

**Greater Thetford Development Partnership Board
Minutes**

16 June 2017 10.00am – 11.30am
The Church on the Way, Thetford, Norfolk

Attendees:

Chair: Graham Jermyn GJ

Board Members

Mike Brown MB (Thetford Business Forum), Caroline Money CM (Norfolk County Council), , Robert King RK (Croxtan Parish Council), Terry Jermy TJ (Thetford Town Council), Robert Campbell RC (Breckland Council – sub-group chair), Will Van Cutsem WVC (Pigeon), Richard Doleman RD(Norfolk County Council), Rob Walker RW(Breckland Council), Robert Whittaker RWh(Communities sub-group chair), Cllr Phil Cowen PC(Breckland Council)

Guests: Emma Ratzer and Alison Arnold.

Minutes

Helen McAleer HM (Breckland Council)

Apologies:

Tony Poulter TP(Brettenham & Kilverstone Parish Council), Sam Chapman-Allen SCA(Breckland Council), Robert Hayes-Ward RHW(Norfolk PCC), Chris Hey CH(Norfolk County Council; Adam Broadway AB(Flagship), Paul Wheatley PW (Norfolk Police)

	Item	Action
1.	<p>Apologies</p> <p>As above.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes and matters arising from 21 April 2017)</p> <p>The Minutes were agreed and the following points were noted.</p> <p>The consultation on the Public Space Protection Order was complete and a report would be presented to the next Cabinet meeting.</p> <p>RD had followed up on the issues concerning Thetford bus station and there was now on-going communication occurring with RWh.</p> <p>WVC would provide the update from Pigeon later on the agenda.</p>	
3.	<p>Vision and Objectives for Greater Thetford</p> <p>The amended Vision and Objectives were approved.</p> <p>Volunteers were requested to take ownership of each of the six areas to move forward with the objective and tasks and report back.</p> <p>No 1: To seek and lobby for investment and improvement in strategic infrastructure</p> <p>RC would lead. RD would support.</p>	

<p>No 2: To promote the Greater Thetford area as a ‘destination of choice’</p> <p>The County Council representative was volunteered to lead and Corinne Fulford of the Communities Sub-Group was volunteered to support. (Subject to their agreement.)</p> <p>No 3: To improve access to health services and the ability of people to adopt healthier lifestyles with improved leisure and recreation opportunities</p> <p>It was suggested that RHW should lead and TP would support. (To be confirmed as both were absent from the meeting).</p> <p>No 4: To revitalise Thetford town centre and improve connectivity with public and other forms of transport</p> <p>Town Council to lead, subject to their agreement. BDC and RWh to support.</p> <p>No 5: To ensure a good supply and mix of quality housing with choice and opportunity for all</p> <p>AB had volunteered to Lead. TJ and RK would support.</p> <p>No 6: To encourage economic vitality in Greater Thetford and enhance education and learning opportunities to ensure residents can access jobs and skills near where they live</p> <p>NCC to Lead. MB support to be confirmed.</p> <p>Cllr Cowen had just been appointed to the Breckland Bridge Board. He was sure they would take an active role in the revitalisation of the town centre. He would raise that at their next meeting.</p> <p>No decision had been taken yet on how much BDC was contributing to the Market Towns Initiative but it was likely to be a quarter of a million pounds across all market towns. It would be considered by Cabinet in July.</p> <p>The Investment sub-group and the Project sub-group would act as a resource for the working groups. The Community sub-group would be the same but would also be directly involved in some themes.</p> <p>Each nominated lead would report on their theme to the next meeting.</p> <p>RWh asked if there was a plan to publicise the objectives or to give the community any opportunity for feedback.</p> <p>The Aims and Objectives would be added to the website and a BDC Communications Officer would attend the next meeting to discuss future public relations and publicity. The Community sub-group would be asked to give feedback but there would be no formal consultation. RW stressed the importance of not presenting the vision document as something decided in private by the Board and then imposed on the</p>	<p>MBarnard</p>
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	<p>public. It was agreed that suitable wording would be used in the publicity to make it clear that public input and feedback would be welcome.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>The past, present and future role of Access Community Trust in the Greater Thetford Area</p> <p>The Chairman introduced Alison and Emma and declared an interest as a trustee of the Trust. Introductions were made round the table.</p> <p>The organisation had been around for about 40 years in Lowestoft and had been in Thetford for seven years. It had been founded in 1975 (as St John’s Housing Trust) due to the decline of the fishing industry in Lowestoft to support out of work fishermen in a rough shelter. Since then it had grown and now had 17 properties in Suffolk and Norfolk. In 2013 it had re-launched as the Access Community Trust.</p> <p>John Room House in Thetford had opened in 2010 and had 10 bedsit rooms and 12 move-on flats; so it could cater for 22 residents at any one time. Accommodation was just a part of what the Trust provided. Initially it assessed each person to decide why they were homeless and to address what had gone wrong. They held employability classes, looked at health and wellbeing and assisted with debt problems. They taught some cooking skills and had a garden with a polytunnel which made them quite self-sufficient.</p> <p>They had taken the lease on the top floor of a building in Tanner Street on a lottery funded project, working with a group of 25 and over long-term unemployed. They hoped to be able to gain control of the ground floor of the building to open a café which would help them to become self-sustaining using Paddy & Scotts coffee which was a local firm.</p> <p>Their vision for Thetford had four strategic themes, accommodation, health and wellbeing, employment and enrichment services.</p> <p>They had just started to work with West Suffolk College and they would run some courses in the Tanner Street premises. They would also work with local employers and the job centre as well.</p> <p>Homelessness was increasing every year. It was a challenging situation. It was suggested that the priority should be prevention work by providing somewhere to go for advice.</p> <p>The Trust’s aim was to build services that were self-sustaining by selling coffee to pay rent, utilities and staff. Charity shops also provided an opportunity to give work experience and the business paid for the accommodation.</p> <p>MB asked which employers the Trust worked with. The Business Forum had got 8 of the top 10 employers together in the last month and attracting employees had been their biggest challenge.</p> <p>Alison said it was the smaller organisations that were more receptive to offering work experience but the Trust would like to get connected to the bigger employers. MB was asked to provide that link through</p>	<p>Mike Brown</p>

	<p>the Business Forum.</p> <p>Alison and Emma were thanked for their presentation.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>Planning and Projects Sub Group (Update)</p> <p>The Group had looked at the objectives list and tried to find out the key contacts, the status of existing projects, what activity was happening and how the Board could help. That work was on-going. They wanted to focus on the things that could be moved forward in the short term, rather than on the long-term projects.</p> <p>Papers had been circulated which suggested a re-cast of the group's terms of reference to give more focus to its purpose and to make it more pro-active in making recommendations to the Board. It was also proposed to make future meeting of the sub-group private.</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To note the progress on the objectives and the collation of evidence 2. To agree the revised Terms of Reference for the Planning & Projects sub group. <p>AGREED. (One vote against RWh).</p> <p>RWh had discussed the Terms of Reference at the Community sub-group meeting and they had felt the bulk of meetings should be held in public to provide more transparency.</p> <p>TJ was happy to have background work in private if there was a genuine commitment to publicity. He was concerned that no thought had been given to publicising the Objectives. There needed to be a proper commitment to publicity.</p> <p>RWh reported the Community Sub-Group's view that it is vital for transparency for some form of meeting notes to be published if the meetings themselves are to be private.</p> <p>CM pointed out that notes from the meeting would have to be tailored due to the sensitive nature of the discussions and would not mean much to people that had not been there. It was an officers working group to get business moving forward. The sub-group update came to the Board and set out what had been done. The update would give enough information to allow the Board to make an informed decision if one was required.</p> <p>RW agreed that the publicity was not right. He would task the Comms Team at Breckland to work on strengthening communication with the community and on how to make a summary available to the public.</p> <p>The Chairman explained that he had asked for some meetings to be held in private to get members working as a group and committed to a series of joined-up actions. We have come a long way and would not have done so if they had been public meeting. Now the challenge is to rebuild communication with the public.</p>	<p>RW</p>

6.	<p>Inward Investment Sub Group (Update)</p> <p>No meetings held. Report on TEP on agenda.</p>	
7.	<p>Projects Update</p> <p>a) TEP update. MB asked if there had been any progress since the report was written that he could report back to the Business Forum.</p> <p>WVC said that work was ongoing with progress every day but it was not complete yet. Network Rail discussions were held at their pace.</p> <p>MB advised that the Business Forum Board had expressed their thanks to RC for his efforts and BDC for what had been done to date, but their over-riding feeling was that the TEP was not going to happen in the short term. On that basis they were requesting that the roundabout money be returned for its original intention; to progress the green infrastructure plans, as they seemed like something that could be progressed to give the town a lift.</p> <p>RW was not aware of anyone else voicing concerns about the TEP.</p> <p>MB said the message they had received and the consultancy report said the TEP was not viable.</p> <p>WVC thought it was a strange decision when he was having positive discussions with the County Council and the LEP.</p> <p>MB explained that the Business Forum were not against the TEP but it was not happening in the short term. Their position was clear, they wanted the money back for use on projects now.</p> <p>RW thought the Board should look elsewhere for funding to support the other projects.</p> <p>PC thought this meeting had a consensus of agreement from all stakeholders that these matters were being progressed positively and quickly after a lack of progress over the last years. The Workshop he had attended had been very positive and people had wanted to work together. The TEP was one of the most complex sites to deal with. It had moved forward significantly and included money from the LEP and from the Business Rates pool. The planning application was about to be submitted.</p> <p>The Chairman accepted that funding was needed for other projects and the Inward Investment sub group should be tasked with progressing those.</p> <p>TJ had sympathy with both views. He had agreed to the money being used to provide momentum to get the TEP delivered but he was worried. The roundabout was due to be delivered in June 2019 but there was no date for the TEP delivery. It was risky to build a roundabout to nowhere. The money could support delivery now.</p>	IISG

PC said that the TEP would not happen without the roundabout. The information from the LEP was that the funding would be available for the TEP.

RK accepted that it was frustrating, but it had been agreed that the money should be used to unlock the potential for the TEP and now the Board were being asked to change its mind again. The town would die without further development.

The Chairman clarified that it was not a proposal to abolish the TEP just to use the money for the roundabout on more immediate issues than the TEP. The question was, was the TEP more or less likely with the money for the roundabout up front.

RWh could see both sides of the argument. Building the roundabout demonstrated commitment to the TEP but he shared the concern that there was no guarantee anything would actually happen. It was a risk that had to be acknowledged. The Inward Investment sub group should try and get some substitute money for the sustainable projects. There was also a need for £6.5million for electricity. Were there any assurances from the LEP about that money that could be passed on to the Business Forum?

WVC agreed there was a risk, but without the roundabout the TEP would definitely not be delivered. Residential development would help to pay for electricity. Discussions with the LEP were positive and were progressing and a detailed model was being prepared.

MB thought that if there was assurance that the rest of the money would follow the Business Forum would withdraw its proposals.

TJ wanted to be reassured that everything was in place for the roundabout but that it would not be built without certainty that delivery of the TEP would happen. He wanted commitment not to build until it was absolutely necessary and asked if some of the money could be used to progress other projects now.

RW explained that the Business Rates money could only be reallocated with the agreement of all the Norfolk Leaders.

RWh asked how long the money could be kept before it had to be spent.

RD advised that the growth deal money could be lost if it was not used for the delivery of growth. Money was being drawn down against the programme of work on design and planning application preparation. Money had to be spent in accordance with the bid details.

The Chairman asked Members to vote on the proposal and MB clarified that it was the Moving Thetford Forward (MTF) money that was proposed to be returned for its original intention.

RW pointed out that that was not the Board's decision and if the proposal was supported it would have to go forward to BDC.

	<p>The proposal was not supported. (Three for and six against).</p> <p>The Chairman proposed a second vote to look at ways to replace the MTF funding from different sources and TJ requested that the Communities sub group should be tasked with prioritising what to spend the money on.</p> <p>RD noted that at the last meeting the community sub-group had been given a list of projects and asked to answer three questions about them, but had not responded yet.</p> <p>RWh explained that the list had been received after their last meeting and would be on the agenda for their next meeting.</p> <p>The new proposal to find funding as soon as possible to move projects forward, based on the priority list was agreed unanimously.</p> <p>b) Signage NCC will be undertaking the signage work over the summer. Initial workshops on traffic management would be held in July. RD would ensure that the Communities sub-group was aware of the outcomes from the workshops.</p>	
8.	<p>Communities Sub Group (Update)</p> <p>The new website had been launched and further improvements were being sought. A vision and objectives page was needed and it would be nice to have photographs and details of Board members to make the page more user friendly. More information was also required on the web pages or links to information on other sites should be provided.</p> <p>Transport planning issues had been raised by the public. A more integrated and consolidated approach was needed.</p> <p>The sub-group felt that more effort was needed with regard to transparency.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On transport planning, it was reported that this could be considered as part of the Market Towns Initiative from BDC. - On timing of minutes, the Board agreed to reaffirm its commitment, but RW thought that an SLA was unnecessary. - On the summary, several members didn't see the point of this, but it was agreed that this would be picked up at the meeting when the Comms teams would be present. - On the SUE and TEP updates, this was agreed and would be an agenda item at future meetings. 	
9.	<p>Organisational updates</p> <p>Unfortunately WVC had had to leave the meeting for another appointment. RW would ask him to send his update round to Members by e-mail. This would be a standing item on future agendas.</p>	RW/WVC

10.	Future Agenda Items The Chairman requested that agenda items be sent in advance of each meeting.	
11.	Any Other Business TJ thought it had been very useful to have guest speakers at the meeting. He suggested that it would be good to have other speakers occasionally themed with topics on the agenda. RD thought that a more structured approach would be useful, using a forward plan of future decisions. At the next meeting he suggested the Board should concentrate on the initial feedback from the Working Groups. RWb noted that the agenda for the meeting published on the website did not include the additional papers that had been added for Items 5 and 7b. An updated version of the agenda would be published.	HM
12.	Date of Next Meeting 11 August 2017 at 10.00am in the Captain Mainwaring Room, The Bell Hotel, King's Street, Thetford IP24 2AZ	

Meeting finished at 12.30pm.

[End of Notes]