



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

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD**

**Held on Thursday, 25 March 2010 at 10.00 a.m. at The Innovation Centre, Thetford**

**Present (Voting Members)**

Cllr Ivor Andrew (IA) (sub for B King)  
Martin Aust (MA)  
John Connolly (JCo)  
Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris (MK-M)  
Cllr Robert Kybird (RGK)  
Jo Pearson (JP)  
Cllr Tony Poulter (TP)  
Neil Stott (NS)  
Alec Witton (AW)

**Representing**

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

**Present (Non-Voting Members)**

Margaret Bailey (MB)  
Natalie Beal (NB)  
Anita Brennan (AB)  
Ed Chambers (ECh)  
Phil Daines (PD)  
Tim Edmunds (TE)  
Susan Glossop (SG)  
Trevor Holden (TH)  
Becky Jefcoate (BJ)  
Ray Johnson (RJ)  
David Lawrence (DL)  
Rob Leigh (RL)  
Tim Newton (TN)  
Mark Stokes (MS)  
Tony Trotman (TT)  
Steve Udberg (SU)

Breckland Council  
Capita Symonds for Breckland Council  
Breckland Council  
Thetford Town Council  
Capita Symonds for Breckland Council  
Norfolk County Council  
Thetford Town Council  
Breckland Council (Chief Executive)  
Breckland Council  
Consultant Surveyor  
Easton College (Thetford Forum Project)  
Breckland Council  
Norfolk County Council  
Breckland Council  
Thetford Healthy Town  
Breckland Council

**In attendance**

Cllr Marion Chapman-Allen (MCA)  
  
Daniel Cox (DC)  
Owen B Jenkins (OBJ)  
Julie Britton (JB)  
Helen McAleer (HMc)

Norfolk County, Breckland & Thetford Town  
Councils  
Breckland Council  
Norfolk County Council  
Breckland Council (Committee Services)  
Breckland Council (Committee Services)

**Apologies for Absence Received**

William Nunn  
Jennifer Chamberlin  
Daniel Cox  
Andrew Egerton-Smith  
Mike Goulding  
Steve Greener  
Bob King  
Mary Marston

Breckland Council (Chairman)  
Norfolk County Council  
Norfolk County Council  
NHS Norfolk  
Homes & Communities Agency  
Homes & Communities Agency  
Croxton Parish Council  
GO East

	<b><u>Action by</u></b>
10/10 <b><u>CHAIRMAN</u></b>	
In the absence of William Nunn (who had been called to an urgent meeting at County Hall), it was proposed and seconded that Mark-Kiddle Morris chaired the meeting.	
11/10 <b><u>WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS (AGENDA ITEM 1)</u></b>	
The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting.	
An amendment to the order of items 6 and 7 of the agenda was noted. Programme Project Proposals would now be discussed as item 6 and the Financial Report would be discussed as item 7.	
In response to a question about whether everyone would have to declare an interest in agenda item 6 (Programme Project Proposals), the Board was informed that expressions of interest would not have to be declared as the original proposal for voting on project proposals had been amended. This would be explained later on in the agenda.	
12/10 <b><u>MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 2)</u></b>	
MS pointed out that item 3/10(b) would be discussed at item 6 on the agenda.	
Subject to noting the above point, the minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2010 were confirmed.	
<b><u>Matters Arising</u></b>	
(a) <b><u>Thetford Healthy Town (Minute ref. 3/10(b))</u></b>	
Members were provided with an update.	
NHS Norfolk had appointed a consultant who would be advising on how to move this project forward.	
The Healthy Living Centre would be providing additional services and a new dental practice was anticipated for the town.	
Detailed reports would be provided in due course.	
Referring to the Healthy Town Programme, it was agreed that TP would act as the Community Safety Champion on behalf of the MTF Board.	
(b) <b><u>MTF Vision Prospectus (Minute ref. 6/10(a))</u></b>	
TP felt that the Thetford Bus Interchange should have been included in the prospectus.	
(c) <b><u>Thetford Forum/Anchor Site (Minute ref. 6/10 (c))</u></b>	
RK advised that it was Suffolk Archaeology that had been engaged to carry out the dig on the site and not the UEA.	

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by**

(d) Thetford Skate Park (Minute ref. 9/10 (a))

Members were provided with an update on the skate park.

NS had been met with the children who would be using the site to gather ideas about the design required.

13/10 **FEEDBACK FROM MTF 3 DAY INFORMATION EVENT (AGENDA ITEM 3)**

BJ was in attendance to give a presentation on the feedback from the three day open day event.

The overall turnout had been very pleasing; 968 people had attended - the first day had been for businesses and the remaining two days had been open to the public.

The feedback had been very positive; however, there had been some negativity in relation to timescales. All comments had been posted on the website.

Analysis of the feedback forms had demonstrated four main areas of interest – the bus interchange, the forum, town centre regeneration and housing plans.

Bus interchange

Most people felt that the bus interchange should be pushed forward as the existing station was a disgrace. The perceived issues were highlighted.

Forum

Many people welcomed the idea of the forum and felt that it was a much needed resource in the town and was a very well thought out realistic project. The perceived issues were highlighted.

Town Centre Regeneration

With regard to the town centre regeneration, most people had asked that enough space be left in the town centre for an exciting shopping experience to be built similar to the one in Bury. Many people had asked if the existing Carnegie rooms could be converted into a cinema or a bowling alley. The riverside area was also mentioned. It was felt that this should be made a tourist area with gift shops, cafes and river boat trips. The perceived issues were explained.

Housing Plans

As far as the housing proposals were concerned, feedback had shown that most people were in support of the Thetford North proposals; however, in order to attract professional people to Thetford, this development should be given a garden suburb with a lower density of housing. Many people who had attended the event had been pleased to see that the existing estates were being given serious consideration.

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Thetford Enterprise Park

A good interest had been received from a number of different businesses, including food processing, logistics and the manufacturing industry.

Thetford Healthy Town

Many comments had illustrated that there were not enough sports/cycle facilities on the plans. A cycle route to the forest had been suggested.

Skate Park

Most felt that this would be an excellent concept for the youth of Thetford and that a larger facility should be considered. On-going consultation with youngsters was needed especially with the organisation SK8.

The Chairman thanked BJ for her presentation.

14/10 **ACADEMY / THETFORD FORUM / ANCHOR SITE (AGENDA ITEM 4)**

Members were provided with a presentation by TN and DL.

Thetford Academy/Forum

The County Council proposed to close Charles Burrell and Rosemary Musker High Schools in Thetford from 31 August 2010 and establish in its place an Academy for 2050 pupils aged 11 – 19 from 1 September 2010. The opening of the Forum on the Anchor site was planned for September 2013.

The Academy would be supported by a strong local partnership led by Wymondham College to inspire success for young people in Thetford. The consultation opened on 9 January and closed on 24 March 2010.

The majority of the respondents have responded in favour of the proposal with much positive support for the “learning town” vision. However, a number of issues had been highlighted, including:

- Student travel between sites
- Perceptions about behaviour
- What would happen to the swimming pool at the Charles Burrell School
- Anchor Site

Members were informed that the student travel between the sites would be minimal in the early days. The swimming pool would have to be thought through on how it could be sustained in the new build arrangements. As far as the Forum was concerned, the Anchor site was more than suitable as there would be a learning institution in the centre of Thetford.

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Norfolk County Council, at its Cabinet meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2010, would consider the responses to the consultation and decide whether to issue a public notice to close the schools. The public would then have from 16 April to 28 May to give further views and make objections. Having heard those views and considered all the factors, Cabinet would make the decision on 14 June 2010 about closing the existing schools. Although an expression of interest had been received by Ministers on 3 February 2010, closure would only happen if Government Ministers agreed to set up the Academy.

The Principal's appointment was on-going and would be re-advertised but it was hoped to have someone in post in the next few weeks.

The sponsors' vision for the Academy was to transform education in Thetford by making learning and success irresistible and accessible for all within the community and beyond. A sponsors meeting would be held in April with staff, students, parents and the community.

AW asked DL to clarify what type of students would be going to the Forum. In response, DL explained that the Forum would be a completely new concept. It would be the new sixth form, for pupils in the age range of 14 –19 years and would also be a lifelong learning centre, not just for schools but for the community as well, catering for all age groups in the middle of the town. Most of the vocational facilities would be housed in the Forum such as hairdressing etc and there would be a new significant performing arts provision in place of the current inadequate provision at the Charles Burrell school. This facility would put education at the heart of Thetford and give the town a very high profile and an inspiration of choice.

TH thanked DL and TN for the presentation. He felt that this project was a grand vision for Thetford and the benefits that such an academy would bring would be phenomenal. He did ask, however, if the susceptibility of spending cuts in the Autumn had been taken into consideration.

Members were informed that the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the partner agencies had identified these cuts in the spending stream. There was a clear commitment from the present Government and the remainder of the parties to go ahead with the academy programme.

DL advised that the expenditure was secure as it had a very high profile and had great deal of support from the DCSF.

TP asked if the ministerial approval would have an affect on the opening dates. Both TN and DL confirmed that the dates had been agreed in principal; the project would not be this far in advance if they did not have the confidence in central government.

NS hoped that the academy would happen but asked if there was a Plan B in place if it did not. DL advised that although there was not a clear Plan B, existing resources could be used to utilise what was already there. However, without capital funding, the actual Forum would not be able to go ahead and this would be an enormous loss for Thetford.

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Still on the subject of Plan B, Members were informed that if the Anchor site was not used for educational purposes other options were being explored.

JC felt that DL should be congratulated on pushing this project forward in such a short space of time.

AW mentioned the consultation, particularly the part about the closure of the existing schools and asked if a different word other than closure could be used. He highlighted the fact that the public had misunderstood the interpretation and thought that the schools were not going to be used for the academy. TN agreed, the way the consultation had been worded on the website had caused some confusion. He explained the legal process that Norfolk County Council had to go through to close an 'institution'. Both 'institutions' (Charles Burrell and Rosemary Musker schools) once 'closed' would be replaced by the academy. Once the replacement had happened the academy would no longer be maintained by Norfolk County Council.

The Chairman felt that it would be advantageous to put the timescales out into the public arena so that people were aware of what was going on.

TH suggested asking each prospective media department to put a press release together which would deal with a whole raft of questions as well as the timescales.

**RESOLVED** that each prospective media department be asked to put together a press release so that the raft of questions being asked could be dealt with. The timescales to also be included.

BDC/N  
CC

**Thetford Forum**

KC provided Members with a brief update on the practical issues in relation to the Anchor site.

All asbestos contained on the site had been removed and the geotechnical investigations had been carried out. A team from Suffolk Archaeology, not the UEA, were still on site and were carrying out an archaeological dig. To date the dig had three pits containing medieval foundations as well as pottery, bones, shells and a human tooth. The foundations had shown that the medieval road, thought to run through Bridge Street, actually followed a different route. With this in mind, the foundation design might have to be amended.

Details of the archaeological works, including the finds, were being publically displayed on boards surrounding the site.

The timescale for the Phase 1 dig was Easter 2010. Phase 2 would commence once the Anchor Hotel had been demolished.

The financial position statement as at March 2010 was highlighted. The likely total spend to June 2010 would be in the region of £250,000.

A further report would be produced once the archaeological works and

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site investigation results had been received.

NS felt that all information relating to the archaeological dig should be publicised to a wider audience.

RL advised that there were four 3x2 signs at the moment which gave details about the archaeological dig and these had been applied to hoardings. This same material could be used to produce big information signs and quotes had been sent to various firms about the possibility of installing visual signs around the site. There would be a general MTF ad featured on the first set of signs which could be updated as appropriate and could include project details and timelines.

KC pointed out that he was looking to get school children involved by sending what they think should be included on the hoardings and then entering them into a competition.

The report was noted.

15/10 **BUS INTERCHANGE (AGENDA ITEM 5)**

TE presented this item and explained the project was within budget; £60,000 had been spent thus far.

Work was in hand to determine the future use of the listed building.

Land issues remained the most significant risk to the project. A video was shown of a Google street view heading in a northerly direction along Minstergate to get a feeling of how a bus/coach would manoeuvre in this area.

The project had three milestones – two of them being financial issues and the third being planning. TE needed to be 100% sure that the site would work before purchasing any land.

The Project Team had laid out a full scale mock up of the site and had driven round in a full range of vehicles including coach trials. The main concern was the issue of swept land as the mock up showed that with some vehicles, the planned required manoeuvre was not possible. A potential solution was one of using land currently used as parking in the Wilkinson/Pound Stretcher car park. Further meetings and design work had led to the conclusion that a different access would work without the need for taking the extra land.

Although the programme had slipped by a few months the Project Team was currently working on letting the contract before 31 March 2011. The deadline was not set in stone and as long as it could be demonstrated that a commitment had been made to this contract the funding would not be lost.

A key date to note was the opening of the bus station in January 2012; this date could be brought forward but was dependent on the range of options available for the listed building.

IA pointed out that the Board had been assured that all vehicles would be able to get in and out of the station without any problems. TE was

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confident that there was a solution within the land available. A compulsory purchase order for the land would be used if required.

MA asked how the cost of the land would be met if it was indeed required. TE stated that the project would still be delivered in the context of what had been agreed, the costs would be utilised from the existing budget. The issues of a swept path could be addressed without the need to purchase the said land as vacant land along the street scene could be used.

McA mentioned the continental coaches that were much bigger in size and asked if such vehicles had been taken into account.

TE explained that the bus interchange had been designed to be future proof and adequate facilities had been incorporated in the design for abnormally large vehicles which was in the form of a layby on Norwich Road, immediately adjacent to the main bus station.

TH pointed out two strands of work – firstly, was there another solution being looked at, if not, the Board should be asking TE to bring along some proposals to the next meeting. Secondly, the implications of this extra cost to the budget. Both authorities should concentrate on the outcomes for the delivery of the project. There was an opportunity for this to be rehearsed at the next meeting.

There was a concern about any additional cost implications and it was questioned as to who would bear this cost - did the liability lie with the consultants?

TP remained concerned about the lack of a transport study on a site that had already been chosen. The Board had not been given the opportunity to discuss the wider transport issues. He asked if this was the right site. IA reminded Members that assurance had been given by the experts that this site could be easily accessed.

This was clearly an issue, and TH suggested that the authorities be allowed to investigate these concerns fully, and TE to provide an update at the next meeting on how to move this project forward.

The report was otherwise noted.

16/10 **PROGRAMME PROJECT PROPOSALS (AGENDA ITEM 6)**

As the balance of funding needed to be committed by 31 March 2011, at its meeting on the 22 January 2010, the Board had requested that the Programme Delivery Group (PDG) be tasked with identifying potential projects and undertake a prioritisation exercise to present to the Board. Business cases for each project would then be developed if acceptable.

Twenty-two projects that were considered to be sympathetic to the overall vision had been identified and were attached at Appendix 2 of the report.

Members were asked to refer to the financial report at agenda item 7 Appendix B.

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The prioritised list of revenue funded projects was affordable subject to some minor amendments.

To commit to the £105,458 for administration support was considered too much and it was recommended that the Board reduced the level of funding requested.

As far as the Capital projects were concerned, it was proposed that all major projects be deferred (these included the outcome of various studies including the Vision work, the Water Cycle Study and the Energy Study) until the overall picture for the town was fully understood.

See Financial report below.

17/10 **FINANCIAL REPORT (AGENDA ITEM 7)**

MB presented the report.

Members were asked if they had any questions with regard to Appendix A of the report.

NS questioned the Capital request that had revenue links. MB explained that the Board had £150,449 Revenue available to fund further projects. If the £10,000 for the skate park was taken out and the amount of funding for the administration support (mentioned above) was reduced, the amount of Revenue remaining would still be in the region of £150,000.

On the Capital side, more bids had been received than the funding available. Some had Revenue costs which the Board could fund but the Revenue could not sustain the on-going Capital projects.

NS made the following points:

- Some Capital projects had revenue bids
- He welcomed the comments made by MS with regard to reducing the funding for the co-ordinator position
- Revenue monies needed to be earmarked for community engagement
- In terms of decision making/recommendations, what process would be used in relation to the capital spend

MS explained that the criteria against which projects were assessed was attached at appendix C. This had been formulated to satisfy a number of key requirements including ensuring the CLG objectives had been met.

SG felt it was about time something for the community was delivered from the Board. The Chairman pointed out that there were already some projects on the list that would enhance the town that could be classed as a quick win.

MA felt that some potential work could be done between now and the next meeting to establish whether there were any synergies between

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projects.

It was agreed that the Board should delay any decision on the Capital projects until the next meeting and to continue with all the Revenue projects.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) subject to a full appraisal, the balance of funding be allocated to the revenue projects as listed, subject to final release of funding by the Chair of the PDG; and
- 2) the allocation of Capital funding be deferred until such time that further details are received on vision, Thetford Area Action Plan (TAAP) and land assembly costs for the Forum and Bus Station.

18/10 **EMPLOYMENT, MARKETING, BUSINESS AND REGENERATION GROUP TO LAND AND ASSET GROUP (AGENDA ITEM 8)**

SU presented the report.

It was believed that a joined up approach of asset, property and land management could identify opportunities for partners and stakeholders. Each partner and stakeholder organisation would be at different points in terms of its own accommodation, property plans and service delivery. This exercise would provide each party an opportunity to engage and identify benefits.

This was excellent timing in relation to the nodal point in the MTF Programme.

If the stakeholders and partners felt they wanted to support such an initiative, the future creation of a joined up master plan for the town centre could be brought about. This initiative would slot in with the master planning being embarked on by surrounding major landowners.

The recommendations and the MTF prospectus were explained.

It was noted that the PDG had been in support of the EMBER Group being evolved into the Land and Asset Group (LAAG).

**RESOLVED** that the above change be approved.

19/10 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS (AGENDA ITEM 9)**

TP asked when the Board could expect the Transport Plan for Thetford to be completed. Members were informed that a special TAAP meeting had been arranged on 13 April 2010 but had since been cancelled as it was felt to be too early.

There was some discussion about arranging a special MTF Board meeting to discuss the visioning work and the timetabling for transport and delivery issues.

PD advised that his team could not commit to a date as yet but a TAAP timetable would be provided at the next MTF Board meeting.

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TE suggested having a workshop/interactive session first so that Members, partners and the community would have a much broader view and understanding of the dynamics of the process.

The Transport Plan would be ready by the end of June and MA asked if this would have a knock-on effect on Pigeon's plans, a prominent East Anglian property company who were promoting the scheme on behalf of landowners at the Kilverstone and Crown Estates. OJ felt that Pigeon should have some involvement in the proposed workshop session.

PD pointed out that it seemed inappropriate to provide a TAAP timetable at this stage now that the workshop idea had been put forward.

NP was nervous about leaving the TAAP for much longer. The Chairman advised that without the Transport Plan, Members would be wasting their time discussing the Urban Vision etc. He suggested bringing a draft Transport Plan report to the MTF Board meeting in June.

PD was asked when the Council would be engaging in the new "roof tax" scheme or Community Infrastructure Levy (a capital cost payable by developers). NB advised that discussions with Breckland Council would commence once the necessary clarification was received on various issues regarding the CIL.

MA asked how this "roof tax" would work. PD explained that every application would be dealt with on its own merits and could be different for every site (a link to the CIL regulations was provided).

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/communityinfrastructurelevy>

On another matter MS circulated two letters that had been sent to the MTF Board Chairman – one from Thetford Town Centre Residents Association (TTCRA) and the other from The Thetford Society. To avoid adverse publicity, it was recommended that a response be sent to the TTCRA and for the latter, a meeting be set up with the key officers and The Thetford Society.

RL suggested that the press should also be invited to the meeting so that a balanced view could be provided. NS felt that some of the Board Members should try to attend the Thetford Society meetings to answer questions.

**RESOLVED** that a meeting be arranged with the Thetford Society.

The meeting closed at 12.25pm