be worked through this model and its timescales.
- Concept designs were adequate prior to Invitation to Tender stage; thus the current design work was acceptable but would need to be aligned to this model.
- All local financial risk would sit with the Norfolk County Council.
- Site abnormal costs outside the PfS model would be a cost to Norfolk County Council.
- There was no DCSF retrospective funding of preparation work to date but Norfolk County Council would receive some funding to cover development costs. However, there was a possibility of some backfilling of funding already made to the process.

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In relation to the Forum design, it was noted that there would be a little flexibility to take account of local input (i.e. from Thetford Town Council) in respect of the Auditorium element but this would need to be accomplished within the various timeframes of the process.

(b) Thetford Forum / Anchor Site

KC (Project Manager, Building Partnerships Ltd.) presented details of progress to date on the proposed Forum scheme (which formed the third site under the Academy proposals) and a concept drawing was shown to illustrate a suggested design and relationship of the building to the site.

A number of technical reports had now been received, covering the areas of ecology, acoustics, flood risk, topography / arboriculture, archaeology, asbestos and site investigation. A capacity study had also been carried out and the development area agreed, together with initial design development proposals.

In the light of the technical reports, further work was required in respect of the site ecology recommendations, scoping of archaeological requirements, asbestos removal and site investigations.

In relation to flood risk requirements, agreement had been reached with the Environment Agency and English Heritage consent was awaited.

The budget position as at November 2009 was noted.

With regard to the Anchor site, the ecology report showed that although there had been bat activity in the building, it was deemed not to be a bat roost and therefore did not rule out the option for demolition. However, it would be necessary to keep a watching brief on the position.

Planning consent for demolition would be required. English Heritage had indicated in principle agreement to the proposals, subject to confirmation of details.

So far as the issue of dangerous structure was concerned, provided there was no access to the building, urgent demolition was not required but the position needed to be closely monitored.

In summary, demolition could occur subject to asbestos removal and planning consent, as well as keeping a watching brief on the bat activity in the building by a qualified ecologist.

With regard to the question of planning consent for demolition, PD explained that as the former Anchor Hotel building was owned by Breckland Council, which was the Local Planning Authority, the application for Listed Building Consent to demolish would have to be made to the Secretary of State, who would doubtless make reference to the advice contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 (PPG3), where there was a general presumption in favour of retaining Listed Buildings.

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However, Breckland's position was similar to that of English Heritage which was that, subject to the right scheme, retention of a Listed Building need not be paramount.

It was possible that the Secretary of State would require that the scheme was well developed before any Listed Building Consent came forward.

NS asked about the timing of this scheme in relation to the land ownership requirements for the Academy proposal.

TH replied that this was subject to the ongoing work and discussions regarding land assembly and timing of demolition. PD added that the position regarding the application for Planning Consent to the Secretary of State would need to be checked if ownership was transferred to Norfolk County Council. However, Norfolk County Council was also a Local Planning Authority, so the position might not be affected.

NS also highlighted the need to keep the public informed on the proposals and timescales. TH explained that there had already been publicity.

JC advised that the Learning Group felt the Academy scheme was an exciting and unique opportunity for the whole town. However, it was a process-led scheme and timing would be important, including the timing of discussions with the Town Council (i.e. in regard to the incorporation of a public auditorium facility into the design of the Forum). In addition, while it had not proved possible to move the Charles Burrell High School, the proposal was felt to be a positive step which would help to meet the needed regeneration in that area of the town.

TE advised that public consultation was included within the process and there would be opportunities for people to submit representations and/or objections before a decision was made. However, the timetable for the scheme was very tight and to meet the consultation timetable would require that there was a clear presentation of the vision for the Academy and showing its integration with the High Schools and the MTF programme. This would need to be ready by the New Year.

In answer to questions, it was explained that the Academy would be a Secondary Academy covering the age group 11-19 years, but with a wider view to develop strong links to the primary school sector (who had expressed interest) and potentially to the establishment of primary academies for the future. The partners remained the same as originally proposed, with the aim to integrate high quality education in Thetford.

CH acknowledged the additional (non-educational) element of the scheme could affect funding, and details of this 'additionality' needed to be confirmed.

Action by

NS advised that Keystone Development Trust might be able to offer some capital funding as part of its funding from the Government's Community Builders Scheme.

So far as the existing commercial property on the site was concerned, it was noted that terms for its acquisition were in the process of being negotiated and officers were reasonably confident that the matter could be successfully concluded by private treaty.

In answer to a question from RI, the Project Manager explained that he understood the idea of incorporating a public auditorium facility into the Forum was to replace some of the uses currently provided at the Carnegie Rooms, although the exact scope of this remained to be determined.

The budget allocation for the project was then discussed. The current budget was set at £265,000 and was considered to be sufficient for the immediate future (site assembly and other works) while issues of design etc. were developed further. However, recognising the timing issues for the Academy proposals, it was agreed the position should be reviewed again in January.

(c) **Thetford Bus Interchange**

TE gave a presentation of this scheme, fuller details of which, including business case and financial and development appraisals, were as circulated with the agenda.

The overall cost of the project was £3,183,425, including the renovation of the listed building, although it was noted the cost of the latter may reduce.

Norfolk County Council had confirmed its willingness to lead on the project, subject to Planning Consent.

The target completion date for the project and opening of the bus station was November 2011.

RJ advised that terms for the acquisition of the listed building were being negotiated and he was reasonably confident that this could be successfully concluded by private treaty.

So far as future use of the listed building was concerned, it was agreed this should be reviewed again at a future meeting.

RESOLVED that

- (1) authority is delegated to the Chairman of the Programme Delivery Group to release MTF capital of up to £3,183,425 as follows:

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- £855,250 for land assembly including associated costs
- £812,000 for the build of the bus station
- £1,208,000 for refurbishment of the listed building including fit out costs
- £308,175 professional fees associated with the design and construction of the buildings

Subject to:

- i) Norfolk County Council owning the land.
 - ii) Future use of the vacant building being agreed by the Board prior to release of any funding (ensuring that any proposed transfer / sale of the building is covered by Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) rules on use of assets funded by CLG.
 - iii) A minimum capital contribution of £300,000 from Norfolk County Council for highways work.
 - iv) Funding not being moved between the building and the bus station or vice versa without the permission of the Chairman of the Programme Delivery Group.
 - v) Norfolk County Council reporting back to the Chairman of the Programme Delivery Group at the following stages to ensure the project remains within budget and approval to proceed to next stage is given:
 1. Land assembly
 2. Planning permission
 3. Return of tenders
 - vi) Norfolk County Council to follow an appropriate tendering process for the bus station and refurbishment of the Grade 2 listed building to enable CLG funding to be allocated.
 - vii) Ongoing revenue costs of the bus station and building being borne by Norfolk County Council, subject to whatever is decided regarding final use of the listed building.
 - viii) A report back to the MTF Board in September 2010 on the likely final budget requirement.
- (2) RJ be authorised to proceed to conclude terms for the acquisition of the land and listed building.
- (d) Single Housing Management Organisation (SMO)

In principle support to the proposal to create an SMO had been given at the Board meeting on 14 May 2009, subject to submission and approval of a business case (previous minutes 24/09 and 25/09 refer).

Action by

MA presented an outline business case for the project, to be led by Flagship Housing Group, details of which were as circulated with the agenda.

A Prospectus for housing partners to join the project would be presented to the next meeting.

The total project cost was £30,000. MTF funding of £7,500 was sought, with the remaining amount to be met by match funding.

The Board was satisfied that the release of funding would not jeopardise funding for future applications.

RESOLVED that approval be given to the release of £7,500 MTF revenue funding towards the creation of a Single Management Organisation (SMO), subject to:

(1) the funding being released in stages as follows:

- £2,500 towards a feasibility study, the results of which to be reported back to the Board; and
- £5,000 for creation of a legal entity should the Board agree to proceed beyond the feasibility study.

(2) other match funding being confirmed.

(e) **Existing Estates Regeneration Project**

In principle support to a proposal to undertake a high level spatial planning exercise on the existing housing estates as the basis for any future regeneration work had been given at the Board meeting on 14 May 2009, subject to submission and approval of a business case (previous minutes 24/09 and 25/09 refer).

MA presented an outline business case for the project, to be led by Flagship Housing Group, details of which were as circulated with the agenda.

Capital funding of £25,000 was sought from the MTF, which would be match funded by £25,000 from Flagship Housing.

The Board was satisfied that the release of funding would not jeopardise funding for future applications.

RESOLVED that approval be given to the release of £25,000 MTF capital funding for the development of strategic plans for the existing estates, subject to:

- Other match funding of £25,000 being confirmed
- Results of the work being reported back to the Board in January 2010, including feedback from other agencies

Martin
Aust

Action by

(f) Thetford Transport Study

The outline business case for this project was presented by PD, details of which were as circulated with the agenda.

PD explained that the Transport Study was a second stage study essential to master planning and future development to the north east of the town and was required for the Thetford Area Action Plan. MTF funding of £50,000 was being sought for the project. Other match funding, totalling £100,000, had been confirmed.

PC advised that Norfolk County Council had set aside £50,000 for transport study work in Thetford and that this wider study would complement that work.

In answer to concerns that this work should have formed part of the bus station proposals, it was explained that this extended study went beyond the work already done, including regarding the bus station, and would look at the wider impact of the future growth of the town, both on town as a whole and the surrounding area and transport links to other centres.

The Board was satisfied that the release of funding would not jeopardise funding for future applications.

RESOLVED that approval be given to the release of £50,000 MTF revenue funding for the Thetford Transport Plan.

(g) Thetford Area Action Plan (TAAP) – Public Consultation

The outline business case for this project was presented, details of which were as circulated with the agenda.

£5,000 funding was sought to continue the consultation process, which was a statutory requirement under the TAAP process.

Some concerns were expressed that a further public consultation round could be counter productive if people felt they were not seeing the results of the earlier consultations.

The report on the agenda for the Vision/Marketing Update was brought forward at this point and MS explained that it was planned to hold open / information days from 28 – 30 January 2010 at the Carnegie Rooms, Thetford, to raise awareness of the plans for Thetford in a visual and positive manner. The first day of the event would be aimed at the business community; the following two days would be general public open days.

Members welcomed this proposal and supported the need for a coordinated approach covering all aspects of growth and development plans for the town.

It was explained that the TAAP consultation funding requested was a key part of the delivery and was aimed at hard to reach groups and to ensure comprehensive coverage in response to the magnitude of change facing the town.

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The Board was satisfied that the release of funding would not jeopardise funding for future applications.

RESOLVED that approval be given to the release of £5,000 MTF revenue funding for the Thetford Area Action Plan – Public Consultation project, subject to the consultation not taking place until after the MTF Open / Information Days event in January 2010 and to ensuring a coordinated approach and avoiding duplication with other consultation processes.

(h) **Breckland Retail Study Update**

The outline business case for this project was presented, details of which were as circulated with the agenda.

The purpose was to update the existing Retail Study to provide up to date retail figures required to inform the TAAP and ensure it was found sound. The study would cover Thetford and also the wider area.

The overall cost was reported as between £25,000-£30,000. £5,000 MTF funding was sought, with the remainder to be match funded by Breckland Council (to be confirmed).

(Subsequent to the meeting, the match funding figure was confirmed as £25,000 (as opposed to £20,000 as stated in the outline business case) but that the MTF contribution remained unchanged.)

The Board was satisfied that the release of funding would not jeopardise funding for future applications.

RESOLVED that approval be given to the release of £5,000 MTF revenue funding for the Breckland Retail Study Update.

(i) **Thetford Healthy Town Update**

TT presented an update on Healthy Town scheme activities.

The scheme commenced with a successful public 'launch' at the end of September, receiving good press and media publicity and helping to raise awareness, and there was continuing press interest.

Current activities included engaging with GP surgeries, who had committed to involvement in sustainability and transitional planning work. Work had also started on scoping a Health Planning Consultation Document, with involvement from NHS Norfolk and Breckland Council.

A project itinerary was to be published the following month and there would be further publicity.

Successful projects under the scheme to date included:

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- Bike It – five schools, including both the High Schools, were participating
- Community Supported Growing – Norfolk Rural Community Council appointed to deliver lessons to both High Schools and three primary schools
- Walking for Health – 17 walks held with 194 participants
- Joy of Food – Eight students had successfully completed a course
- Green Ventures Bikes – 55 bicycles recycled from 184 collected. Shop and voucher scheme on target to commence in February 2010.

Future activities were being planned as follows:

- Five various dance classes
- Road running club
- Exercise referral scheme
- Thetford Town Sports Week
- Thetford Food Festival

The report was noted.

(j) **Vision / Marketing Update**

MS reported that Urban Delivery had been appointed to deliver the Vision and communications strategy and introduced Ross Ingham of Urban Delivery.

RI explained that Urban Delivery was a company that specialised in regeneration consultancy. He introduced Rob West and Peter Newton of Studio Reel who would be working with him.

RI outlined how it was proposed to work with partners on town centre regeneration projects, with the aim of completing the communications strategy and Vision stages by the end of January 2010.

Details of the planned MTF Open / Information days on 28 – 30 January 2010 were as reported above (paragraph (g)).

NS suggested a mobile display unit be employed.

49/09 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS (AGENDA ITEM 6)**

Skateboard Park – MS undertook to provide members with information on progress of this project. AW asked that the youth group involved be advised of details of the location and proposed opening of the site before the next meeting.

Mark
Stokes /
Steve
Udberg

The meeting closed at 12.25pm